Warm Sand

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by Sushipillar

Summary

Journey of the Vagabond, Mendicant and Renegade. An exploration into the love they lost and hope they gained.

Notes

Originally written for the 2023 Homestuck Secret Santa Exchange.

Rough sand on hard feet.

He walks. Tired, hungry, scared. And yet he still walks.

Rough sand leads him to a metal room, filled with cans.

He makes a town with those cans. He crates hope from nothing, from people he loved long gone.

He has no reason to, and yet he still hopes.

He meets them both in the most unconventional of ways.

A firefight.

He finds himself huddled behind a rock, crouching next to a postalwoman. In the tower near them, a judge decides their fate, and fires at them. The hail of bullets surround them, the noise drowning out any words the two strangers try to say.

Later that night, around a warm, glowing campfire, the three are strangers no more.

It happens instantly for them. Three pawns who, long ago, would've been told to distrust each other, now huddle together for warmth, any fear of betrayal stomped out like the fire that dims before them.

For one of them, the one who witnessed his men slaughtered on a battlefield so long ago, it is the blush in his face that keeps him warm, huddled between two pawns he now calls friends.

They make plans for the future.

They build a town of cans, they write laws, they write letters.

They meet someone new, an old friend of the postalwoman's. She declares her queen.

The postalwoman fears her new position, but she takes it in stride, and prepares herself for whatever the future holds.

The four of them make plans to destroy their home, and while he knows its a necessary loss, the solider feels an ache in his chest at the thought of everything the three had build being gone in an instant.

His heartache is not only reserved for their home, however. As the days pass, there is a warmth in the former solider's heart seems to swell by the day.

It's only as he lies dying, his torso torn though by the man who killed his comrades, that he accepts what that comforting hurt in his chest was.

Love.

He will never know how close to death he really was. The judge, the man who showered him with bullets, let himself die. All because he couldn't bring himself to risk the soliders life.

The judge lies dead, a comforting ache in his heart. The solider and the postalwoman will never know this.

She is the sole survivor. and yet she cannot let herself sigh with relief.

Her duty as queen compels her to dawn the very thing that killed her subjects. A spliting image of the dog who killed the solider and the judge.

She changes fate, claws through the rules written in stone to find someone who can do the unthinkable - bring someone back to life.

And yet, it wasn't unthinkable, was it? It's what life players are for.

She leaves the solider with children who have suffered greatly, like she has. Like he has.

She promises to come back once she'd found the dog who did this to them.

As she starts her long journey, she feels that same, burning ache.

It's 3 years until they meet again, but it feels like lifetimes.

The solider is now the mayor, a title granted to him by the children who'd found him. When he'd woke on that floating rock, he'd given up. He'd lost everything to the same man, twice.

And yet, somehow, these kids kept living. Despite everything they'd done, witnessed, all the friends and companions they'd lost, they kept marching forward, like soliders do.

Like the judge and postalwoman, they'd helped him plan his town. They'd given him more hope than he'd had in years.

In return, he helped them. Being a solider came with problems, repercussions of sacrificing yourself. The new mayor knew this all too well.

He'd stopped them from drowing themselves in alcohol. From breaking each other apart. He'd helped them realize people they admired weren't people they should be looking up too.

It was a hard few years. But they pulled through, together, like soliders do.

The queen, now scared and ragged from her chase, was happy to hear this. It'd been a long three years on her part as well.

Nothing but empty space, her only goal just being out of reach. It was a game of cat and mouse, one that went on for far too long.

She'd promised him that it would be quick. She'd kill the dog, then make her way back to the solider. But things are never easy, it seems.

She's not to keen to reminise about her time away from him. The mayor gets it - he understands her more than she knows.

The mayor and queen stand on a volcano. The cause of their grief and sepration having been thrown into the fire, destroyed for good.

He tells her he misses their friends. The judge. She agrees.

They both feel that aching warmth again.

She kisses him, on the volcano, the sounds of bubbling lava drowing out whatever the two lovers would want to say.

If they tried hard enough, they could pretend they were on rough sand, the sounds of the desert wind rushing past their ears. The heat of the sun blazing their skin. Behind them, a tower would loom over them, where a friend would watch down on them.

The ache in their hearts softens, until only the pleasent warmth remains.

They will miss him, they will love him until the end of time.

But he would want them to continue marching on.

Like soliders do.

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