echoes of a city that's long overgrown

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/19385044.

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning: No Archive Warnings Apply, Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category: M/M
Fandom: The Society (TV 2019)
Relationship: Sam Eliot/Gareth "Grizz" Visser, Sam Eliot & Gareth "Grizz" Visser
Additional Tags: soft angst, Character Study, Canon Compliant, Fluff, Pining, grizz is secretly a cuddle bear, Feels
Stats: Published: 2019-06-27 Updated: 2019-07-01 Chapters: 2/? Words: 2155

echoes of a city that's long overgrown

by echoesfromtheuniverse

Summary

They’re living in a whole new world, it seems, and it’s completely up to them to decide how much of their old selves needs to be preserved. What stays and what changes. What’s important when you actually don’t know how many days are left to live.

Grizz is suddenly reminded of a pair of charming blue eyes and his heart staggers. This, this he can find the words to describe - plenty of brilliant writers and philosophers before him have attempted to. But now is not the time.

a retelling of S1 through flashfics, with a focus on Grizz and Sam's relationship

Notes

Hello there. Disclaimer: I don't know what this is. I've been stuck on trying to write something, ANYTHING, for months now, then The Society happened. Or better yet, Grizzam happened and rocked my whole world.

I finished season 1 today and this fic was begging me to be written. This will follow canon with some minor tweaks and of course more Sam & Grizz content. I guess I'll see where inspiration takes me!

Title comes from Florence + the Machine's lyrics while the song quoted below is from Death Cab For Cutie. Have a read and let me know how you liked it? <3
And it is true what you said

That I live like a hermit in my own head

But when the sun shines again

I'll pull the curtains and blinds to let the light in

◆

It all starts with an ominous discovery. The sort of thing one sees in dystopian movies and dismisses with a shrug, because it seems just a bit ridiculous, even for the context.

All the roads leading out of West Ham are gone. They’re surrounded by thick woods, like they’re living in a freaking national park.

It’s a strange feeling to describe. *Lord of the flies, Hunger games, The road, Animal farm,* Grizz has read them all. Nothing could have prepared him for the reality of their situation. His head is spinning on a crooked axis.

“This is not good.” He murmurs while staring into Jason and Clark’s dumbfounded faces.

“Grizz, bud?” Luke calls out from behind him “Tell me you can find some explanation for this.”

“None of them plausible. Fuck.” He replies before walking closer to inspect the impossible landscape ahead. His brain starts churning out possible ideas to justify the sick joke their life has become.


Grizz Visser is starting to worry. And as his football mates know well, that’s never a good sign.

Ten more minutes pass as they search for a clue, any clue, and come up with nothing at all. The tall trees look like they’ve been there forever, undisturbed giants, and small bugs are the only other life form they discover.

“We have to get back and report to the others.” He says finally, trying to keep a steady tone.

“This is crazy. Crazy! What am I going to tell Helena?” Luke says and shakes his head with genuine worry in his eyes. That right there gives Grizz pause. It’s a sweet and simple sign of how much Luke loves his girlfriend. It hangs in the air like a kid’s innocent, powerful question.

And it triggers a series of realizations in Grizz’s mind. They’re living in a whole new world, it seems, and it’s completely up to them to decide how much of their old selves needs to be preserved. What stays and what changes. What’s important when you actually don’t know how many days are left to live.

Grizz is suddenly reminded of a pair of charming blue eyes and his heart staggers. This, this he can find the words to describe - plenty of brilliant writers and philosophers before him have attempted to. But now is not the time.

“We’ll tell them together and brainstorm on what to do next. We’ll find a way.” Grizz tells his friends
as they walk back to the car.

“Fuck yeah we will! Thank god for you and Doyle, right?”

“Who’s Doyle?”

His boy scout days are long gone, and yet there’s something about this moment that feels like the start of a camping trip. The nervous anticipation, the dirt on their shoes, the easy camaraderie. It gives Grizz hope, despite everything else.

◆

After the church meeting Grizz hangs back and surveys the situation. Half the people have already left, while the other half is chatting in small groups and presumably freaking out over their current problem. Cassandra and Allie Pressman seem determined to lift everyone’s spirits and are going around offering kind words and shaky smiles.

There’s not much else Grizz can do there - he should start planning the short expedition he volunteered for, maybe find some people who want to join. He’s immensely relieved for the opportunity to keep his mind and body busy over the next few days. Nothing better than finding refuge away from the crowd, Into the wild style. Everything is easier when he doesn’t feel crushed by expectations he’s supposed to meet.

His gaze wanders on Allie’s group of friends and of course he is there as well. Grizz has to remind himself not to stare because - well, that wouldn’t be polite, for starters. And there’s no guarantee he’d be able to stop.

“Hey” Luke appears at his side “Count me in for the trip, yeah? I’m so ready.”

“That’s great, because I’ll make you sweat, Lukie.” Grizz replies, quickly putting his hands on his hips to do an impression of their football coach.

They share a soft laugh because what else is there to do when you’re left with a ton of memories of people who have disappeared?


“Sure, what is it?”

“Did you always know you were in love with Helena, or did you figure it out after you started dating?”

An amused smile grows on Luke’s face. He’s clearly surprised by the question but he doesn’t rush to tease him. That’s one of the reasons why Grizz has always felt a bit closer to him than Jason or Clark.

“A little bit of both, I guess. It was too early to understand love, to talk about it, right? But I just had this feeling when I saw her, this tingling sensation from head to toe. Still got that, actually.”

“And that’s how you knew.”

"That’s how I knew. Why are you asking? Got someone special on your mind?” Luke inquires with a sly smile, keeping a low tone of voice.

It’s a simple question. If he were the guy everyone thinks he is, the standard jock with a goofy spirit,
a silly answer would come to him naturally. Just like breathing. But as it happens, his breath is stuck in his throat.

“Something like that. Doesn’t matter now.”

Luke nods and gives him a friendly pat on the shoulder before walking back to his girlfriend.

But maybe it does matter. There’s definitely a reason why he’s been sneaking looks at Sam Eliot for the past year without engaging in an actual conversation with him.

And so when Grizz walks past Allie’s friends he throws a small smile in Sam’s direction. Just because he can.

He’s already walking forward before he can register the full reaction, but - Sam has seen him. It’s enough for now.

‘One step at a time, Visser. You got this. Now focus on getting us out of here’ Grizz tells himself. Outside the church the afternoon sun is slowly descending. It’s a familiar, comforting view. Even if it could be a completely different sun, for all they know. He wonders if they’ll ever find out.
Hey there! Sorry for the wait, had to write a cover letter for an internship I'm applying for and that basically drained my energies over the weekend. I'm so happy for the response I got and I hope you'll like this new chapter! Next up we'll have a chapter from Sam's pov :D
The quote is from Seneca's *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium* - I've got to say, I studied Latin in high school and this is a nice throwback to those times.
Let me know how you liked this <3

p.s.: hit me with your headcanons about songs/bands that Grizz and Sam would listen to pls!!

*Non quia difficilia sunt non audemus, sed quia non audemus difficilia sunt*

*It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that things are difficult*

Prom is everything he thought it would be, with the added bonus of unsupervised alcohol consumption. And after the days Grizz has had, you can bet he’ll take advantage of that.

Sometimes, when he closes his eyes, his mind still conjures up the feeling of helplessness he experienced watching Emily die. He’s tried to shut it up with rationality - there was nothing he could have done, snakes weren’t supposed to be found in Connecticut woods, it was an unpredictable event… It’s not enough to make him fall asleep with a clear head.

Why would anyone even want to have prom in this clusterfuck of a world is beyond him, but Grizz has played along, has dressed the part and he has even helped organize it, all for a simple reason. They all need some distractions for this whole arrangement to work. They’re effectively trying to build a society, and barely scraping through at that. Not surprising, since they’re a bunch of teens without access to the internet.

He’s paid attention to his history lessons long enough to know that there’s a thin thread to balance between peace and chaos. And if prom is what tips the scales in favour of peace, so be it.

Grizz shakes his head as yet another annoying song floats through the speakers. He really, really misses his Spotify playlists.

His teammates are gesturing for him to join them for another round, but he’s downed enough cheap beer for one night. He shrugs and yells “maybe later!” later over the music, adding a friendly wink for good measure.

Grizz is not drunk, not exactly. He knows how to pace himself, unlike most people in this party hall. But he’s not sober either. His head feels simultaneously light and heavy, like he’s just stepped off a roller coaster.
That must be why, when he sees Sam, his brain suddenly think it’s a very good idea to go and talk to the boy right now. And why not? Prom night’s almost over and so far there’s nothing he’ll remember fondly about it.

Sam is sitting alone and wearing a lovely black and peach waistcoat and - well, clearly being so far in the closet has killed some of Grizz’s brain cells, because he can’t think of a single way to start a conversation. There must be brain moths in the metaphorical closet.

But there’s no more time for metaphors or brilliant ideas: he’s sitting down next to Sam and Sam - he’s giving Grizz this curious look, his blue eyes twinkling under the party lights.

He’s clearly waiting for Grizz to say something. Too bad Grizz’s thoughts have become a blank slate filled with exclamation points.

“How do you like prom?” Sam asks after a beat.

Smooth, solid opening line. Grizz wants to kick himself for not thinking about that. And then for being too busy to subtly stare at Sam’s cute, little freckles, because he instantly shouts “What?” over the music.

“I’m sorry, I don’t speak very well. How do you like prom?” Sam repeats slowly signing his words along, and now Grizz has to resist the urge to bang his head against the table. Idiot, he’s an idiot.

“Oh no, no! You speak - you speak fine! It’s the music, it’s really loud.” Grizz tries to salvage the situation and his heart sinks in his chest when Sam nods noncommittally lowering his gaze.

Aretha Franklin’s *Natural woman* is playing and isn’t it ironic, how the lyrics mention a soul being in the lost and found?

He must do something, anything, before Sam flees from what’s likely the worst first conversation ever.

He puts one arm on top of the other and signs “bullshit” in an attempt to distract Sam from the sweaty lock of hair that’s fallen on his forehead.

“It’s the only sign that I know.” He explains then. Sam is miraculously smiling and a quote by Seneca flashes in Grizz’s mind. Something about daring to do difficult things, but he can’t remember how it goes. Maybe he did drink too much.

He nervously scratches the back of his neck before asking the other boy “Hey, huh - you think you could teach me something else?”

Grizz then proceeds to stare at Sam’s hands, utterly transfixed. They’re moving gracefully and slowly so he can keep track of the signs.

“What does that mean?”

“I hated high school.” Sam whispers, barely audible. Fair enough. It’s not difficult to imagine why.

In a different universe, they could be making fun of prom night together, the last shitty thing they’re morally bound to stumble through before it’s all over.

In a different universe, they’re probably not talking at all.

“I just told my friends I never planned to see any of them again after graduation. And I meant it.”
Grizz admits with a shrug. It’s easy to let that truth slip out, so easy, with Sam’s patient eyes literally disarming him.

“Why?” Sam questions in a hoarse tone. God, but he loves his voice. This is the first time Grizz is hearing it properly and it does *weird things* to him. His insides are melting like butter.

“I wanted a fresh start, I guess.” There’s so much more he could say, but he leaves it at that.

Sam probably still thinks he’s a dumb jock who is bored and has had too much to drink. ‘*Way to go, Grizz. This is exactly why avoiding him was the smart choice.*’

“You know,” Sam muses while gesturing at the large group of people dancing in front of them “in a way, we all got a fresh start. Only it’s a parallel universe instead of college.”

The two boys share a pained smile.

“You’re right. And we get to have a go at socialism too. It doesn’t get better than that!” Grizz comments lively, eyebrows raised in pretend folly. Sam chuckles, clearly amused, and Grizz’s heart *soars.*

Before he can say anything else, Kelly is tapping on the microphone to gather everyone’s attention. Sam turns around and Grizz wants to curse their bad timing.

But he doesn’t. Instead, he murmurs “You look amazing tonight”, well aware that Sam can’t see his lips now. There’s something sweet and forbidden about that simple act.

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