

HOH

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/29168949) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/29168949>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Fandoms:	Dream SMP , Video Blogging RPF
Relationships:	Sam Awesamdude & TommyInnit , Toby Smith Tubbo & TommyInnit , Callahan & Tommyinnit , Sam Awesamdude & Callahan
Characters:	TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF) , Sam Awesamdude (Video Blogging RPF) , Toby Smith Tubbo , Callahan (Video Blogging RPF) , Jack Manifold , Foolish Gamers , Phil Watson (Video Blogging RPF)
Additional Tags:	hard of hearing character , Sign Language , Tommy is HOH , awesamdad , he makes an appearance
Language:	English
Series:	Part 5 of DSMP
Collections:	Completed stories I've read , Found family to make me feel something , Purrsonal Picks , Want To Read DSMP , MMR , I liked these fics and I finished them , Kit's Favourite MCYT Fics , Dream SMP: in my heart:
Stats:	Published: 2021-02-03 Completed: 2021-04-03 Words: 7,535 Chapters: 3/3

HOH

by [thanotaphobia \(blue000jay\)](#).

Summary

Like a puzzle, the last little notch slips cleanly into place and Sam stares at an increasingly uncomfortable-looking Tommy.

“Tommy,” he says, and he makes sure to keep his voice gentle. “Has your hearing gotten worse over the years?”

(Tommy struggles with the aftermath of being around so much TNT. Sam helps him, and enlists a friend. HOH [hard of hearing] headcanons abound.)

Notes

disclaimer: i am not HOH nor do i interact with those communities often! if anything in this fic is inaccurate or needs to be changed, please, let me know!!!! the signs i describe in this ficlet are mainly pulled from ASL, but i like to think that this "AU-world" has it's own version of mashed-up sign language types.

this fic is dedicated to my friend cry! love you!!!!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

new beginnings

Sam is the first person to notice it.

It starts off with small things. Nothing too major to note. Tommy asks him to repeat a sentence here or there, the way that he favored people to walk on his right side, the way that if you walked up to him quietly enough, he'd startle as though he hadn't known you were coming. For a while, Sam doesn't put the pieces together. It's not until they're working together around the hotel one day does it set in.

"Pass me the shovel?" Sam asks, holding his hand out. Tommy is to his right, kneeling in the dirt and ripping out weeds. He pays Sam no mind-- so after a second, Sam tries again.

"Tommy? Can you pass me the shovel?" Again, Tommy ignores him. He's humming gently under his breath as he tugs a weed out of the dirt, the shovel on the other side of him, lying in the grass. They're landscaping the area, to make it look nice, and Sam's just about done moving the soil. "Tommy," he tries again, and then finally, raises his voice. "Tommy!"

"Oh, shit, yeah?" Tommy, apparently snapped from his reverie, turns to glance at Sam. "What's up?"

"Why were you ignoring me?" Sam asks, feeling perplexed. "Can you hand me the shovel? I called your name like four times."

"Wasn't ignoring you, big man," Tommy says, wiping his forehead with the back of one palm, smearing a bit of dirt there. "Just didn't hear ya. Speak up next time."

"Tommy, I had to *shout* to get your attention," Sam says, and that perplexed feeling sinks in deeper as Tommy leans and hands over the shovel to him. He frowns, setting the tool on the ground in favor of reaching out and snapping his fingers right next to Tommy's ear. "Can you hear that?"

"Bloody--" Tommy grimaces, reaching out with two hands and shoving at Sam's wrist, pushing his hand away. "Personal space, bud! I can hear you just fine!"

"Humor me," Sam says, and for a second he thinks he's going to have to pull out the Sam Nook act to get Tommy to let him mess around, but after a solid minute of silence, Tommy lowers his hands from the defensive position they'd taken up in front of his face.

With his sleeves pushed up like they are in the garden, Sam can see the scars from where he'd obviously used the motion before and taken the blows with his forearms.

It makes his stomach roil, but he pushes aside whatever protective instincts are flooding through him in order to reach out with a hand and snap gently again. Once on Tommy's right side, and once on the left.

"Can you hear those?" He asks, and Tommy grumbles, but nods. Sam does it again. "Does it sound fuzzy at all?"

“It’s clearer in my right,” Tommy finally admits. “Sharper.”

Sam sits back on his heels and ponders. Suddenly, all the little details start to click into place.

The explosions that rocked L’Manberg not once, not twice, but three times. The crater he’d seen when he went to go visit Logsteadshire after the final confrontation with Dream. He’d had to settle his mind after hearing Dream talk aimlessly to himself, and he’d found a wasteland full of holes and detonated gunpowder residue. He recalls how Tommy prefers people to stand to his right, the little flinches that come when you’re not approaching him head-on, the way he misses people calling his name when he’s occupied or has other noises going on around them. Like a puzzle, the last little notch slips cleanly into place and Sam stares at an increasingly uncomfortable-looking Tommy.

“Tommy,” he says, and he makes sure to keep his voice gentle. “Has your hearing gotten worse over the years?”

“What?” Tommy sounds scandalized, but after a second, his fingers tap. Reminiscent of a piano, fingers laid atop invisible keys. “Well. Maybe a bit, I suppose. ‘S not anything ridiculous. Been around a lotta big booms, I guess.”

“Right,” says Sam, and he can see the way that Tommy is shifting, uncomfortable, so he’ll drop the subject for now. “Just curious. I’m almost done here. If you want to go, I won’t mind.”

“Oh.” As Sam turns back to the pile of dirt and sod in front of him, the enchanted shovel gleaming under his fingertips, Tommy stays where he is. He seems confused, but Sam doesn’t press him any further, and after a minute of him shoving the tip of the tool into the dirt, Tommy turns back to the weeds and soil. Five minutes later (long enough for Tommy to think Sam won’t think he’s running away) Tommy gets up, brushes the dirt off his knees and hands the best he can, and waves Sam a simple goodbye before launching himself into the sky with his trident.

Sam settles in for a few more hours of manual labor to clear his head, and then afterwards, goes to find an old friend.

Tommy is not looking for Sam, alright? He’s just... hanging around where Sam usually is. The hotel is obviously the first candidate for this, but proves to be abandoned. Almost finished, the red and white walls careen high into the sky, a multitude of rooms inside and nearly ready for visitors. With a hotel like this (so fancy! So nice!) Tommy will surely never be alone again. People will flock to see it, and him! But alas, Tommy sits on the steps of the hotel for a good long while before giving up in his quest to wait for Sam. They’d been working together the past few weeks to finish it, and usually they’d meet up there. The steps, however, remain empty save for Tommy.

So he gets up, and checks the prison entrance. No one inside, and he doesn't dare press the summon warden button. Sam as the warden is cold and mean-- Tommy prefers Sam the older brother construction worker, or Sam Nook, his eccentric secretary. Tommy's been playing along with Sam Nook for shits and giggles, but dammit if he hadn't started to get mildly attached.

The grass and area near the prison are empty, so Tommy makes his way down the prime path and checks the church. He checks the spider spawner, ducking under a tendril of-- what had Tubbo called it? An egg?-- and continues down his way. The new community house looms overhead before long, and he takes a moment to appreciate the rebuilding job. It's pretty. Even if it brings back horrible memories of an axe to his throat and angry words and tearful, silent apologies. But this new house-- it's the same, but different. The workbenches shift under his feet as he steps inside.

And there, in the corner, is Sam. Purple netherite chestplate on like it always is, and beside him...

Beside him is a face Tommy hasn't seen in ages.

"Sam," he calls out, watching as they both turn to face him, Callahan waving silently as Sam breaks into a grin.

"Tommy!" He calls out, and Tommy neatly slots himself into the little conversation corner they'd had going on before he'd nudged the door of the community house open and barged his way inside. Sam's fingers are clumsy as he holds them up near his chest, glancing between Callahan and Tommy. "You remember Callahan?"

"Been a while," Tommy says, holding a fist out, and grinning when Callahan returns the gesture, bumping knuckles. "Where you been, man?"

Callahan signs something, held close to his chest, and Sam translates aloud.

"Off-server," Sam says, and Callahan shrugs. "Didn't want to get too involved because of admin duties."

"Right," Tommy says, thinking of the current server owner and his status as a maximum-security prisoner. The owner, who happened to be one of Callahan's closest friends before this mess started. "Good to see you back, then. Sam, I was wondering--"

"Actually, Tommy." Sam cuts him off, which is surprising, but then again, is it really? Tommy shuts up, opening his mouth to argue, and then shutting it again. He'd wanted to work on the hotel again today, but apparently Sam had other plans. "I invited Callahan back for today. I wanted him to talk to you."

"To me?" Tommy snorts. "What, come to officially transfer server ownership rights to me? I fuckin' deserve it, for beating that prick and putting him in jail."

Sam shakes his head. "It was about something different," he says, and Callahan rolls his eyes, then signs something quickly that makes Sam snort. "I wanted to know if you wanted to learn

sign language?”

Everything screeches to a halt in Tommy’s mind.

“What?” He asks, and there’s a thudding in his chest that surely can’t be audible to anyone but himself. Like the ringing in his ears he gets sometimes. Sam’s voice fades out slightly as he turns his head away from Tommy to look at Callahan, and all of the sudden Tommy realizes that this whole conversation, Sam’s been looking at him when he spoke. He’d consciously shifted to the right when Tommy had arrived. He’d moved to Tommy’s good side, without Tommy prompting it himself.

Memories of yesterday flood in, with Sam’s fingers snapping in his ears and a concerned looking briefly crossing the older man’s face.

“--might be beneficial,” Sam is saying when Tommy tunes back into the conversation, forcing himself to listen. “Callahan knows it like-- okay, well, excuse my funnies, but he knows it like the back of his hand. I can interpret, but I’m crap at the signing myself. I thought we could work as a team and maybe have you learn a little bit.” Tommy’s staring at Sam with his mouth hanging open he’s sure, feeling quite like a fish out of water. Something passes over Sam’s face, and he’s quick to amend: “Only if you want to, though.”

Does he want to? Memories of nights lying so close to Tubbo in order to whisper pop into his head, memories of explosions and bright lights and how, after the second explosion of L’Manberg, Tommy’s ears had bled on and off for a few days. He’d wake up with red staining his pillowcases. Even more repressed memories are the ones in exile; Dream, standing in front of him with a handful of TNT and shouting, Dream blowing everything up so close to Tommy that he was left with burns. How, after the one night that had changed everything, Tommy had stumbled to Techno’s and how Techno had dabbed the blood away from his ears and cleaned him up gently.

He can’t play the piano anymore. There are a few reasons why-- painful memories of family, the way his fingers cramp, and how his ears ring with the notes and how he can’t quite hear what he’s playing right.

“Tommy?” Sam’s voice, once again cutting through the damaged tissues of his ears and pushing right through to his very soul. His voice is muffled. It always is muffled, because everything is muffled in Tommy’s world and he’s just had to adapt to it. Stand to the left of people. Tip his head and nod and smile, even if he hadn’t heard what they’d said. Be loud himself, because he can’t properly tell if he’s shouting or speaking normally.

“Can Tubbo learn too?” He asks breathlessly, instead of giving Sam a direct answer. It must be enough, though, because Callahan rocks back and forth on his toes and Sam just smiles.

“I don’t see why not,” Sam says, tugging his communicator off his belt. “Want me to send him a message?”

“I’ll do it,” Tommy says, tugging his own communicator off his belt. “He’ll answer me even if he’s busy.”

“Alright,” Sam says. Callahan signs something, and Sam nods. “Right. Uh, Callahan says that he can use his comms to work with you and Tubbo to get some basic stuff down. I can help too, but I only really know the basics as well. Sounds good?”

Tommy’s going to be able to *talk* without worrying about how loud he’s being. Without worrying about getting a properly audible answer from Tubbo in return.

“Sounds good,” he says, fingers flying across his communicator and whirling a message off to Tubbo. “Really good.”

Sam is smiling when he looks back up. Tommy returns it with a grin of his own.

Can you still hear the birds in the morning?

Tommy wrenches his eyes up from Tubbo’s hands to his face, the clunky language still new for them both. Callahan was not a patient teacher by any means, and they were rambunctious and obnoxiously loud students, but the lessons had proved to be... helpful.

Tommy raises a hand, bringing together his first two fingers and thumb. *No*. He can remember the birds, and he struggles for a second to recall the sign for them, then brings his hand up to the side of his cheek and does it the best he can. *Birds are too quiet*.

Tubbo’s face falls gently, but it perks right back up when Callahan butts in. His way of signing is fluid and clean, years of practice compared to Tommy and Tubbo’s week or two. Yet, he’d come every day, sitting with them and explaining signs and their meanings. Occasionally Sam would pop in, signing a hello and handing over snacks with a cheerful smile on his face.

Sam and Tommy still worked on the hotel together. Instead of shouting over to him, Sam would clunkily sign the word *shovel* over at Tommy, or *help me*, or *are you okay?* And Tommy would smile or nod or bring over the requested tool.

Stop thinking about it, Callahan signs, eyebrows furrowed. *You think too hard. Sam said you were all instincts. Apparently, he was wrong.*

Fuck off, Tommy signs back, because their third lesson had been an all-inclusive course on how to swear in sign language.

You fuck off, Callahan shoots back. Tommy scowls, and his hands fly as he tries to get his words across without opening his mouth, finger-spelling what he can’t remember.

I am not scared of your teacher bullshit, bitch, he says, grinning lightly as Callahan rolls his eyes. *I own the server now.*

No, you don't, Callahan says, shaking his head. *I could un-whitelist you.*

You won't, Tommy says, and then Tubbo waves a hand between them, catching both their attention.

“Ranboo needs my help in Snowchester,” Tubbo says out loud, and then groans loud enough that even Tommy can hear him from here. Callahan raises a brow, and then taps his ears again. “Right.” It takes him a second, but then Tubbo’s signing the same thing, painstakingly finger-spelling out Snowchester. It’s probably very wrong, but Tommy gets the gist of it. So does Callahan, who waves him off dismissively.

“Come roun--” Tubbo cuts himself off again, tongue poking out as he scrambles to his feet and signs at Tommy, grinning at each other. *Come over tonight for dinner.*

Okay, Tommy signs back, waving a hand in goodbye as Tubbo launches himself off the community house roof with a trident. It’s... freeing. Being able to speak in a whole different way. He doesn’t worry too much about hearing anymore, especially when it’s just him and Callahan, sitting on top of the community house roof and signing back and forth to each other.

Tommy thinks back to their very first lesson, and raises his hand to his lips, then lowers it down gently with a flat palm. He smiles. Callahan smiles back.

You're welcome, he says.

turbulent seas

Chapter Summary

tommy adjusts.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Slowly, people start to notice his newfound skill. That's to be expected, but it throws Tommy off all the same. There are a couple of notable interactions. None of them are life or death. Not much is life or death these days, which Tommy appreciates. It's a break in the routine of running for his life and dealing with terrible traumas, so the quiet downtime is nice.

(He's always expecting death to be around the corner, even now. The peace is temporary. It has to be.)

But for now, things are calm. Tommy goes about his daily life and then, at the end of every day, slips a disc into the jukebox and sits on the bench. At some point, he has to get up and shove the bench a little closer. It's like once he became aware of the fuzziness in his ears, everything suddenly became so much softer.

Which is why the sign language comes in handy.

The first time that it becomes helpful, notably, is when Tommy is visiting Tubbo and Jack and Foolish in Snowchester. He spends many of his days here, but this time is different. They're caught up in a blizzard, the rain and snow and slush coming down hard against the windows and walls and making the whole house rattle. Jack and Foolish had come to Tubbo's house a couple hours ago, and now they're all in the basement, digging into baked potatoes together. Tubbo is working on cooking up some steak as well, and the whole place smells like food and is full of laughter. It's a good night. It's a lovely night, dare Tommy say it. The day before had been quiet but happy, and now he's ending it surrounded by friends. Their jabs are easy to follow along with, and Tommy's quick to shoot ones right back.

The notable event of the evening comes halfway through dinner. Tubbo is halfway across the basement where the fire is, tucked by the corner of the wall, while Tommy, Jack, and Foolish are all over on the other side where the heat's less intense. Tommy's jacket is slung over his shoulders and the stone walls are cool against his back, the back of his head, and he's laughing. For a split second, he catches eyes with Tubbo after a quip Jack had made, and the other is looking at him quizzically. Then, as if it's as natural as breathing air, Tubbo lifts his hands.

What's so funny?

Tommy's mouth is full, so instead of bothering to chew and swallow, he just lifts one hand and does his best with the one, the other still holding the baked potato.

Jack's being dumb. Carry on.

Tubbo's grin is evident even halfway across the room. *Weird. How do you want your....* He pauses for a second, then painstakingly spells out *steak?*

It's spelled s-t-e-a-k, Tommy tells him, and then takes another bite of potato. It's then he realizes he's being stared at, Jack and Foolish whipping their heads between the two and eyeing them both oddly.

"What?" Tommy asks, feeling his cheeks go hot. "Mind your business."

"Is that sign language?" Foolish asks after a second, and Tommy tips his head a bit to glance back at Tubbo, who waves at him and spells out *s-t-e-a-k*. It's right this time, so he nods briefly.

"Yeah," he says. "Been learnin'."

"What for?" asks Jack, looking down at his own hands and then back up at Tommy with a strange glint in his eyes.

Tommy chews on his cheek, debates internally with himself, then shrugs. "Can't hear as well these days."

"What? You've gone deaf?"

"I haven't gone deaf, you dumbarse, I can hear you just fine right now. But ever since L'Manberg blew up, it's been harder." Tommy shoves his fork into his potato, spoons some of it into his mouth. "Sam got Callahan to teach us."

"The TNT," Foolish says, staring at Tommy with an absent look. Despite it, his remarks are sharp and observant. Tommy nods. He wonders where the hell this guy even fucking came from. It's then that Tubbo butts in, coming over with the meat from the fire and handing over new plates for everyone. Jack immediately jumps to grill him too, because apparently Jack's taken a sip out of the "jackass" water tonight.

"So you learned it too?" He asks, taking his plate happily. "But your hearing is fine."

"I do get the ringing sometimes," Tubbo says, sticking his pinky in his ear and wobbling it as he sits down, pulling it out again. "I wanted to be able to talk to Tommy."

"Have secrets," Tommy cuts in. Tubbo grins over at him.

"Best friend things." And hell, if Tommy can't pretend his heart didn't swell a little bit. Yeah. Tubbo's his best fucking friend, and now they've got their own secret language. Well-- it's not exactly a secret, it's the generally accepted sign language of the entire world, but as far as he knows, Tommy, Tubbo, Sam, and Callahan are the only ones who speak it on the SMP and he's plenty fine with that.

Jack's a bitch, he signs to Tubbo, making sure to make his movements and signals grandiose. Tubbo snorts a laugh, and Foolish leans over to elbow Jack lightly. "I don't think that was very nice," he says, and Jack splutters meaningless noises until he's run out of breath.

The conversation gently moves on from that point forward, away from the sign language and Tommy's grateful for it. He spends the night with Tubbo, even once the blizzard's over and done with. He makes up excuses-- shoveling, not wanting to go home in the dark with mobs, needing to stay and make sure Tubbo's alright in the morning with Snowchester's paths. Tubbo, of course, sees right through it, but says nothing despite his knowing smile. They stay up late into the night, pressing signs into each other's hands and joking until their eyes get too heavy to keep open.

The second time, Tommy is by himself.

The prime path is not in the best shape. There are all types of wood patching it together, huge holes in the stairs heading to L'Manhole, the wood burnt and crushed in some places, others just where it had worn down naturally ever since it had been laid. It's mostly intact around Tommy's house and leading down the community house, which he can appreciate, and it's the route he most often walks when he's by himself. Dancing to himself, singing to whatever's stuck in his head, talking to the occasional voice that'll pop through the crowd of fuzzy words that have always plagued him since he was a child. (He's lucky in that regard. His voices are quiet and don't ask for blood. They only time they'd grown as strong as Phil or Techno's had been one horrible, terrible day in exile.)

He's started to sign along with himself, as well. He'll talk out loud to himself, fingers practicing the words and spelling out what he can't remember in front of him. It's a good way to practice, and he finds himself doing it more and more often as he traverses the path and dances through the Holy Land, tiptoeing into the community house and then circling back around. By the time he dies, he thinks he'll have worn a divot in the wood from how often he walks it. Occasionally he'll see other people, wave a silent greeting, and continue on his way.

That is not what happens today. He's just outside the Holy Land, hanging out with himself and signing furiously as he speaks out loud to one of the voices. They're being more pester-y than usual today, and he's not sure why. At least, he's not sure why until he turns a corner around the flower shop and finds Phil in the center of the prime path, clad in netherite, trident in hand. For a second, from the back, Tommy sees the blond hair and jumps a bit-- but then he realizes who it is, the green underneath, the way his shoulders are held ever-so-slightly differently than they were when they had the elytra strapped to them. Phil walks like he's missing limbs. Tommy only feels a little bit badly for him.

"Phil," he calls out, nervous but ecstatic. Phil turns, a smile breaking out over his face as he shuffles to plant the trident in the wood of path and lean on it.

"Hey, Tommy," he says lightly. "How're things?"

"Good," Tommy says, shuffling his feet as he approaches and clambers onto the path. Every move is instinctual. "What're you doing here? Aren't you still living out with Techno?"

"I was bein' pestered about some egg around here," Phil says lightly, tapping his head and then gesturing the great red vine they're currently standing next to. Tommy's sort of blocked them out of his head for now, but every once and a while he'll stop and stare. They're... gross, in a way. "Figured I'd come settle everyone and check around here for myself. Any up by your place?"

"Nope," Tommy says, popping the p. "Not yet."

Phil's looking at him curiously. It makes him a bit self-conscious, shoulders tipping back and away from the man he once called dad and now only calls Phil. "What?"

"You're waving your hands around," Phil says lightly, a thin veneer of interest draped over recognition. "Are you--"

Tommy's gut sinks right out of him and splats on the wood of the path, which also promptly feels like it's been pulled out from under him, so his guts are flying into the void instead and leaving him a cold, empty shell. His hands immediately fly down to his sides, fingers picking absently at the hem of his shirt.

"Tommy?" Phil asks, looking almost startled at the shift in Tommy's emotions. He's always been good at hiding them, however, so he forces a smile onto his face and waves his hand.

"Talking to myself," he says, "and just gesturing around."

Phil's always been good at seeing right through his bullshit. "Uh huh."

Tommy swallows and nods. "Uh huh."

They're both silent for a minute, Phil leaning on his trident, Tommy standing there and fiddling with his shirt hem. His left ear starts to ring. The voices settle.

"If it was something important..." Phil says, trailing off after a second, then picking it back up. His eyes haven't left Tommy. "Would you tell me?"

Tommy debates telling the truth or lying. He settles somewhere in the middle. "Depends."

"Are you alright?" That's a genuine question at least. It always is from Phil, no matter who he's talking to.

"I'm fine," Tommy says, and that's a lie but Phil hasn't been around enough lately to know that it is, and for the first time Tommy's actually grateful for his absence. "Really. Just being loud to myself."

Phil's face is indecipherable for a second as he studies Tommy, posture casual and face anything but. He'd been different ever since Wilbur had-- well, ever since L'Manberg had blown up a second time and Phil had come just in time to see it blow. He'd been distant, and Tommy doesn't want to blame him but he does anyways and it hurts. Phil's different. He's not the same man who pulled Tommy from the mud on the side of the road and brought him home. He's colder. Worn down. More tired, less caring. Tommy's not sure if it's a defense mechanism or just what Phil's been hiding underneath all along. He's not sure if he wants to

know the answer to that terrible dichotomy. And yet.... "Alright," Phil says, voice gentle. "Just makin' sure you're okay."

"Yeah," Tommy says, and his mouth feels dry. "I am."

"I think I'll try and come by more often," Phil says after a second, glancing around. "This egg shit is weirding me out. Are you still in your house, or in Snowchester?"

Tommy thinks about his own dirt house, full of memories and ghosts, and Snowchester, burning up from the inside. At least it's warm there. "Kind of wandering, honestly. But mostly the house."

"Good," Phil says, and then there's a moment where he lifts his hand, clearly accessing his inventory. Tommy's actually accidentally done it a few times while signing-- it was always funny to see it pop up in his mind's eye as he was trying to get a thought across to Tubbo. Phil's eyes go distant for a split second, and then an ender chest plops down and Tommy's left standing awkwardly there as Phil rummages through it for a second. "Here," he says, and Tommy steps forward and holds his hands out to receive. Diamonds plop into his grip, shiny and solid and new. Half a stack of them, actually.

"Phil--" he starts to say, about to insist he can't take them (or doesn't want them, not from Phil at least, he's not a pity case--)

"Keep them," Phil says lightly, and the ender chest is picked back up a second later. "I've got more than I know what to do with. And you've been keeping quiet out here, so, think of it as a reward."

"For not causing trouble?" Tommy asks slyly, tucking the diamonds away into his inventory. Phil snorts.

"Exactly," he says.

"And if I wanted more....?" Tommy asks, leaning in slightly and bouncing on his toes. Phil's laugh is larger than life, boisterous, and for a second Tommy lets himself sink into the sound of it. It's so loud it's clear, which is a rarity for him these days.

"Then keep up the good behavior," Phil chides teasingly, pushing himself off his trident and leaning forward to ruffle Tommy's hair slightly. "Alright. I've got to head back. Thanks for chattin', mate. You should come by sometime, and not just to steal potions."

"It was a dire situation," Tommy says, hiding how the mention of That Day makes him feel sick and wobbly in the knees. Phil just laughs, grinning at him and a bucket of water appearing in his dominant hand.

"Right," he says, sounding entirely unconvinced. It dawns on Tommy just now that he has yet to tell Phil and Technoblade exactly what had gone down almost... almost three weeks ago, now.

He hadn't told them how he'd nearly died yet, or how he'd won.

He knows they know, technically. Phil clearly knows Dream is in prison, and Techno must too by association. Not to mention Ranboo, who Tommy is pretty sure is living out there with them-- they must know Dream's in the prison. But had Ranboo specified how exactly that had happened? Tommy has no idea, and based on the carefree nature of Phil's expression right now, he hadn't.

"Bye," Tommy says faintly as Phil splashes the water on the ground and preps the trident.
"Old man."

"Goodbye, insufferable child," Phil calls out fondly, and then he's gone-- a flash of purple against blue sky.

Tommy walks home silently, occasionally pulling up his inventory to glance at the diamonds and the netherite axe gleaming in his hotbar.

Maybe he'll pay Technoblade a visit.

Chapter End Notes

im gonna be real i have no idea where this fic is going. it was meant to kind of be a one shot but people REALLY liked it, so. if you have any ideas of where this fic can go lmk i guess?????? in a comment?? pffff.

but! i adore my HOH!Tommy, and i think it's a headcanon that will persist for me. leave a kudos/comment if you enjoyed, and make sure to check out my other work!

closure

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The tundra is very cold, and Tommy finds himself surprisingly at home. Or, well, not surprisingly, since it really hasn't been that long since Tommy had found a semi-home out here, a fire rekindled between betrayed brothers and a distant father. Of course, it hadn't lasted long, but that's not surprising either.

"Are you sure you want to go by yourself?" Tubbo had asked, hands stumbling signing alongside his words as they sat on the bench by Tommy's house. It's good practice— Tommy likes it, even if they both get words wrong a good portion of the time and giggle over it.

"I have to," he'd insisted, signing back as they talked. "It's-- I need to go. Phil invited me, for one."

"Since when did you start listening to Phil?"

"Never. And I'm not about to start. But I guess... well. I guess I left things off when I shouldn't have."

"I *suppose* that is how you guys work."

"...what's that supposed to mean?!"

"Well, the back and forth. Constantly apologizing for being shitty. And then immediately being shitty again."

"I am not shitty!"

Tubbo fixes him in an even look.

"....alright, fine, maybe occasionally I can be mildly mediocre. At times. Very occasionally. Not as much as they are, though."

"Do you think they're going to apologize back? You still don't want me to come?"

"I don't know. No. I've got to do this alone. Besides, Techno's still— you know."

"Government, yeah. I know."

So here he is, halfway out into the cold biting force of the snowy fields, making his way towards Techno's house and by extension, Phil's. As he walks, Tommy wonders when he'd

stopped being able to hear the crunch of snow under his feet.

Eventually, the winds die down a bit and the snow drifts to the ground, and after a few minutes of walking in this clear afternoon light, Tommy's able to see Techno's house and the small smoke trail rising out of the chimney. There's a smaller one behind it, and Tommy thinks it might be Ranboo but that is not a mess he's about to get into, so he ignores it for now and plunges forward. The front yard is just as he'd last seen it, snow dotting the grass and dead plants around others. There's a bee farm to the left, and to the right is the greenhouse with turtles. Tommy debates just going there first and catching up, the chores familiar and easily able to settle his nervous hands, but after a moment of thought he just trudges right up to the basement door.

It's easy to settle in, opening the wood with a creak and stomping his way inside. He brushes the snow off his hair, his shoulders, a borrowed brown coat from Jack that's almost too small. He stomps the snow clinging onto his boots off, and slips the jacket off entirely after a second to toss it over a chest.

No one's come downstairs yet to see who's making noise, so maybe no one's home.

Tommy decides to check downstairs first, peering his head down into the basement-basement and waving to the cow; his to-do list is gone, an empty stone wall staring back at him. There's another hole, and the sound of villagers underneath. He pops his head back up from the basement-basement and rummages aimlessly in a chest for a second, then glances up the ladder and towards the warm upstairs.

"Hello?" He calls out, and there's no response. None that he can hear, anyways. The muffled footsteps or creaking floorboards are things of the past for Tommy, and he doesn't find too much that he truly minds it. Yes, it makes him unreasonably paranoid, but so does everything these days. Tubbo's usually there to quell his nerves. He's sure whatever they have together is mildly unhealthy, but that's ace by Tommy's standards and who cares, really.

Tommy brings up his inventory, staring at the axe in his first slot, and then heads toward the ladder. Up he goes, swinging hand over hand and finally popping his head out of the top. The bottom floor is just as empty as the basement, so Tommy lets himself relax a little bit and glance around. Not much has changed since he'd truly been here last-- the chests are a little fuller, there's some patched-up creeper damage on the floor and walls, and a few of the posters are singed, but despite that, the house is just the same. There's a polar bear sitting by the fire, eyes opening lazily to give Tommy a look as he pats its head. Kinda cute, kinda scary, but Techno's always had a thing for large fluffy animals and Tommy can't deny it-- he's cute.

His box is even still here, in the corner, sitting on the floor with just enough room for him to squish inside. He does for old time's sake, then promptly gets out as his stomach drops, a reminder of old anxieties. He stands over it, brushing his fingers over the top-- it's dusty, hasn't been touched since he left, he supposes.

Someone taps his shoulder.

Tommy whirls around from where he'd been (leaving fingerprints on the lid), fear coursing like fire down his spine. He freezes up, hand raised to access his inventory, to fight—

But it's just Phil. Phil, who he'd seen just before, and behind him, Techno. They're both covered in snow, shaking it off their boots and jackets and Phil tugging his hat off. He hangs it up on a hook. His hair is braided.

"Calm down," he says. "Just us."

"We should be the ones panicking," Techno mutters, and there's a layer of menace that Tommy can't exactly hear, but he knows is there simply by how he stomps his boots so hard against the wood that it trembles beneath all their feet. His cloak is unceremoniously tossed onto a chest. "With an intruder in the house. What did you come for this time? Empty your pockets."

Tommy's hands are shaking, and he nervously stretches them-- it's a habit he's fallen into, stretching his fingers and relishing in the burn. It helps him move them faster as well, lets him speak just as quickly as his brain works.

"I didn't come to take anything," he says, wringing his fingers near his middle.

"Right," Techno drawls, turning away to lean his sword by the door, still sheathed. Tommy misses the next sentence, Techno's tone too deep for him to hear without it being muddled and the panic making blood rush through his ears.

"What?" He asks.

Phil and Technoblade exchange a glance. Tommy twists his hands harder.

"See what I mean?" Phil asks, and Techno glances Tommy up and down. There's no longer any malice in his expression-- just curiosity, and maybe a bit of annoyance.

"Don't talk about me like I'm not here," Tommy says, because he's a little pissed off that they'd even try. Phil straightens from where he's shifting to knock snow off his boots, and Techno's face is flat, but wary. "I'm not here to take shit. You can check. I'm here to return this."

He holds up a hand, opens his inventory, and allows the Axe of Peace to fall from the first slot and into his outstretched palms. Tommy can feel the silence overtake the room.

"Why?" Techno asks after a long, pregnant pause. "I mean, I won't kick a gift horse in the mouth, but--"

"I don't need it," Tommy says. "Anymore."

"You don't need it," Techno repeats, raising a brow. Tommy nods, firmly setting his lips into a line and not letting himself show any emotion on his face.

"I'm done fighting," he says. "Dream's locked up. I'm running a hotel now— opening night's in three days, by the way, Sam's been helping me build and I have an invite for you, it is three

diamonds per person, but—”

“Get to the point,” Techno says dryly. Tommy swallows.

“I’m done fighting,” he reiterates, and after a second, Technoblade reaches out and takes the axe from his hand. His fingers brush Tommy’s palm. They’re callused and warm, and Tommy stares stubbornly at his face as he turns the axe over in his hands. “So I don’t need it anymore.”

There’s silence that’s too loud around them, and Tommy must speak to fill it as Phil watches from his spot sitting on a chest and Techno, still by the door, still inspecting the axe.

“I kept it clean and mended,” he explains, fingers twisting, twisting, “well, Tubbo helped—and really I hardly used it except to fight Dream that last time, really, and in the whole Doomsday event thing— ash is easy to clean off of metal, you know, you should know since you fucking do it every time you blow up a government which is *twice* now and frankly, that’s a little fucking freaky that you’re making this a habit, Blade. Shit’s not right, gonna fuck up your head a bit, give you an ego—”

“I already have an ego.”

“Make it *bigger* then, see if you’ll fit through the door right, not like you don’t already.”

“You should see Ranboo come in,” Phil pipes up. “He has to duck.”

“I hate Ranboo,” Tommy says, loud and proud, “He’s annoying and has been spending far too much time with—”

“Pipe down,” Technoblade interrupts, and then in a flash of inventory light, the axe is gone. “You’ve returned the axe. Is that all?”

Is that all? Good question. Tommy’s not sure what the answer could even possibly be. Here they stand, circling each other without moving, an eternal dance. They’re always dancing, feet tripping over each other and music vibrato and aggressive in their ears, dancing to the tune of betrayal and gunpowder smoke. That’s just how they work, and yet—

And yet with Wilbur gone, the dance has been thrown off balance. There’s still the old them, of course, but as Tommy stands here and looks between Techno’s face and Phil’s, something has been irrevocably changed. Tommy’s not dancing with them anymore, is he? Maybe the music’s too fuzzy, or he’s strayed too far from their open arms, or maybe they’ve pushed him away. Either way, something is different.

“That’s all,” Tommy says, pressing a fist to his chest to loosen the tightness there. Wilbur’s absence is painfully noticeable in the silence that falls between all three of them. It’s quiet. Tommy hates the quiet.

“Well then,” Techno says, turning towards the fire and letting a hand rest on the polar bear’s head for a moment. There’s more fondness in that gesture than there has been towards Tommy this whole time. He can feel it in his gut. “Time for you to go, then.”

“Yeah,” Tommy says, and his voice is too quiet for his own ears. “Well then. See you ‘round, I suppose.”

“Goodbye,” Techno says, fluttering a hand in dismissal, and he’s not looking at Tommy. That makes it easier for him to press his fist harder against his chest and absently, move it in a circle. Or not absently— purposefully, like he’s apologizing to a stone brick wall, or maybe a ghost that’s floating in between them and humming a melody they’ve all forgotten.

“Bye, Tommy,” Phil says from his left, and Tommy nearly startles at the reminder he’s there.

“Right on,” he says, letting his hand fall from his chest, and giving Phil a hasty salute.

Then he ducks out of the house and makes his escape into the cold, axeless, but feeling marginally warmer than before.

“Sam,” Tommy says, staring up at the hotel and eyeing the roof, holding a hand over his eyes to block out the sun. “Can I ask you something?”

“Anytime,” Sam says nonchalantly from where he’s placing stone bricks. A creeper had blown up a corner of the hotel last night, the cats asleep, but the damage was minimal and Tommy had been halfway through fixing it himself when Sam had shown up to help. He’s sitting in the grass now, staring up at the blue sky and pondering. He’s been doing a lot of that lately, pondering. What an odd word, too. Ponder, like wander, it rhymes. He’s sure Wilbur would’ve done something with it, worked the rhyme into lyrics that flowed like water in a stream, poetry simply by virtue of being spoken by Wilbur himself. Tommy realizes a moment later he’s hesitated too long, and now Sam’s hands have stopped and he’s watching Tommy intently, like he’s realizing something is just a bit off.

But nothing’s really off, is it? Everything’s aces. Tommy’s fine.

Is he?

The visit with Techno had made him think a lot about closure. About the stupid dance, and the people involved.

Speaking is hard, sometimes, so after a moment Tommy lifts his hands and presses them flat to the blue sky above, weaving words with his fingers.

I want to visit Dream, he explains, and Sam’s eyes flicker to his hands and then his face again.

Why?

A simple question, one Tommy should be able to answer. But he can't— literally, he can't. He doesn't know the sign word for closure, if there is one at all. So after a moment of painful hovering, he spells it out.

C-L-O-S-U-R-E. He thinks he's spelled it right. Sam is staring at him, and then carefully, he picks back up his trowel and slathers more mortar on the stones, eyes distant, like he's thinking. Eventually, he responds.

"I'm not sure," he says aloud, and Tommy groans, rolling onto his stomach and shoving his face into the grass. It prickles and stings, but he pays it no mind. Grass will not be the downfall of one mighty Tommy Innit. "It's just dangerous, that's all. You're sure it's what you want?"

The rush of blood in his head is all Tommy hears for a moment, the fuzzy sounds of something smacking in the distance, and Sam's voice. He shuts his eyes, and for a moment the world's dark and he can only smell grass and soil and bugs.

"Yes," he says out loud, finally. "I'm sure."

The sun is hot on his back. The grass sticks up his nose, and he has the urge to sneeze.

"Alright," Sam says eventually. "For closure."

Tommy rolls back onto his back and thinks about Technoblade. He nods.

Chapter End Notes

canon-divergence that flows back into canon is my jam. fun, right?
:)

hoh!tommy is one of my favorite headcanons, and i hope i could portray it as accurately as possible. i changed a few things to fit into worldbuilding, of course (the signing is based on ASL, but in my head the minecraft universe would have one universal language with very minimalist signage). i wasn't planning to make this as long as it came out, but here we are lol.

make sure to leave a kudos/comment if you enjoyed !

find me on [twitter](#) and [tumblr](#)!

i also now have a [discord](#) if you're interested!

End Notes

thanks for reading!!!! i hope you enjoyed, and if you did make sure to leave a comment/kudos. it helps a ton!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!