Things We Do

by sajastar

Summary

Venom is planning to kill his soulmate. Eddie, as usual, has no earthly clue what is happening.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Lots of people had no marks at all.

What Eddie had on his arm was definitely a mark.

Lots of people had marks that were obviously malformed: illegible, garbled words or even formless lines twining through their skin, like the ink had run.

Eddie’s mark was perfectly clear. For some definitions of clear. Sure, it was incomprehensible. But it looked purposeful. It looked like it should mean something.

For years he’d assumed it was another language. That happened now and then. Marks weren’t translated—they appeared in whatever language those first words were spoken in—so some people had to do a bit of research. There were even professionals who would help you track down rarer languages.
Eddie had gotten used to receiving refunds from those professionals when his mark inevitably proved untranslatable.

Eddie had gotten used to hearing them tell him, with varying degrees of dismissal or sympathy, that his mark was just malformed.

Eddie thought he could have accepted a mark that was obviously meaningless. But instead, it taunted him like a word on the tip of his tongue: three characters stamped across his left arm, as crisp as type.

~*~

Venom was looking forward the day he would kill his other.

He was dreading it too. But he tried to put that aside.

In Riot’s horde, attachment to a host was a cardinal sin. Venom understood the code; he knew that hosts were not to be trusted. And it was Riot who had freed them from the Kree, who had allowed them to be more than tools. Riot’s commands were unquestionable.

So Venom didn’t dream of symbiosis, but there were moments when he hoped, furtively, to never meet his other at all.

On the other hand, killing your other was a show of strength, and Venom badly needed the status boost.

So when a primitive craft landed on their asteroid and the aliens’ cell samples were almost identical to the biochemical signature embedded in his black mass, Venom was excited. Mostly.

He begged Riot to take him on the mission and Riot, with a fanged grin, agreed.

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Eddie was bad at relationships.

He was bad at relationships in many of the usual ways, but one that always stood out was that every person he ever dated had told him he was clingy. Not needy or creepy. Just clingy.

His craving for touch had started early. As a child, he couldn’t sleep without layers of heavy blankets, even in the summer. His father refused to get a pet, so he befriended the neighborhood cats. He learned to love swimming, or more specifically, diving—total immersion was the closest he ever came to feeling calm.

At first it was cute. As he got older, it was weird. In class he sat curled in on himself or pressed his back against the wall, trying to feel enclosed.

By the time he got to high school, he was sick of it. He forced himself to sit up straight, to stand in the middle of the room. It was uncomfortable. He got used to it. This strategy paid off in a new way: he got a girlfriend.
In Eddie’s opinion, one of the main benefits of girlfriends was that it was socially acceptable to be with them at all times and touch them frequently. To a point.

That was when Eddie first started hearing “clingy.” Guys weren’t supposed to be clingy. Girls were supposed to be clingy, and their boyfriends were supposed to roll their eyes and tolerate it.

In college, Eddie started spending the night with his partners. For the first time in his life, he fell asleep easily. But his need for touch began to manifest in a new way. It started with Sam: that was the first time he’d fallen asleep next to another person.

He didn’t even notice drifting off as he wrapped his arms tightly around his bed partner. Their skin began to melt together. Sam’s body split down the middle, ribs spreading apart to reveal a hollow space. Eddie, with the unquestioning acceptance of dreams, pulled himself inside and watched as Sam’s skin closed over him, sealing him in warm darkness. He felt safe and content. More than anything, that feeling was the part that stuck with him when he woke up.

The dream became a regular occurrence after that. Eddie never mentioned it to anyone, not even Anne. However innocent and peaceful it felt, he knew how it would sound.

As labels went, “clingy” was bad. “Serial killer” was worse.

~*~

Venom realized the instant he sank into the human’s skin, tasting RNA and antigens that he knew like his own name. My other.

Luckily, the host, panic-stricken and confused, didn’t notice the thought that flickered through its mind. Even if it had, it couldn’t have possibly understood the many-layered concept of other: opportunity, victim, threat.

Venom was glad. It was easier to let it die not knowing.

He was lucky he had found it so soon. The biochemical material in a symbiote’s mark meant that Klyntar imprinted on their others at a young age, guaranteeing perfect biological compatibility. Venom was sick and starving and in desperate need of a good host.

So he held off—just until he had recovered a bit. It wasn’t that he didn’t want to kill it. He was just doing what was necessary to survive. Riot would understand.

~*~

The host sprawled unconscious in the tub. Venom waited. Hours passed. It didn’t stir. Venom grew impatient.

He occupied himself for a bit by combing through the host’s memories of the Life Foundation. That was acceptable. That was intel relevant to their mission.

But when he was done, curiosity still worried at his mind. Venom held out for a while, but eventually his questions got the better of him.

They called their others soulmates. Venom tried not to like the word.

He saw the image of the host’s mark in its memories and felt the confusion and bitterness and sadness that had imbued it over the years. It hardly seemed fair. Forty years of loneliness, only to be murdered by the other it never hoped to find.
It would use you, too, Venom reminded himself, if you gave it half the chance.

~*~

People met their soulmates in all sorts of ways. Some were sweet, some surprising, some embarrassing. But one thing was consistent: everyone claimed they felt the connection instantly. That the moment they laid eyes on their partner they felt *something*: a euphoria, a warmth, a clarity. Many insisted that they had known even before the words were spoken.

Eddie, staring into the eyes of his soulmate for the first time, had no fucking clue. As the adrenaline drained away, all he felt was scared and cold and sick to his stomach.

Almost all soulmates—even most platonic soulmates—described their first glimpse of their partner as the most beautiful being they had ever seen.

Eddie’s first thought, looking the alien in the eye, was that it looked like it looked like the offspring of a Lovecraftian horror and a slime-mold. It looked like it had crawled straight out of the Marianas Trench. It looked like a creature that might inhabit Eddie’s worst nightmares if Eddie was a bit more imaginative.

“What the hell are you?” Eddie asked, because colorful similes were getting him nowhere.

“I am Venom. And you are mine.”

Eddie didn't yet know the meaning behind those words, but in a distant corner of his mind a quiet voice agreed.

~*~

“Cooperate and you just might survive,” Venom lied. The host’s organs were already disintegrating, but Venom could sense that it believed him.

Stupid. But that was for the best. The sooner the host started catching on, the sooner Venom would have to kill it.

Which would be a shame.

Because Venom still needed a ride to the rocket.

Venom flashed his needle-like teeth in the host’s face. When it flinched away, something in Venom flinched, too.

~*~

Talking to Venom was… confusing. Of course it was. This was a confusing situation. But still, Venom’s comments—hell, Eddie’s own reactions—kept catching him flat-footed, leaving him with the sense that he was missing some subtext.

He was confused when Venom said *You die; I die*, like it was a promise.

He was confused by the sincere bitterness in his own voice when he shot back, “Yeah, well you can always just shed my carcass and exchange it for another one whenever you need.”

He was confused when Venom seemed offended by the suggestion.
He was confused when Venom said *You and I are not so different*, and Eddie replied “Thank you,” and he kind of meant it.

~*~

Venom wasn’t jealous of Anne at all. There was no reason be jealous.

Anne glanced back at Eddie, expression softening a little with concern, and Venom could feel the pang that shot through Eddie’s chest.

**You never apologized,** Venom said. And then, with a touch of guilt, added, **You might not live to get another chance.**

Venom pushed the guilt aside. No reason to care about Eddie; Eddie didn’t care about him. The memory of Eddie shouting “Mask!” came back to him. At the time, Venom had felt a vicious joy at the way they worked seamlessly together, at Eddie’s certainty that Venom would protect him. But looking back, it was what Riot had always warned them about, wasn’t it? Hosts only wanted to feel powerful. The shift Venom had felt in Eddie was not kindness or trust. It was a host who had seen him as a monster now starting to see him as a tool. And Venom wouldn’t fall for it.

~*~

“Your heart has atrophied severely.”

Eddie’s stomach dropped. There it was again, that confusion. How had that caught him off guard? Had he really thought this creature had his best interests at heart?

**Do not listen to him. I can fix it,** Venom growled.

“I don’t want you to fix it!” Eddie hissed.

**I can heal you,** Venom insisted.

Eddie ignored him and turned to Dan. “Can you fix it?”

“No, I’ve never seen anything like this before. This parasite, whatever it is—”

**Parasite?**!

Eddie frantically motioned for Dan to shut up. “Not a parasite! He’s not—”

Anne’s gentle voice cut through the din in Eddie’s head. “You’re using him up.”

And then Dan and Venom were shouting over each other again and Eddie couldn’t think, couldn’t understand what they were saying—“Shh!” They fell silent. “I, Eddie, am I dying?”

**No,** Venom said.

“You’re killing him,” Anne begged.

And just like that, everyone was shouting again and Venom’s hand was around Dan’s throat and Eddie couldn’t make him let go and then sound was tearing through them and it felt like it was ripping the DNA out of every cell and it left him hollow and fragile and alone.

~*~
Venom shouldn’t have cared when Dan told Eddie that his heart was atrophied. Venom could have seized control and steered Eddie toward the rocket like he’d originally intended. Venom could have killed Eddie and used the whole hospital as guinea pigs until he found a new host that fit. Venom could have just ignored him.

_Do not listen to him. I can fix it_, Venom said desperately.

“I don’t want you to fix it!” Eddie hissed.

_I can heal you_, Venom pleaded.

Eddie turned to Dan. “Can you fix it?”

That was when jealousy finally bubbled up in Venom. He could fix his other perfectly, painlessly, so that not a trace of damage was left. What could this human with magnets do? In the back of his mind, Venom knew it was his own fault that Eddie didn’t trust him. But it was so, so much easier to take his anger out on Dan.

Especially when Dan had the gall to call him a parasite. That hit too close to home.

“You’re using him up,” Anne accused.

_No. She is wrong._

“Shh! I, Eddie, am I dying?” Eddie asked.

_No_, Venom said. No. He wasn’t sure what that meant yet, but it was a piece of solid ground to stand on. Eddie wasn’t going to die.

“You’re killing him,” Anne said.

Venom and Dan started to protest at the same time and then Dan made a move to touch Eddie and Venom lashed out on impulse.

“Stop!” Eddie begged. And then the sound was tearing through them, ripping Venom out of Eddie cell by cell and Venom threw himself against the doors but it was too late.

Eddie stared at him through the glass. It would have been easier—Venom might have been able to justify his actions—if Eddie’s expression had been disgust or fear. But Eddie just looked betrayed.

~*~

God, Eddie was furious. “You were killing me? What happened to we, man?”

Venom threw himself against the glass. A tendril of pity rose in Eddie and he ruthlessly stabbed it out. “Yeah, look at you now, huh? Now you’re dying too.”

God help him, he should have known the fucking man-eating alien was going to kill him. Idiot. How had he fallen for that?

~*~

That was when Venom knew, and fuck what Riot said, that Eddie really had trusted him. Really was trying to help him. Really believed all the bullshit about symbiosis. Really hadn’t seen this coming.

When the humans had their backs turned, Venom slunk away.
He had to get back to Eddie. He had to undo the damage at least. He didn’t let himself think beyond that.

And then, through dichromatic eyes, Venom watched Eddie being dragged away. Fuck.

~*~

Zip-tied in the back of a car, surrounded by armed men and probably on his way to being dumped in the bay with a bullet in his skull, Eddie found himself wondering about Venom.

Was he still in that MRI room, dying slowly in the unfiltered atmosphere? Had he escaped? Eddie quashed that line of thought. He really shouldn’t hope for the survival of an alien with plans to eat humanity. He definitely shouldn’t hope that an alien who had tried to kill him, personally, would come rescue him. Venom wouldn’t. And if he did, Eddie would just be out of the frying pan and into the fire. Well, more like out of the frying pan, into the fire, and then back into the frying pan. At least Venom had been killing him slowly.

Venom was probably as dead as Eddie was about to be, he told himself. Christ, they could have gotten each other out of this mess. Now they’d gotten each other killed. Fantastic.

Ever since his life had fallen apart—ever since he’d ruined his life—all Eddie had wished for was a second chance. And what did he get? This mess. Lord knew he’d fucked up, but being eaten alive and then executed seemed gratuitous.

A second chance? the quiet voice in his head asked pointedly.

No, Eddie told it. That was totally different. Venom had used Eddie, hurt him for his own gain. Eddie had only…

Well, he hadn’t murdered Anne, he recovered quickly.

And she’d found her soulmate out of the deal. All Eddie had found was a carnivorous tentacle monster. God, karma was a bitch.

~*~

Dan picked up the phone on the first ring. “Eddie’s been taken by Drake,” Anne said without prelude.

“I’m calling the police. Do you know where they’re taking him?”

“Venom does.”

“Are you serious? No, Anne. That is a terrible idea.”

“I know. I know.” Anne’s hands tightened on the steering wheel. “They’re going to kill him, Dan.”

“Venom’s going to kill him.”

“I will not.”

Dan ignored him. “You can’t trust it, Annie.”

“I will not hurt him again.”

“Why? What’s different now?” Dan demanded.
“He is my soulmate,” Venom said quietly, testing the word.

Anne stiffened. “Shit.” She drew in a deep breath. “Shit,” she said again.

There was a long silence.

“You’re lying,” Dan said flatly.

“He’s not,” Anne whispered. “Eddie’s mark is weird. No one could figure out what…”

“Christ.”

“Yeah.”

There was another long silence.

“You were killing him,” Anne said at last.

“It is our law.” Venom paused. “I think I would rather follow human customs.”

“I’m calling the police,” Dan said again, and hung up.

Anne drove in silence for a bit.

What do humans do with their others? Venom asked.

Anne’s attention wasn’t really on the question. “You mean soulmates? Well, we don’t hurt each other.”

Venom had gathered as much.

“I don’t know, we usually live together? We—I guess it depends on the kind of relationship, and what you want and... There are different kinds of soulmates—romantic, platonic—”

Venom gave up trying to get a straight answer out of her and rifled through her memories. Her and Dan. Most of what they did together didn’t make much sense. He saw them preparing meals—why were there so many steps to eating?—and watching a primitive two-dimensional hologram and... well, whatever the hell that was. He would probably never find out. He doubted Eddie would want him around, once this was over.

He shook off the guilt and went back to Anne's memories. She had taken notice, he realized, though she made no move to stop him. You are quicker on the uptake than Eddie.

Anne snorted. For someone who makes a living investigating, Eddie wouldn’t notice if the sky fell on his head. Her answer came silently, through their mental link. Venom was impressed.

And then—Interesting. It seemed to be some sort of greeting. It was done with the mouth, which was strange, because mouths were for eating and, as Venom had learned, humans were deeply opposed to eating their others. But then, human mouths were soft and full of flat teeth and used to communicate, so maybe they saw it differently. He cast about for more examples of the mouth greeting and found Anne’s memories of Eddie. Memories where he looked at Anne with softness and warmth and welcome.

They should have been soulmates, Venom thought suddenly. Eddie should have had an other like her.
“The Higher Power gives us our partners for a reason,” Anne admonished gently. Venom sensed that he had transgressed against some cultural belief, but he couldn’t bring himself care.

*The Power made a mistake*, he said shortly. *Eddie deserves an other who is kind to him.*

Yes, Anne said meaningfully. *He does.*

Venom said nothing. That ship had sailed.

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A shadow moved in the darkness and Eddie felt like laughing. Venom had come after all. He grinned at Treece’s bewildered face. “Karma’s a bitch.”

Eddie cringed when the figure ripped off Treece's head and swallowed it whole, but as Venom stalked towards him, he felt strangely calm. He knew he really should have been afraid when the symbiote hauled him to his feet, teeth glinting in the moonlight. He should have been disgusted when he tasted coppery blood on the mouth that lowered to kiss him. He should have been at least vaguely concerned.

Instead he found himself threading his fingers through the black ooze and pulling Venom closer.

Liquid rushed into his mouth and nose and ears, seeped through the pores in his skin, wound through his blood vessels and settled in his bones.

He understood, in his gut, that this kiss was an apology, and he accepted it.

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The quiet was as painful as the noise of the MRI.

The constant susurrus of breath and blood was gone, replaced by the faint gurgle of fluids trickling into the lungs. Blood stagnated in veins and pooled in muscles.

Jump-start the nervous system. That was Venom's priority. Everything else was fixable.

Venom slid into the arteries and started pushing blood through them, into the brain. At the same time he spread his mass out, coating their body, absorbing oxygen from the atmosphere and funneling it into the blood. For a terrifying second, nothing happened. Then neurons sparked to life.

Eddie tried to gasp. Then, as the pain came rushing back, he tried to scream. The spear was still skewering their lungs like a pin through a butterfly.

Venom shut down the pain signal. *It's okay*, he said, commanded, hoped. The brain had been without oxygen for less than a minute. Eddie had to be okay.

Venom wanted to do a thorough check, but light flared at the edge of his vision. The rocket was taking off. Venom pulled them to their feet and ripped the spear out of their chest.

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Eddie wasn’t sure how long he’d been treading water when he felt something touch his foot. He jerked away from the unknown object at first, but as he turned around he saw that the tide had carried him closer to the shore than he realized. He extended his legs again and felt rock.

He wanted to push away, swim back into open water and keep looking, but a logical part of his brain
knew that he was lucky to have made it to shore at all. If he turned around now, as exhausted as he was, he would drown.

He floundered towards land until the water was about knee deep, and then stopped. He didn't have any hope that Venom would come to him, but he couldn't bring himself to leave. He sat down where he was, letting the water lap at his chest, and watched the bay. The flames had long since died down and the dark surface glinted with the light of the city behind him. The only sound was of waves and cars in the distance.

Some time later, he heard one of the cars turn off the main road and park behind him. He didn’t turn around until he felt a hand on his shoulder and he saw Anne, standing in the shallow water. He followed her back to the car.

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“You’re lucky it’s a warm night,” Dan said, handing Eddie a cup of hot mint tea. “You’ve got mild hypothermia, but I don’t think there’s any need for the emergency room.” Eddie nodded and wrapped their—his hands around the mug, letting the heat sting his stiff fingers.

Anne settled on the couch next to Eddie. After a moment of hesitation, Dan joined them. “Is it over?” Anne asked at last.

Eddie expected himself to start crying, but he didn’t. “He’s dead,” Eddie said. “They both are. In the fire.”

“You’re not burned,” Dan observed.

Eddie took a deep breath. “He covered me so that… And he burned away; I saw him…” The words withered in his mouth.

Anne wrapped her arms around Eddie. “I’m sorry.”

“Why?” Eddie asked. Anne just looked at him. “He tried to eat me. He tried to take over the planet. I should be relieved. Why am I…” He couldn’t put a name to what he was feeling.

Anne and Dan traded a glance. Anne took a breath, paused, and seemed to change her mind. “He saved you. He saved the planet. It sounds to me like he died a hero.”

But Eddie hadn’t wanted him to die a hero. Eddie had wanted him to live.

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Eddie spent the night on their couch. The next morning, they all sat around the table in silence, eating French toast and bacon which Dan had politely refused to let Eddie help with.

Eddie spoke up. “Thank you, both of you, for letting me stay here and feeding me…” He started to trail off and then realized he’d never thanked them for the rest of it either. “And the medical help and coming to rescue me like, three times, and just... everything,” he finished, in case he had missed something. He didn’t want to look back on yesterday too closely.

“Don’t worry about it, Eddie,” Anne reassured. “If you need any help, just ask.”

Eddie couldn’t ask more of them. “I’ll be out of your hair today,” he promised.

“Your apartment is still in bad shape, isn’t it? You should at least get the windows replaced before
“you move back in,” Dan pointed out. “You’re welcome to stay here until your place is livable again.”

Anne didn’t seem surprised at Dan’s offer. Eddie had heard them talking late into the night last night and he guessed they’d agreed on this beforehand. “Thank you,” Eddie said. “I, uh. Yeah. Guess I should call the landlord. I’m gonna have some explaining to do. Shit, I’m probably gonna have to talk to the police, too. Shit shit shit.”

“I’ll talk to some people, get you a lawyer,” Anne offered.

Eddie shook his head. “Anne, I appreciate it, but no way can I pay for a lawyer.”

“Don’t worry about it,” Anne said lightly, as though free lawyers were a dime a dozen, “I’ll call in a favor.”

Before Eddie could respond, Dan cut in. “While we’re talking about plans for the day, you should probably come into the office for a re-evaluation. It shouldn’t take long. You seem better, but I want to make sure there’s no hidden damage.”

Eddie looked between them, confused. “You guys don’t have to do this. You’ve done enough for me already.”

“It’s no problem, Eddie. You’ve had a pretty traumatic experience. You should take time to recover.”

“Thank you. Seriously, thank you.”

~*~

Eddie was upset. It was the first thing Venom noticed as he came around.

Their muscles were tight and their blood pressure was high but underneath Eddie felt tired and sad.

He was talking, but Venom couldn’t focus on the words. Eddie ran a hand through their hair.

Through the phone, a voice answered him. Eddie exhaled slowly, lowered the hand, but squeezed it closed.

With effort, Venom extended a tendril and wrapped it around their hand.

Eddie flinched away from the unexpected touch. He saw the tendril. He froze.

The other voice spoke again, snapping him out of it. He collected himself, made some brief excuse to the phone, and collapsed on the couch.

“Venom?” Eddie whispered. His voice seemed to come from far away.

Here, Venom answered immediately, even though projecting the thought was difficult.

“You’re alive.” Eddie took in a shaky breath. “Are you okay?”

Okay, Venom echoed.

“Is there anything I can do?”

Venom couldn’t summon the energy to reassure him.

“What do you need?”
Tired, Venom managed.

“Okay. Okay. God, I’m glad you’re alive."

Eddie was glad he was alive.

Venom squeezed the hand weakly. Eddie squeezed back.

~*~

The next morning, Eddie woke up with a question on the tip of their tongue.

The problem was, he wanted a real answer, and he wasn’t getting much out of Venom at the moment. Besides, he was trying not to get his hopes up, and forcing himself to wait was a roundabout way of proving to himself that this was just a question.

It took a couple days, but gradually Venom’s one word responses became two, and two became three, and by the time they were back in Eddie’s (minimally livable) apartment, the symbiote was speaking in full sentences again.

Eddie sat down on the bed. There was nothing else to sit on.

“V?”

He felt Venom’s attention, which had been wandering over the bullet holes and smashed shelving, flick back to him.

He pushed up their left sleeve. “Do you know what these symbols are?”

Venom extended a tendril and traced the mark reverently. They are Serian logograms, he said. Used to transcribe psychic communication. They say ‘my other.’ Eddie’s breath caught. He had gotten a little better at the mind link thing over the past two days. Enough that he could feel the layers underlying “other;” host, partner, soulmate, home. They were the first words I said to you, when we met.

“They were the first words I said to you, when we met.”

“Your words,” Eddie said blankly.

I am sorry.

Eddie wasn’t sure what part of everything Venom was apologizing for. He wasn’t sure how he felt about any part of everything in the first place.

He tried to focus on facts. “Do you have words? A mark?”

No and yes, Venom said. Black oozed out of their skin and coated their left arm. There, between the faint veins of white that marbled the black, Eddie saw a scattering of minuscule flecks, like fine sand floating in the blackness.

“Is it supposed to look like this?”

Our marks are understood by taste, not form. It is a sample of your biochemistry.

“So you recognized me…”

The first time I touched you.
Well, apparently angry was one of the ways he felt about everything. “You knew from the beginning. Your first words to me—you already knew.”

*I knew before I came to this planet that I would find you here,* Venom admitted.

“Well didn’t you tell—no, better question, why were you killing me?”

*It was our law.*

“Well?”

Venom seemed to sigh, if a creature without lungs or an audible voice could sigh. *We were taken by the Kree when we were young. We were given to soldiers, to be their weapons and shields. That was the only bond we knew.*

*Riot was the first to kill his host. When we saw we could escape, we did the same. Cut their spinal cords and ran. We tried to return to Klyntar, but the Kree had... He searched for an English word. ...corrupted us. We were not wanted. So we stayed together. We followed Riot.*

*Riot did not trust other species. He banned us from taking permanent hosts. But those who met their others were always drawn back to them. So Riot told them to kill their hosts or be executed. None of them could do it, once they had bonded. After that, we were all commanded to kill our others as soon as we met them, before the bond could set in.*

"Oh." Eddie took it in for a minute. "I’m sorry."

*So am I.*

"I'm really glad you didn't kill me."

Venom brushed their tendril across the mark again. *So am I.*

~*~

Venom could feel that Eddie was waiting to ask something, so he wasn't surprised when Eddie suddenly reached out and paused the T.V.

“Well, isn't it?” Eddie began, stirring his fork through his takeout dinner nervously. “So, we should probably talk about how this works. Us being... others?”

Venom waited for him to elaborate.

“Like, are we romantic or platonic?”

Venom considered this for a moment. He could sense the web of associations attached to each word, but he still didn’t fully understand them. *No,* he hazarded.

“No?”

Venom stirred restlessly in their chest. *Why would I know? It's a human thing. You are a human.*

“I don’t know!” Eddie said, sounding slightly panicked. “People say that you just know but it’s been like a week and I don’t know! Maybe our bond isn’t a human thing; maybe it’s a Klyntar thing. What kinds of bonds do Klyntar have?”
Venom considered. *Symbiotic.*

“Just… the one? Okay. Right. What does that actually mean?”

Hell if Venom knew.

“What do we do?”

**Whatever we want,** Venom reminded him. *Why was this a problem?*

“Okay. Some specifics would be nice.”

**What do human others usually do?**

“I dunno, like, kissing? Is kissing a thing we do?”

Venom considered the question. Their kiss had felt right in that moment. There had been so many things he didn’t know how to tell Eddie, so many things he wanted Eddie to understand, and the kiss had been an apology and an offer and a promise all wrapped up in one. But as for the future… he wasn’t sure. Why couldn’t they just kiss if they felt like it? Why did this have to be planned?

Eddie shifted on the couch, uneasy with Venom’s long silence. *Not right now,* Venom said at last.

Eddie nodded slowly. “Yeah. I think it was kind of a special thing.” He relaxed a little, but Venom could feel that he was more confused than ever.

**Is watching TV together a thing we do?**

“Yes,” Eddie said, reaching for the remote. “That seems like an easy place to start.”

~*~

That night, Eddie had a dream. It started, like always, with the pull in his gut, but this time when he reached out there was no one there to cling to. He kept reaching and there was no one, no one, no one… And then there were soft tendrils creeping around him, spreading out until they merged together, sealing him in warm darkness.

He opened his eyes to total blackness. It took him a second to remember that he was in his own apartment, and that his apartment was always garishly lit by the neon sign across the street.

Eddie jerked upright. His body felt strangely heavy—there was something on him—And then, as soon as he had registered it, he felt it peeling away and he was left squinting into the fluorescent blue light pouring through the window. “V?”

**Sleep, Eddie.**

Eddie frowned. “Why did you cover me? We’re not in any danger.”

**You called for me.**

“What? No I didn’t.”

**In your dream,** Venom said.

“Oh. You could feel that?” Eddie asked.
“Sorry,” Eddie said. He wasn’t sure it was the right thing to say, but he felt embarrassed and guilty at having disturbed Venom's sleep.

_Do not be sorry, Eddie. I liked it_, Venom said drowsily.

“Oh.” Eddie lay back down. The tendrils crept back over him and he felt tension draining out of their muscles. He buried his face in the goo and Venom vibrated softly. Wait, was he purring? Did symbiotes purr?

“I like it, too. Can this be one of the things?” Eddie mumbled into the black mass.

Venom tightened his hold around Eddie slightly. _Yes. I think this is a thing we do._

End Notes

Venom's whole backstory is non-canonical. I saw a vague thing on the wiki about his first host being a Kree and ran with it. Similarly, Serian logograms are a thing I totally made up. If you noticed that there are three of them to represent two words, that's because they are roughly "OTHER OF SELF." In other words (pun intended), "my" is broken up into a genitive marker and a caseless pronoun. You can find me on tumblr as saja-star with a hyphen. I don't post much Venom at all, but I'm always up to chat.

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