

# What Remains

By toxic\_dreamer

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*-Gaz's P.O.V.-<br />*

*I brought at hand up to my neck, feeling for what I knew wouldn't be there. My necklace, my skull shaped necklace....gone.<br />*

*(Kinda angsty...and dramatic)*

## 1. Gaz's P.O.V.

He stared up in my direction, his dull amber eyes gazing behind the broken lenses of his glasses. His clothes were disheveled, torn in several places and singed from the fire we had escaped to get where we were now; here, amongst the rubble of someones now forgotten home. Destroyed, barely holding itself together, I knew we would not be safe here for long.

The adrenalin that had been rushing through me before was simply gone though, almost like it had never existed at all. I didn't feel tired or hurt, but perhaps I was just ignoring it, I had always been good at ignoring things around me. Whatever the reason for my current numbness, I was nowhere near the condition of my pathetic companion; down on his hands and knees and looking to me for...for what? what did he expect of me? To tell him everything was okay, to hug him, to break down and cry? No, he knew me better than to expect something like that, even if our current situation was dire. Besides, I had let myself show too much weakness already.

"Get up!!" it wasn't a request, I was demanding it of him.

He didn't even blink, he must have just gotten used to me yelling, as it was quite common. He lowered his head, his black spiky hair had even limped to the side, a slight whine escaping his lips.

I clenched my hands into fists, he was being stupid and worst of all, he was acting weak. We still had a chance to get out, a chance that we could escape the fate that the rest of the stupid world was currently suffering. He knew the ship wasn't far from here, and that had been the plan all along; we were supposed to meet Zim there, strangely enough, he was the key to our escape.

The world was literally falling apart, not because of Zim or his kind, but because it was simply ceasing to function. It was being destroyed by its own people and it had been happening for years now; finally the breaking point had arrived.

Stupid world, I had always hated it. Dib wasn't like me though, a major under-statement, but that wasn't the point. Dib had not only liked earth, but he had stupidly and blindly strived to protect it; something that I was sure I had told him was pointless.

When the earthquakes and fires had first started, Dib had assured me that Zim was the reason behind it all. I knew better though, this was too good a plan for Zim to be the cause. Things got worse, people started panicking, causing them to act even dumber than they normally did, there was no one to blame so they began fighting each other. Murder, theft, it seemed endless. How easily did everyone seem to revert to such primal and senseless means of survival.

It was strange, but I wasn't afraid, it didn't stop me from doing what I did. I played my GameSlave same as always, watched TV, ate pizza, glared over at Dib when he rambled about Zim and his evil plan.

Dad had locked himself in his labs, while other less violent people clung to their friends and families and silently prayed for safety, he was determined to find a way to save the earth from its current downward spiral; with science of course. I was certain that most of the world had been counting on him to avert the disaster, 'if only he could have..' I thought distractedly, a flicker of emotion rising within me. 'Dad'. I pushed the thought back.

Dib had tried to save the world in a different way, still certain that Zim was the cause, he stormed over to the invader's pathetically disguised home to confront him; I reluctantly tagged along as backup.

My mind raced through the events-getting into the base-finding Zim disgruntled and packing his belongings-Dib arguing and fighting Zim to the ground. What stuck out most was the anger and

disbelief that flashed across Dib's face when he fell to the floor in front of his enemy; finally realizing the truth. I stared at him from my spot near the elevator, my game abandoned somewhere on the streets during our run to the base; I'd make Dib pay for that later.

Zim had an unreadable expression on his face, perhaps he was disappointed in his mission, or anger at earth's people, or maybe even reluctantly understanding. I didn't really care to try and decipher the relationship that he and my brother shared, a sort of rivalry that had always bordered on friendship. Still, I would be lying if I said I wasn't surprised when Zim frowned and in a low raspy voice said 'Sorry'...and Dib whispered back 'It's over, isn't it?'. A statement, and not a question.

Over. Like some kind of game, and giving it some thought, I suppose it was. It was the game that Zim and Dib had been playing since day one, and it was over. It was the end of that part of their lives, though strangely enough even I believed the the two would go on forever like that. I wouldn't miss it though, Dib had been more than annoying during that time anyway.

But the truth had settled in on me during those words, The world was really ending. There was no other reason for what had just happened, the only reason Dib would ever let that game end. Still, I wasn't worried.

Then it got even stranger, like it wasn't weird enough already, Zim asked Dib to come with him. He had even bothered to look in my direction and add 'the Dib-sister too'. Why? That had to be the question that was lingering on all our minds, his included, though we all sort of knew the answer. Dib swallowed down whatever amount of resentment he had for Zim and nodded, asking only that Zim give him some time to get ready, and to bring their father with them. Zim seemed reluctant at the idea, but nodded, giving us til that evening to meet him in the park where he and Gir, that stupid insane robot of his, would be waiting.

How could so much happen within that time, how could things get so out of control?

Of course dad didn't believe him, 'Not now son...the fate of the world is at stake'.

It didn't stop Dib though, not when it was something so important, not when it was his life at stake. Dad may not have been the father of the year, but he was still our dad, he was family. Even I, deciding I could not just stand back and watch dad turn away from everything, stepped forward and asked him to come. I was smarter about it than Dib, I spoke calm and rationally, and my stoic expression remained. 'He's right dad. We need to go,' I told him, 'Not even science can save the world now. It's ruined.'

Dad seemed to consider me for a moment, maybe he was simply surprised at my sudden directness toward him, or the fact that I had just agreed with Dib; something that left a bitter taste in my mouth. He shook his head at last, muttering that the insanity was spreading, that he could still fix everything. The building shook and we stumbled, I remained balanced and Dib grabbed the side of the step railings as pieces of the ceiling fell to the floor.

'Dad please, you have to listen', it was a desperate plea from my brother that I silently agreed on 'We can still get out of here. Zim's waiting at the park and...'

'This is no time to run off playing with your little friend, son!' my father's voice had lost it's usual calm tone, bordering on hysterical rage. Perhaps I had gotten that from him, it certainly sounded scary enough, not that it scared me.

I looked to Dib, angry tears in his eyes and hands balled into fists, he pushed himself away from the stairs to stand. My father turned his back on him, on us, back to beakers and test tubes and plans. The building shook again, pieces fell all around me, but no one budged. There was a certain stillness in the room, and I could feel the tension building. I was ready, I had prepared myself for another of Dib's rants, for some kind of angry cry, for him to yell at dad.

And he did yell, but not what I was expecting.

'I love you!'

Dad didn't respond, he just stood there hunched over his work desk.

Dib swallowed, I could hear it despite the chaos around me. His breathing was heavy and tears were falling down his cheeks. Why did he always have to let his emotions cloud him, why couldn't he just...just stop.

'Doesn't that mean anything to you, dad?' he asked, 'I know I'm not the perfect son but...'

Whatever he was going to say never came out, the house shook tremendously, booming like thunder, I fell to my knees.

'This stupid house is falling apart,' I said curtly, 'We need to get out'

Dib looked over at me and nodded before looking back at dad. His hands were gripping the edges of his desk but he wasn't moving. Dib walked behind him, managing not to fall despite the shaking ground beneath him. He put his hand on dad's shoulder and nudged him slightly 'Please dad, just this one time', Dib said, 'Please listen to me.'

Dad turned his head around to stare at him, though it was hard to tell what was going on behind his goggles. I could only guess that he was in a state of shock, he didn't know what to do and science had let him down for the first time. Everything dad had come to rely on had failed him, and I was certain that Dib could relate to that, even I could.

As crazy as it would be to admit that I could ever be so weak as to rely on anyone but myself, I had. I had come to rely on the most stupid thing of all; my crazy, paranoid, alien hunting brother, Dib. What was most pathetic was that I hadn't even realized it, I had come to expect certain things out of Dib and he had met all my expectations whether I liked it or not. It was a strange since of normalcy attached to something so very abnormal, I depended on Dib to talk to me; whether I wanted him to or not. I had gotten use to hearing the mysterious mysteries theme song before I went to bed, and seeing him glare over at Zim during lunch, his failed attempts at proving to everyone how he was right. Dib just being Dib, so that I could be Gaz.

What should that have mattered? I would still be me without him, wouldn't I? I suppose that would be hard to answer, at least truthfully. I guess... I would be a little less than me without him, though I'm sure he would be fine if I wasn't around. I really hated that he held that over me without even knowing it. Maybe I always had known, I just didn't want him to.

I didn't even realize I was holding my breath until dad replied.

'My poor insane children'

I flinched at the words, hating that it prompted that kind of response in me. Dib pulled his hand away, and stumbled back. His hands tightened and when he turned to face me, his face was set in a deep determined frown.

'Come on Gaz' he told me, 'We're leaving'

I glared at his demand, but he grabbed my wrist and began pulling me up the stairs. I still don't know why I let this happen, Dib knew better than to grab me or tell me what to do.

'What do you think you're doing?' I asked, my teeth clenched in suppressed rage.

'Leaving,' was his bitter reply 'You can't save everyone.'

It was something I should have been saying, not Dib.

Dib was suppose to be the one that cared, or at least acted like he cared, and it was my job to be strong, rational, and emotionally unattached. This was different though, it was like Dib had already considered him-our dad-to be dead. I glared at the side of his face, it was not his job to make that decision for the both of us; and as far as I was concerned our dad was coming with us if I had to drag him out myself.

I forcefully pulled my hand away, barely catching the look of surprise on Dib's face as I bolted back toward the stairs.

'GAZI!'

That's when the explosion happened; dad's lab. Dad.

My head hurt trying to think about it, I must have blocked most of it out. I can't recall if I screamed or not, I don't think I did, since it would just be another display of weakness on my

part. The next thing I realized I was running, faster than I ever had before along side my brother. Before I knew it we were almost at the park, but had stopped here.

Dib had just collapsed, we were so close and he was just giving up. I growled in my throat, but he just started to cry, tears dripping down his soiled face and falling to the ground.

"I mean it Dib!" I yelled at him again, no signs of compassion in my voice. Perhaps I held some resentment toward him for losing dad, even though I knew that wasn't fair.

"If you don't get up right now I'll...",

Why couldn't I finish, I had done this so many times before. My fists were shaking, I needed him to get up and keep going because... because I couldn't leave him, I wasn't capable of doing it. There was no way I would tell him that though, it made me mad enough just knowing it was true.

"I'll drag you there if I have to Dib," I told him in a strong voice "And I won't be gentle about it either, so get up!"

"Why?" his voice was so hallow, so empty, it even sent chills up my spine.

"What's the point?" he asked, his voice still so distant "What else can I lose?"

The question made me feel angry and maybe even hurt, but why? Was it because I was still there. I knew that I had given him little to no reason to care about me, but that had never stopped him from acting concerned before. Guess this was all the proof I needed, perhaps it had always been an act on his part. It was my anger talking, I had come to recognize it, even I didn't believe myself; of course Dib cared, nothing I ever did stopped him from caring.

"How about your life?" I asked him angrily, "If we don't keep moving we'll.."

"It doesn't matter," he muttered, "Nothing matters."

That was it, I wasn't about to stand here and listen to him complain. I took a step closer, my boots rooted beside him and I was ready to yank him up by his hair and force him to go. Before I could do anything though, someone else acted.

"Get up Dib-pig!"

Dib's head shot up, his teary eyes focused on the alien in front of him, and I found myself angry that he hadn't given me the same attention. I also wondered how I didn't notice Zim approaching, though I had drifted into my own thoughts more than once.

"Z..zim," His response was shaky and tears still flowed slowly down his pale, burnt, and ashy face.

"We are wasting valuable time!" Zim declared, his red eyes narrowing slightly and then darting back and forth.

I guess there was no need to wear the disguise, as lame as it was to begin with, no one would have noticed him now; what did it matter.

"I..I can't," Dib let his head droop again and his shoulders shook from his silent sobbing.

I sighed.

"There's no point in talking to him," I said, somewhat toward Zim but also to myself.

"Why?" Zim asked, his stance still seeming urgent, but considering the world around him was crumbling, it made sense.

"Because, he's finally cracked," I replied bitterly, "We could be gone already if it weren't for him." Zim didn't bother to look my way, but there was a look of understand on his face. I guess he didn't need to ask where our father was, too much could be assumed from just Dib's pathetic weeping.

"It's all...all m..my fault," Dib choked out.

Oh how I wanted to agree, to get rid of the lingering pain of losing dad by yelling or hitting him, but I didn't.

"This is pointless!" Zim yelled, teeth clenched, "I refuse to perish on this pitiful ball of dirt! You will get up now or Zim will leave without you!"

I looked over at the alien, he was completely ignoring me and probably wouldn't care if I stayed

behind too. It had always been more about him and Dib anyway, I was just there. Could I really leave without him though, I knew Zim wouldn't dare deny me entry into the ship. I clenched my hands, but for the first time in a long time I let that anger slip from me. "Dib.." he didn't look over at me, maybe he was expecting me to yell at him. "Just go." he said. "Not without you," I replied, wondering if he knew how hard it was for me to admit that. Whether it was because I depended on him or because he was my brother, maybe both, I needed to keep something from this life with me. I hated how stupid and pathetic it all sounded in my head, me needing Dib, it was crazy. Maybe I just didn't want to be stuck on the ship with Zim and his crazy robot. Yeah, that sounded about right, Dib should have to be there to suffer with me. "Humans are such fragile beings Dib," Zim spoke, but his voice was devoid of the superior or mocking tone it often held. "They're weak, they make mistakes, and they die," he replied plainly, "You do not have to join them though." "This is different," Dib shook his head. I frowned, maybe Dib was taking this harder than I had ever thought. I still hated him for crying over something that couldn't be changed though. Dad was gone...there was nothing he could do. "Why should it be any different?" Zim asked, more sternness in his voice. "Because..." Dib whispered and I noticed that he was clutching something tightly in his hand. He pulled it up to his chest and clutched it near his heart, only one of his hands were placed on the ground holding him up. He had been in that position for so long, I was surprised he had moved at all. I tried my best to peer at the object in his hand, bending down on one knee beside him. He took in a shuddering breath and looked up at Zim again, slowly pulling the object away from him and opening his palm up to reveal it. My eyes widened, and it was impossible to describe the rushing in my ears, or the sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. I gasped and fell back, catching myself with my hands and sitting on my butt. Everything came flooding back to me, those moments I was sure I had missed. I remember the light, the heat pushing back against my body and even the pain the came with it. The explosion...'Gaz..please don't leave me' ...I can hear Dib's cry in my head, I can remember feeling him holding me...holding me until.. I pushed myself away from him, I was scared. Me, Gaz, absolutely terrified. This just wasn't right, yet it all made sense. This was why I didn't feel hurt, or tired. This was why Dib wouldn't respond to me. I brought a hand up to my neck, feeling for what I knew wouldn't be there. My necklace, my skull shaped necklace...gone. "Because.." Dib said again, his hand shaking and tears forming in his eyes as he looked down at the cracked and dirty skull pendant in his palm. "It was Gaz." Those words hung in the air, his eyes flooding with guilt and pain, and some how I knew that I'd haunt him forever.