my dearly departed

by varsiiy

Summary

The Retributionist knew that they were made for each other. Perfect for each other. Meant to be together forever.

Notes

tw - graphic gore, lots of bugs, even more graphic gore, generally a pretty disgusting premise, idk it speaks for itself

See the end of the work for more notes

They were soulmates, really, in every sense of the word; the pair of them fit together flawlessly, sharing a bond that nobody else in town even understood. The Medium and the Retributionist. Destined for greatness.

Together forever, even if the Medium wasn't as talkative as he used to be. These days, Artem barely spoke at all.
"Authement's coming over today, honey," the Retributionist said distractedly, rummaging through a set of drawers. "I know you don't like her, but please try and get along, alright?"

A few rays of light shone through the crack in the curtains, illuminating the small, meticulously neat bedroom. Vasily tossed a sweater onto the nicely made bed and pulled out a striped button-up from the bureau. "I'm not breaking up any of your stupid fights."

His conversation partner had yet to reply. Vasily turned.

His lover was seated upon the bed, back against the headboard, looking at the opposing wall. Dirty blond hair framed his angular face. He gave no sign he had even heard Vasily. The Retributionist bit back a sigh of disappointment. *Silent treatment again.* He didn't comment on it, simply pulled off Artem's shirt without another word.

Artem’s bare skin was pitted by bugs that had burrowed into his decaying flesh. Doughy white maggots squirmed within the open, oozing blisters covering parts of his torso. His skin was all the wrong colors, too taut in some places and entirely too bloated in others, and Vasily flicked off some of the fly larva as he buttoned up the Medium's clean shirt for him. "Really, darling, you ought to take better care of yourself."

Artem remained silent, leaned back against the headboard, his body limp and lifeless.

"In one of your moods again, hm?" Vasily asked, slightly miffed. "There’s no reason to ignore me."

The Medium, once again, had nothing to say, lidless green eyes staring vacantly at nothing. The collar of his shirt didn’t cover the ring of bruising and abrasion that the noose had left around his neck.

The Retributionist wrinkled his nose slightly at the sight. "It’s kind of rude, actually, ignoring me. After all I do for you. Downright ungrateful."

A large beetle crawled up from beneath the Medium’s shirt and made its way towards the man’s eye socket. Vasily plucked the bug off Artem’s discolored face, and the insect took a large flap of the Medium’s skin with it.
“Oh, well,” he said resignedly, tossing the insect to the floor. “I suppose you’ll talk when you want to. That almost-lynching must have been pretty traumatizing, after all. Now let’s go, hm? She’ll be here by nine.”

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Sunlight streamed into the small kitchen as the Retributionist meticulously set Artem upon a chair. A plate of toast and scrambled eggs already sat on the table in front of the Medium.

“You haven’t been eating much lately, Artie,” the Retributionist said absently, turning towards the coffeemaker. “It’s worrying. Perhaps you should pay the Doctor a visit or something. A loss of appetite could signal something far worse.”

Artem did not reply.

Vasily leaned over and patted him on the shoulder. “Alright, honey. Whatever you say. Or don’t say. You should really be more talkative. People in town have started thinking you’re not even here.”

The doorbell rang, interrupting the one-sided conversation. Vasily glanced over. “Let yourself in!”

The door swung open.

The blonde-haired Sheriff stepped into Vasily’s house, shrugging off her pea-green coat and immediately wrinkling her nose. “Vasily. Hello. What on Earth is that ungodly smell? Did a rat die in the walls again?”

“Oh, maybe,” the Retributionist replied, looking thoughtful. “Come into the kitchen, would you? We’re just having some quick breakfast.”

“Who’s we?” Authement asked curiously, stepping over the threshold and into the kitchen.

Her eyes widened at the sight of the Medium. She choked out something that might’ve been a word
before doubling over and clutching her stomach.

Vasily averted his eyes politely as the Sheriff emptied the contents of her stomach onto the checkered floor. “Was that really necessary? I hope you’ll clean that up.”

“Vasily -- Vasily, what the fuck?” she questioned hoarsely, clapping a hand over her nose and mouth as if there was some unbearable stench in the room. “That’s -- fucking -- come outside for a second.”

The Retributionist frowned. “Are you certain you’re alright? You look unsettled.”

The Sheriff seized his arm and dragged him out of the room, careful to skirt the puddle of vomit on his carpet. As soon as they were out of the house, she slammed the door shut behind them and gasped for air.

Vasily’s frown deepened. He reached over and tapped her on the shoulder. “Authement?”

“What the fuck?” She looked like she might throw up again. “What the genuine, everloving fuck? He died weeks ago, what the hell is wrong with you, when did you take up grave-robbing as a hobby --”

“What are you talking about?” the Retributionist interrupted, looking confused. “Are you sure you’re alright? Can I get you some painkillers? A glass of water?”

“There’s a fucking decomposing corpse sitting at your kitchen table and you’re gonna ask me if I’m alright?!”

Vasily was looking more lost by the minute. “There’s a what? Why would there be a corpse in my kitchen?”

The Sheriff contemplated this for a second. She reached out and slapped him hard across the face.

The Retributionist took a careful step backwards. “Ow. Can you refrain?”
“Did you hit your head when you took that fall after he got lynched?” The Sheriff waved a hand in front of Vasily’s face, and Vasily promptly swatted it out of the way.

“No, I didn’t. Why do you ask? You’re acting odd.”

“Vasily, you have to bury him,” Authement said insistently.

The Retributionist tilted his head. “That’d kill him. Really, are you sure you’re alright?”

The Sheriff was starting to look upset. “Yes! You’re the one who’s not alright! I don’t know how I didn’t realize sooner how much it got to you. Vasily, I’m sorry, I should’ve checked up on you --”

“How much what got to me? Seriously, stop playing mind games, it’s getting old.”

“...You have to come with me, you’re not... you’re not thinking clearly.” Authement wrung her hands together, looking anxious. “We can get you to the Doctor, figure out what’s going on --”

“Autememt, I’m sorry, but I can’t converse with you when you’re in this sort of state,” the Retributionist said decisively. “Maybe you should go home and take a nap.”

“No, Vasily, you need help, I can --”

“Come back when you’re feeling a little better?” the Retributionist suggested placatingly.

Authement was looking more and more worried by the minute. “Vasily -- Vasily, you’re obviously not okay, I can’t just leave you here when you’re in this state. You can’t go back into that house.”

“It’s my house, Sheriff.” A trace of impatience had entered Vasily’s tone. He looked back to the doorway, shrugging off Authement’s hand as she grabbed his shoulder.

“Vasily --”
He gave Authement an apologetic smile as he stepped back inside. “Listen, we can talk more about it when you’re in your right mind, okay? Go home, have some water, get some sleep.”

“No, wait, listen to me -- ”

“None of this ‘corpse’ nonsense,” Vasily said sharply, cutting her off. She opened her mouth to say something more, and the Retributionist closed the door in her face.

—

Artem was right where the Retributionist had left him, sitting at the kitchen table, eyes wide and glassy.

“She’s delusional, I suppose,” Vasily said quietly, one corner of his mouth downturned in a frown as he sank into a chair. “It’s… unfortunate. Poor Authement.”

The Medium said nothing in return, staring listlessly into space. The tear on his face was wide open, torn flesh hanging down in a curtain; half his cheek was gone. Decaying yellow teeth and pale gums were visible through the gash.

“I guess you can’t be expected to feel sorry for her. After all, she did try to kill you.” Vasily folded his hands together on the tabletop, staring out the window above the kitchen sink. “Still, I can’t help but feel bad… I mean, she was obviously out of touch with reality, asking all these funny questions about whether or not I was concussed. I told her I was fine but she didn’t seem to buy it. You agree, don’t you, dear? You think I’m fine?”

Once again, Artem remained silent. Something with several sets of legs was moving around his mouth, visible through the slice in his skin.

Vasily sighed in relief. “Well, at least someone’s on my side here. And you’re the only person I really need, anyways. Everyone else in the town is some brand of backstabbing coward, but you’re always there, Artie, even though you haven’t been very talkative lately. I can trust you. I appreciate that.”
A fly slowly crawled out of the Medium’s left nostril, flying lazily across the table, and Vasily swatted it absentmindedly. “You aren’t gonna leave me, are you? No? You don’t think I’m crazy? Good. I know you wouldn’t betray me like that Sheriff did to you.”

Artem did not reply. The only sound was a faint breeze from outside the kitchen window.

“You’re very quiet these days,” Vasily said softly. “Makes me feel alone. But I guess I should consider myself lucky you’re still here, right? Just having you here is good, darling.”

He reached over and patted the Medium’s cold hand.

The sore-riddled skin sloughed right off as he touched it. Bone glinted through the rotting yellow-brown tissue surrounding it, small cream-colored worms writhing within the open wound.

The Retributionist mustered up a grin. “I’m not gonna let her do anything, don’t worry. None of that ‘burying’ bullshit. We’re gonna be together forever, Artie. *No matter what*.”

End Notes

i don't have anything else to say about this. i've had this tab open for seven hours because i couldn't bring myself to write a beginning. i wrote most of this while listening to minecraft parodies. i don't even like this fic anymore

thanks for reading, as always
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