

These samples were all taken from an RP I did with a friend that we then published into a fanfic! You can read the whole fic [here](#), but these are parts I wrote that I feel exemplify my Vlad.

Sample 1

Vlad's night was a long, lonely thing.

There was no cat to greet him, no ghosts to pummel into dust. Just him and his research, his cold lab, his empty home. More of the same, but it felt more enclosed tonight. Like the world was condensing around him, suffocating, smothering. He rubs his eyes, his temples, begs his brain to stop spiraling out of control. Something was setting him on edge, but he couldn't put a name to that feeling, and it made the synapses in his brain fire faster than ever before.

He felt useless here, in this cold metal room. Like there are things he's missing, although for the life (*ha*) of him, he can't figure out what. Maybe it was the old need to cause trouble, to distract himself with destruction and vengeance, needling his thoughts. It was more likely that he was just tired, but Vlad prided himself on his long nights and longer days. Tonight, however, he just felt hollow. He hunches his shoulders in, doubling down until he loses sense of time; of his own body.

Coming to in the morning to a blaring alarm isn't his idea of a good start. He drags his hands down his face, detaching papers that had stuck to his skin while he slept. It was an hour past six, much later than he likes to start his mornings-- he floats upwards towards his bathroom, determined to wash away his foul mood. Even though he takes a steaming hot shower, it still feels lukewarm to him; a consequence of his blaring-hot core.

Not for the first time, he wishes he could properly feel the heat so he might, at least, relieve the tension that sits along his shoulders. He takes a few moments to brush his teeth, his hair; pulling wet strands back into his customary ponytail. He moisturizes and manages to plaster a false face of peaceful calm onto his face, surfacing to eat a quick breakfast before driving over to the office to start a day of paperwork.

He holds his coffee mug to his lips at his desk, filtering through the countless e-mails he'd have to eventually answer. Logo changes to the former Axion Labs were in, and he'd have to review them before settling for his new one for that subsidiary of VladCo. Recommendations from his employees poured in for musical guests at the festival this year, but if he could pick out the names clearly, they were considering too many old faces. New housing permits were brought

to his attention by his secretary, and he thanked her before signing off on a few he hadn't even read.

What was the point of this, again?

He'd become mayor to be closer to the Fentons, back when foiling their marriage was still a prominent figure in his mind. Now, it was more or less a practice in appearances and endurance. How long could he coddle an entire city before the monotony drove him mad? He's got a few years behind him in mayoral status, but it still makes him long for his Wisconsin mansion and the open diary fields. Fresh air, the scent of pine needles, gourmet cheeses.

"Mr. Masters?" his secretary calls him. "You have a call on line two. Something about the local restaurants you asked to cater?"

"Thank you," He says, distracted, picking up the landline and tucking it against his shoulder. "Mayor Masters speaking."

The call couldn't have lasted more than an hour, but it easily felt triple that. At the end of it all, he agreed to pay handsomely for the most popular locally-run dining establishments to cater to the event, and hung up with a headache starting just behind his left eye. With the majority of the day's work behind him, Vlad rests his head in his hands, backlit by the too-large window behind his desk. *'Perhaps it is time to resign,'* he thought. *'Maybe I'm too old for this.'* Though, he didn't feel particularly old in body. Just in mind.

There was, after all, such things as putting too many eggs in one basket, and he's been called a basket case extensively.

Sample 2

Of course he wouldn't describe it well.

Vlad had expected as much, honestly, and bit his cheek to stop himself from barking out a laugh. Only *his* little badger could make this sound as nonsensical as possible; Vlad rests his hand on Daniel's shoulder instead of the couch back, giving it a squeeze before looking up at the group of people gathered here tonight-- the majority of which he'd personally tried to slaughter with his own misguided hands.

"Jack." He says, hoping he wasn't making one of the worst choices of his life. "Back in college, when we were all working on our thesis, do you remember the miniature portal we'd constructed together?"

The large man nods. Of course he did; that first prototype led to several dozen others until they'd settled on the current design. He wipes a gloved hand across his chin, only really succeeding in smearing the pepperoni grease across it. "Sure I do, V-man! You know that I'm still really sorry about that, right?"

For perhaps the first time in his life, Vlad agrees with that statement. "...I know. And I'm..." Vlad swallows around the lump in his throat, pushing down his pride as far as it could go. "...I'm sorry for... ignoring your offers of consolation. I wasn't in my right mind for... a long time. Too long." He gives Madeline a tense, faintly hopeful stare before redirecting his attention back to the hulking man.

"...that day-- and I need you to listen, Jack, Madeline. That day, when the portal blasted me directly in the head, I died. Not at that direct moment, but I was condemned to it the moment it happened."

Jack looks visibly confused, brows pinched together, but Vlad can already see the gears turning in Madeline's head. He had been secretive about the condition, but if he was going to do this now, he needs to lay his entire soul bare, and all his words rush out of him so quickly he cannot hope to stop them.

"I spent months with incurable ecto-acne. It boiled and pulsed along my face, yes, but it ate away at me-- all of me. I couldn't sleep, couldn't eat. My organs were shutting down, I wasn't even able to absorb nutrients through an IV. The scientists and doctors called me terminal, and when my body finally rejected itself completely, I was declared dead, briefly." Unconsciously, he tightens his grip on Daniel's shoulder. "When I came to, all my attendants were confused, but once I began improving, they stopped caring. I'm not proud of how I acted towards you all, after that. I should have... listened. But, as all the recently deceased are ought to do, I became obsessed with my last furious thought."

They'd done research on that together, the three of them. The *'aftershocks'* of ghosts, how they clung to their dying wishes, their dying regrets; he'd rejected every nicety, including any extensions of sorrow from his best friends. "I... hated you for a very long, miserable time, Jack. I'm sorry. And Madeline--" Vlad looks more towards the ground than at the woman he's addressing. "You have never deserved anything I've done to you."

He knows he's gotten off track.

"What I'm saying is," He looks down at his free hand. "I absorbed the energy from that portal failure. It consumed and changed me from the outside in, and I am not fully human, nor am I fully ghost. Stuck halfway between worlds. Daniel has, unfortunately, shared the same fate some odd years ago."

Sample 3 (gore warning)

Vlad's about to send over a set of clones to knock the resident overactive ghost fighters unconscious, but that one shout from Daniel made his head whip lightning fast towards their retreating forms. A terrible, awful lump forms in his throat, choking him from the inside, and he pauses for a few moments too long. A rookie mistake, really; he can feel the phantom (*ha!*) sensation of a laser blast that forces the clones to fizzle out while he contemplates every single mistake that led him up to this moment.

He's barely able to hear Madeline or Jack's enraged shouting over the rush of ectoplasm in his ears, the only other noise the whoosh of a vehicle and the practically inaudible sound of the souls of the Ghost Zone crying out as the portal opens.

'At least they got out,' he thinks as Jack's body physically drags him to the floor. *'I was able to do that much.'*

The living room swims in his vision, a medley of nature tones and hardwood floors, his head pounding from the impact of his skull meeting wood. He thinks, vaguely, he can make out the light snick of metal cuffs snap to his wrists, his ankles. The lighting's changed, and the color palette has shifted to a clinical, ominous grey and blue; he reaches for his power and finds it all bottled up inside of his body. For a moment, a blinding light flickers in his eyes, a hand forcing his jaw this way or that--

Oh.

He's strapped to a table.

He can feel the rapidly heating metal against his back, his hips. He'd recognize the face masks and glittering stainless steel tools anywhere; he himself has, many times, strapped both willing and unwilling ghosts down to his *own* tables, after all. He never quite imagined what it would look like from this angle; all harsh lights, hanging over him like a guillotine, and the chemical-clean of antiseptic. The back of his skull throbs where he'd hit it, and with a sinking

feeling in his chest he watches his two former friends hover over his body, considering what to do.

Jack looks the most strange like this; the lighting washes out his orange jumpsuit to a sickly, muddy shade, his giant form taking up most of Vlad's line of sight. Madeline, however, looks prim and clinical next to her husband, clipboard in hand as she takes observational notes.

"What first?" Jack says, taking the clipboard and pen from her. This is (*as far as Vlad knows*) the very first time they've been able to successfully capture a ghost. When Vlad tries to phase through the table, the restraints flicker to life with blue electricity, keeping him perfectly pinned down.

Madeline takes a long moment, looking him up and down like the most interesting puzzle she's yet to finish. Like meat on a slab, which, all things considered, he feels like.

"Well, we already have plenty of observations on ghost behavior, and the file for the *Wisconsin Ghost* is rather thick." She lifts a pair of medical scissors, then a scalpel. "Let's get him opened up, Jack."

Bleakly, and perhaps rather late, Vlad realizes that if he cannot phase through the table, and cannot access his power at all, that it would be likely that other, passive parts of being a ghost might not work. With his own brand of power-suppressing technology that had been the case, and he finds himself muttering a prayer under his breath that the Fentons wouldn't be smart enough to figure out that sort of thing.

But, like many things in his life lately, Vlad finds out that his assumption is unfounded. They take several minutes to prepare themselves and their tools of choice, and by the time they come back the throbbing ache in the back of his head *should* have been gone. Worked-over by the accelerated healing properties that come with being half-ghost.

As they ruin his costume, slicing it open from the high collar and straight down to the bump of his hips, he feels his whole body tense with the realization that he might permanently die here, flayed out on the table like a gutted fish. The scalpel is cold against his collarbone, and it takes all his willpower to force himself still. If he jerks, or moves suddenly, the wound would turn out a hell of a lot worse, and a hell of a lot more difficult to heal.

Without his permission, tears spring to the corners of his eyes, and he sinks his teeth into the skin of his cheek to keep himself from shrieking out bloody murder. The goggles the pair of them are wearing combined with the masks make it impossible to see either of their expressions, but god, his chest feels like it was lit aflame, which is saying something.

Vlad does, for the first two minutes, resist looking down at his body. Instead, he spends that time pleading with his eyes towards Jack, who's large hands and general excitement never lent themselves well to delicate work like this. It's Madeline who's pulling back his robin's-egg flesh, clamping it to his sides with painful metal clips, she who is wrangling his dead-toned intestines into a rolling tray beside the table. Vlad gasps out a shout when he feels the blade rest against his stomach.

"Madeline." He says, glancing down at his opened up body with a wave of nausea (*oh, god, he just saw the way his stomach actually rolled*), fighting against his bonds weakly. "Don't. I won't be able to recover if you take it out--"

"Shh." She hisses out, head turning up towards him. "Don't keep trying to play me like that, ghost!"

Jack puts a hand on her shoulder, and he can't hear whatever words they say over the rush in his ears, but she removes the scalpel from his organs. He can feel (*and, sickeningly, see*) his heart pound a mile a minute in fearful relief. Instead, he sees her grab a pair of thick pliers, and knows without a doubt he will not have possession of every bone in his body by the end of this.

It's an agonizing couple of hours he spends there.

Maybe it's been longer, but he can't conceptualize a vivisection lasting that long. He's been poked, prodded, sliced and re-arranged; there's a rack of petri dishes sitting, perfectly innocuous, at the side of the table now. The pain slowly made him feel rather numb overtime, which was a small relief, but he can feel himself slowly losing his grip on his consciousness. The sea of ectoplasm soaking through his clothes and dripping off the table lets him know that he has no large amount of time left if he wants to live.

By some small mercy, the two of them seem to call it a night; Jack is cleaning tools while Madeline is tucking his intestines back into his body. He can feel them scrape against the

shattered nubs of his lowest set of ribs, but tries his best to stifle the agonized scream that wants to tear his vocal chords open anew. She's cleaned herself up and gone up the stairs by the time Jack turns around, his hands glistening with water, as he moves to clean up the trays and other, larger tools.

Weakly, Vlad decides that he'd have a better shot with Jack than his wife.

"Jack. Jack... please." He says, and rage and shame wash through him in equal parts. "Please. I won't survive this."

The man is silent at his station, the sound of running water louder than it was before.

"Jack I-- please. I don't want to die like this." His voice feels less steady with each word. "I'm begging you to show me mercy, please."

There's a long pause; Jack's stopped washing the dishes, and turns to look at him, goggles raised and mask discarded. Vlad knows he lacks pupils and irises in this form, but the restraints didn't allow for him to transform back to his human body. Not that he'd want to at this juncture, but. His former best friend walks back over to the table, looking around at the samples and the now-clean surgical tools.

"... Half-ghosts, huh? I always thought it was so... *strange* that all of our detection tools went off around you and... and Danno."

Vlad flexes his fingers in lieu of reaching. "We are, Jack, and this will kill me. The... the blood loss alone is making me... woozy."

Jack seems to contemplate something for a few moments, then his eyes flick to the staple gun on the tool shelf. When Jack walks away, he condemns himself to this table, his chest aching, until he hears the water running again. Then, with speed Vlad didn't know the old man possessed, he pressed the skin of his torso together, stapling the pieces in lieu of stitches. Then he presses a button on the side of the table, and the restraints click--

Vlad sucks in a huge, sickly breath.

"*Jack--*"

"Go."

He doesn't need to be told twice. Clutching his hands to his chest, Vlad stumbles over to the portal, slamming on the button to open it before tumbling through into the Ghost Zone. He moves on autopilot, feeling the sluggish kick of his powers as his body slowly begins to heal itself over. By the time he drifts to his own lab's portal, he's unsure of both the time and the day.

With a heave and a gasp, he throws himself through, landing face-first on the polished metal floor of his basement lab.