

Tap()

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Tap()

by [Flippant](#)

Summary

Exploring the Transistor's Functions was never without risk - Royce consoles Grant over a mishap.

(A short drabble, set pre-game.)

Tap.

Tap.

Tap.

It's the sound of Royce's pen on the kitchen table, of the sleet on the window, of the languid dripping of the faucet. He leans forward, slips the pen into his pocket, takes a cigarette and lighter to quell the nagging in his chest. Smoke rolls over his tongue when he speaks.

"So," he begins. "Regenerative. Leeching." Or maybe, "*we ought to talk*," but that much is unspoken.

Grant won't meet his stare. "Your ceiling has nicotine stains, Royce."

"The Transistor can fix it."

Twin mugs of coffee cool, untouched. *Tap*, the cigarette on the rim of the ashtray.

"I didn't mean to hurt you."

"No! No. Of course not. No such... accusations, here."

It was an accident, Royce knew that. Neither of them had fully recognised the destructive potential of the Transistor: to them, it had seemed a paintbrush, a conductor's baton, for making and shaping works of art - a work of art in and of itself. They hadn't considered the hammer, the saw: fundamental tools, capable of creation and destruction alike.

"I should have been more cautious." The guilt in his voice makes Royce's expression twist.

"Don't-- this isn't, this is on me, too, Grant. We both should have... seen it coming."

"I broke your ankle, Royce, don't try to make me feel better--"

"Only an ankle. And you fixed it. We are on... the phrase, what's the phrase?"

"Level ground." Grant provides, dull and dispirited. "But I don't see how you can just accept--"

"Ah. Ah. No. Stop." He shakes his head, left, right, adamant. "We knew that this, the Transistor, we knew it had its... risks. And now we know *specifically* not to... well. Slam it point down into the ground next to our best friend, hm?" Too blunt. The humour falls flat; Royce smiles thinly. Grant does not.

"*Tap()*," he'd wondered aloud. "Regenerative, leeching...? Why... hm. Grant, why don't you try it out? Seeing as it's yours. It is yours."

So of course Grant had obliged, trusting Royce's judgement - regenerative, leeching? It couldn't be that bad, though he wondered what the description said about himself. But Royce

had stood a little too close, been clipped by the edge of the shockwave, had his ankle shattered - a quick fix, a wave of the offending sword and the physical damage was healed, but the mental rift... that was another problem entirely. One that existed, it seemed, only on Grant's side.

"Grant," Royce tries again, a thin veil of exasperation in his tone. "It... is fine." *Tap*, setting his lighter down on the table. *Tap*, cigarette on ashtray again.

"Perhaps if I hadn't been so forceful with it--"

"It would make no difference. Besides, besides, do I have to tell you a hundred times? No lasting damage done." He stretches his leg out, kicks Grant's shin under the surface. See, see? he's saying. As good as new. Maybe better.

"Try a thousand times." But the shinkicking earns a weak smile, and a gentle nudge back. Always so tender, always afraid to cause harm... privately, Royce thinks Grant errs on the side of being too wary, but that's far from his call to make.

Regardless, "That's better. That's better," and he nods. Now he's sure: Grant will accept this, in due course. Reading him is mercifully easy, he thinks, as he stubs out his cigarette. Time for a change of topic: "Come for a walk with me?"

"It's raining. And there's flooding in the district - oh." Worry lines fade. Good, good.

"Obstructive, lingering." Royce bares his teeth, or smiles, meets Grant's eyes.

"On purpose? Clever." and the smile of Grant's now is genuine, crinkling at the corners of his eyes. "Very well then. Get your coat."

They stand together, and *tap*, Royce's affectionate nudge on Grant's shoulder. *Tap*, Grant flicking him back. *Tap, tap, tap*, steps down the hall, the cold sleet falling outside as they don coats, scarves, hats, and *tap, splish, splash*, their feet meeting hard ground, then puddles, in perfect time.

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