

Just Another Day.

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*Maybe some things weren't meant to be understood. *A slight -Zim and Dib friendship.* one-shot.*

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1 - What brought us here?

Zim growled in frustration as he tugged impatiently at Gir's leash. It was getting very late and Gir was still rolling around in the dirt at the now empty park. Why Gir had insisted on taking a walk at such a late hour, Zim might never know, but he had made a promise and was now bound by his word.

The promise had been simple, if Gir could manage to be quiet during the days experiments then Zim would take him outside for a walk. It was a promise that he hadn't expected Gir to take so serious, but after hours and hours of experimenting without interruption, Gir seemingly appeared out of nowhere...his costume on and his hand extending the leash out to his master.

At first Zim had refused, but Gir's tearful eyes widened behind his costume and Zim found himself sighing in defeat. It wasn't that Zim cared for the Robot, he would never admit to that, it just seemed easier at the time to take a quick walk outside rather than to listen to Gir's crying.

Now Zim was regretting the decision, even though there were no humans around, he was hoping the outing wouldn't last much longer as he grudgingly took a seat on the nearest Park bench. He shivered as a gust of wind blew by, adding to the already bitter cold of the night.

"Gir are you done yet?" Zim snapped becoming frustrated.

"Nope," Gir replied beginning to shove some of the dirt into his mouth.

Zim let out a frustrated sigh., he really had no patience for this sort of thing and would much rather be working on a plan to destroy Earth. Lately he had been having trouble coming up with anything, it had been almost three weeks since his last plan had failed, maybe he was running out of ideas.

"Nonsense," Zim said out loud, "Zim does not run out of Ideas."

"Okey dokey then," Gir said turning toward his master with dirt around his mouth, "I's done now."

Zim returned from his train of thought and hopped off the bench "Finally!" He exclaimed beginning to walk away.

He felt the leash tug again in protest and growled as he quickly turned back around.

"Gir, Come. Now!" Zim commanded.

Gir blinked but his gaze was directed away from Zim.

"Gir are you listening to me?" Zim asked very annoyed at the robot.

"Nope," Gir answered and Zim's left eye twitched slightly.

"What possible reason could you have for disobeying ZIM?!" He demanded to know.

"Awe...he looks all sad," Gir said, not really answering Zim, "Just like a giant monkey bug." Zim cocked an eye at the remark and followed Gir's gaze up the hill. He recognized it as the same one he had used to search for a new telescope during the planet jackers incident, now however, there on top of the hill, sat Dib. His back was leaning up against the tree near the top, and his knees were pulled close to his chest, his arms wrapped around them as he gazed up at the sky.

'What is the Dib pig up to now' Zim wondered.

He let Gir's leash slip from his gloved hand as he took a step forward, straining his eyes for a better look. Was the human planning something? He looked around, finding the area deserted and allowed his spider legs to emerge from his pak and carry him up the hill for a better look.

A little over half way he withdrew them, afraid that Dib might hear the mechanical devices and he'd give himself away. He cautiously crept up the rest of the hill, keeping low to the ground as he peered up at Dib from a spot almost ten feet behind.

Dib sat there, just as Zim had seen before, there were no telescopes nor cameras, not a single device to make him think that the human was up to anything at all.

Zim felt an evil grin come to his face. The human was unarmed, alone, and completely unaware of his presence. If ever there was a time for eliminating the troublesome earth boy it was now. He stood himself up and crept behind the tree to peer over at Dib. He clenched and unclenched his clawed hands in eagerness and bent his knees in anticipation to lunge at him.

All at once he stopped himself, the human was just sitting there staring up at the sky, seeming unaware of even the wind that had picked up. None of it seemed to add up in Zim's mind, Dib was always prepared, he never seen the boy without some kind of device even if it was just a camera. Was Zim falling into some kind of trap?

Zim straightened himself and frowned as he stepped out from behind the tree. He glared at the human, he was only a few feet behind him, but Dib was acting as if he were still all alone. Zim balled his hands into fists....this must be a trick.

"You probably think I'm crazy," Dib said and Zim jumped slightly. Dib was talking but he wasn't talking to him, as far as Zim was concerned the boy had still not noticed his arrival.

Dib sighed and closed his eyes "I know you can't hear me," he said, "I don't know why I'm here."

Zim blinked. Was Dib trying to communicate with someone? Was it perhaps another race of aliens, was he trying to get reinforcements, or was the speculation about Dibs sanity true? He had known the human to spend time talking out loud to himself, but this....this was significantly different. Had the human truly gone insane?

Dib shifted and tilted his head back.

"I don't know what I'm doing anymore," he whispered to no one, his words coming out in almost a whine.

Zim's gaze upon the boy intensified, almost as if he were trying to look inside the human, to understand what he was thinking and feeling. Dibs pale skin glowed against the moonlight, his glasses reflecting it's light and hiding his eyes from the world. His hands moved up to wrap around his arms and Dib sighed, not a sigh of content but of defeat, and Zim could make out the vague glint of tears behind his glasses. Zim blinked and tore his eyes away from the sight of his enemy. He wasn't use to seeing the human like this, Dib had always held himself above the rest of the earth creatures. He did not possess their natural sense of stupidity and lack of understanding, he did not bend to the will of the majority, he did not cry. What could possibly prompt such a display of weakness from him?

Further more, why was it that Zim had still not attacked him? All logic and reason was telling him to strike now, that the perfect time to take out his enemy was when Dib was at his most vulnerable. His enemy? Was that what this child was to him?

Child?

The thought was almost like a revelation to Zim, after all the time spent fighting Dib, after all the arguments they had, not once had he seemed to acknowledge this. He had always treated Dib as an equal when it came to fighting, but Dib was just a child, barely reaching the age of 13 now; while Zim, still in his prime, was over 150 years old.

Thoughts seemed to be racing through his head, almost too fast for him to react to.

All this time he, the amazing Invader Zim, had been bested by a mere child. Years of military training, advanced weaponry, and incredible Irken intelligence and he couldn't even defeat a human smeeet.

He realized too, that this was not from a lack of trying or opportunity. How often had he let his chances to destroy the human slip from his clawed hands? Even now, why? Why could he not destroy him?

Was it that he enjoyed his rivalry with the Dib human? He knew for sure that he did not enjoy being defeated. Then again, in all the times he had lost, Dib had never really won.

Dib still fought though, even with his own people against him. Dib fought with a passion that Zim had only seen Irkens possess. Was this passion really just a child-like fascination? What was he to the human.....what was the human to him? Why did it matter?

"Zim?"

The sound of his name caused him to jump. He looked up to see Dib standing in front of him with questioning look on his face.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

There was no resentment in his voice, no hatred, no distrust, all that remained was questioning curiosity and vague tiredness. How long had he noticed Zim standing there?

Zim quickly slipped back into character and narrowed his eyes at him.

"Zim needs no reason," he told the boy, but he realized that his voice had not risen to its full height.

Dib noticed this too and his eyes narrowed slightly in accusation.

"Did you follow me here?" He asked, his voice gaining back some of the liveliness that Zim had come to expect from him.

"Do not flatter yourself Dib-pig," Zim replied with the faintest of smirks. "Zim would not waste his precious time on such a lowly being as yourself."

Dib glared but with the blink of an eye the look was gone, replaced with an indifferent frown, much like the one on his shirt.

"Well?" Dib asked expectantly, "Why are you here then?"

Zim crossed his arms over his chest, glaring away from the boy as he mumbled under his breath.

"What?" Dib asked straining to hear Zim's response.

"I was taking Gir out for a walk," Zim replied with as much dignity as he could while staring forward at Dib. "Not that it concerns you Dib-beast," he added.

"Right. And Gir would be where exactly?" Dib asked with a raised eyebrow.

Zim blinked and turned to gaze down the hill into the park, his eyes scanning the area with precision and accuracy but finding no sign of the robot.

"He is....er...around," Zim replied, waving a hand off in another direction as he eyes continued to search the area below.

"Yeah sure," Dib replied folding his arms across his chest "And I'm suppose to believe that?" he asked

"Can't you come up with a better excuse besides 'I took my robot dog out for a walk'?"

Zim shot a glare over at the human "Can you find nothing better to do than sit and talk to the sky?"

Dibs expression went blank, his arms falling down to his sides.

"You.....heard that?" He asked in almost a whisper, his face paling.

Zim smiled, revealing his zipper-like teeth.

He felt the balance of power shifting towards him, he could almost sense the humans inability to cope with whatever his mind was telling him at that moment, and Zim relished in this.

"I apologize human pig-smelly," The alien said in mock sincerity. "Were you having a private conversation with someone?"

Dib glared and his face tinted a slight shade of red, Zim wasn't sure if this was because he was angry or embarrassed but either emotion spelled a victory for Zim.

Victory?

Zim stopped smiling. Was this just a game to him too?

He could not deny his enjoyment when he got Dib angry, even after being defeated, he would not trade that moment in. All the insults, taunting, and individual plans to destroy the human had always at one point given him pleasure. He pushed the human to fight him back, and Dib did not disappoint. He was the perfect play thing.

Again, Zim realized that he had let a long silence linger upon them and the anger on Dibs face was fading into confusion. Zim found himself stepping back, consumed by the thoughts and revelations in his head.

Dib took a hesitant step forward "Zim?" he asked with cautious tone to his voice.

Zim growled and pointed a finger at Dib.

"Who are you to confuse the great ZIM?!" He demanded

Dib blinked and looked strangely at him "What are you talking about?"

"Do not avoid the question Dib human," Zim told him stepping closer "Why is it that I can not destroy you?"

Dib blinked again "Uh...Because I always stop you," he replied with a faint smirk "Or because you're too stupid to actually have a good plan of attack."

Zim growled under his breath and stepped closer again.

"Why then can you not destroy me?" he asked, "If I truly am so intellectually challenged, then why are my guts not spewed across the autopsy table?"

Dib blinked and backed up slightly, something about Zim's demeanor seemed frightening.

"Tell Me!" Zim yelled.

"I...I don't know" Dib said trying to shake the feeling of uneasiness Zim was giving him.

Zim turned his head away from the human and glared at the ground, mumbling a few insults as his eyes dart back and forth in a confused but angry state.

Dib stared at him for what seemed like hours, his feet feeling frozen to the ground. What was the point?

'This is definitely not my day' the boy thought with a sigh.

"I was talking to my mom," Dib replied his words seeming to drift off into the wind.

Zim immediately stopped his ranting and his head shot up in full attention. He gave Dib a curious look.

"I was not aware that you possessed a female parental unit," Zim stated, his behavior seeming normal once again. Well...as normal as you can be if you're Zim.

Dib frowned and glanced away "Yeah well..."

"She is in space then?" Zim asked, "And you were trying to contact her?"

Dib looked back at Zim, the alien had quiet a habit of making assumptions.

"Uh...no," Dib replied.

Zim raised an eyebrow "You were not plotting against me?" he asked.

"I was just....talking," Dib replied as he looked at the ground.

"But you have no device in which to reach her," Zim observed, "How could you possibly..."

"Don't you think I know that!" Dib snapped "I've never been able to contact her, okay!?"

Zim was both confused and angered by Dibs shouting.

"How can I know that you are not lying?" He asked, "You and your mother both could be planning to.."

"SHE'S DEAD!" he yelled, "She's not planning anything Zim so SHUT UP!"

There was an uneasy pause as Zim let Dibs words sink in.

"Dead?" Zim repeated with an almost raspy tone to his voice.

"Yes Zim, DEAD!" Dib shouted meeting the aliens gaze. "As in 'no longer functioning'!"

"I know what the word means Dib pig!" Zim sneered and then quietly he added "I did not think on it though."

"Well..." Dib paused and sighed in frustration, tears brimming his eyes "Forget it."

Zim had never thought to ask Dib about his female parental unit before, after all, what relevance did it have. After some thought though, it wasn't quite surprising that Dib did not have one; since Zim had known the human for a couple years now and had never seen or heard of her. But he was still confused as to why Dib would be trying to communicate with someone who was obviously beyond reach. He believed the human to be smarter than that. Also, why would such a thing make Dib act so...different...he couldn't place the word. Perhaps...human? Or weak?

"Why do you let this person create weakness in you?" Zim asked.

Dib wasn't sure how to take the comment but his anger deflated and he stubbornly wiped away his tears.

"She was my mom, Zim," Dib told him, "She loved me and I...It's just..." Dib struggled for words before sighing "I don't expect you to understand," he said at last. The confusion that had been on Zim's face

turned into to anger.

"Zim understands plenty," he stated harshly, "But unless these 'tears' you humans possess can raise the dead then your pathetic crying is of no use."

Dib glared up at him.

"Shut up Zim!" he yelled, a fresh display of tears forming in his amber eyes. "Just Stop it!"

"You dare try and silence Zim!"

Dib gritted his teeth and turned his back to Zim.

'Why today, of all days, should I have to deal with Zim's stupidity' He silently fumed.

There was another lengthy pause between the two as Zim stared at him from behind. Dib had been out here trying to talk with his mother. *'But why?'* Zim wondered, *'How important could one human be?'*

"Tell me human," Zim asked with a quiet and distant tone to his voice "Was she.....like you?"

Dib looked over his shoulder at Zim but there was no look of taunting on the aliens face. Zim seemed to be looking off to the side, lost in his own inner thoughts.

"I don't remember much about her," Dib admitted, "Only little things."

Zim looked back up and took a step beside Dib.

"Then why do you feel such sadness for her, if you do not remember?" He asked.

Dib was surprised that he wasn't offended by Zim's question. The alien seemed more curious than anything else, as if truly wishing to understand why Dib was upset. For a moment, if Dib hadn't known any better, he would have thought that Zim actually cared. That was impossible though, this was Zim after all, but what harm could it do to answer. Maybe Dib needed this...someone to listen....someone to talk to. Zim would have to be that person for now, even if he was Dib's enemy, Zim had still been the only one to ever listen.

"I would have liked to know her," Dib told him, "And it would have been nice to have someone around who cared about me. Ya know?"

Zim shook his head.

"Of course not," he replied with a strange look on his face "Irkens care only for the empire. Invaders need no one and Zim...."

He paused and narrowed his eyes in the other direction "Zim cares for himself."

Dib stared at him for a moment "That's to bad," he replied.

Zim looked over "Nonsense," he said, "That is what makes me superior."

Dib gave a weary smile "It's not really a bad thing," he told him "Caring about someone, that is."

Zim glanced at Dib from the corner of his eyes "It leaves you vulnerable," he replied, almost warningly.

"Does it?" Dib asked, more of a statement than a question.

Zim rolled his eyes "Even your tiny brain should be able understand, this 'caring' will be your downfall," he replied, with a stern look. "Your enemies will not show you compassion, nor will they hesitate to use such a thing against you in battle."

Dib paused and looked over at the alien "Then why haven't you destroyed me yet?"

Zim visibly tensed, his back straightened, and his face set into a deep frown.

Dib stared expectantly over at the alien, before he finally answered.

"I am currently working on amazing plan to defeat you Dib-pig," he replied as he glared over at him "I am simply waiting for the best moment to strike."

Dib blinked "Right" he nodded a smile forming on his lips "Thanks for the tip."

Zim raised an eyebrow and Dib turned to face him completely, a determined grin set on his face.

"Make no mistake Zim," he declared, "No matter what plan you have in store for me and for planet earth, I'll stop you at every turn."

Zim couldn't help but match Dibs grin as he turned to face him. Indeed, his mission would not be quiet as interesting without the human around.

"I expect no less of you earth worm," he replied.

Zim then turned and began walking away, he still needed to find Gir and get back home before all the radioactive weasels went bad. He found himself stopping though, a stray thought in the back on his mind making itself known, he called back to Dib.

"What day is this?" he asked.

Dib stared at the back of Zim's head and swallowed.

"Uh...Thursday...I think" he replied, though he was certain of his answer.

Zim blinked and with slight hesitation he turned around and lifted an eye in question.

"Happy day of Birth then, Dib-human," he replied. He wasn't sure why he had bothered to acknowledge such a thing, but to humans who lived such short lives, it seemed important.

"Uh...I..you..what?" Dib managed with great surprise. He had never expected anyone to remember his birthday, even his own family seemed to forget; far too busy with video games or real science to bother to say anything. He wasn't sure why he expected things to be different on his birthday, it was always just like any other day, so why expect it to be special. Maybe it was because it was *his* day, maybe because he felt he deserved that recognition, if only just a simple 'Happy Birthday'. The fact that Zim had been the first and only one to actually say something was more of a surprise than anything.

"Consider the fact that I did not kill you today a gift" Zim smirked.

"Gift?" Dib blinked, returning from his stupor.

"Ah Yes!" the alien declared with a raised fist. "An oh so *amazing* gift from the almighty ZIM!"

Dib rolled his eyes at Zim's more in-character response.

"Gee Zim, thanks" he replied sarcastically.

"There is no need for such formality" Zim told him with an air of superiority "Your complete and total admission of my greatness is enough."

Before Dib could respond, Zim turned back around and march away, leaving Dib pondering everything that had just occurred. None of it made sense to Dib, he could hardly believe that he and Zim actually had a some-what civilized conversation with each other, and it left him more confused now than he had ever been before.

Dib shook his head, realizing with a sort of fond sadness that this was one of the best birthdays he had had in a long time.

Maybe some things weren't meant to be understood.