



20 Minutes

Sesame Street (US TV) · Not Rated · 1567 words

by Arukir

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Fandom: Sesame Street (US TV) Rating: Not Rated Category: Gen

Warnings: Creator chose not to add warnings

Relationships: Bert & Ernie (Sesame Street)

Characters: Bert (Sesame Street), Ernie (Sesame Street), Rubber Duck - Character

Tags: Denial of Feelings, Pre-Relationship, Friendship/Love, Roommates, Tea, Newspapers, Slice of Life, Quiet, Fluff, Domestic Fluff, Silly, Cute, Light Angst, Clocks, Tags Are Hard, Other characters mentioned - Freeform, Furchester Hotel References, Bert (Sesame Street) is Bad at Feelings, Bert (Sesame Street) Has a Heart, Sweet Ernie (Sesame Street), Wholesome, POV Third Person, Ernie (Sesame Street) Tries, Bert (Sesame Street) Tries, Boundaries, Characters being respectful of boundaries, for like two seconds but still - Freeform, Overtagging, Over Tagging, THAT WILL BE A TAG SOMEDAY

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Bert has finally managed to outlast Ernie in a matter of stubborn resolve! But was it worth it?

"Bert."

Bert was sitting in his favorite chair, reading a newspaper.

"Bert."

The sun was hitting him *just right* from the window and his tea had cooled to the perfect temperature.

"Bert."

It was exactly the sort of perfect, calm, quiet day he lived for. He planned to spend it relaxing.

"Bert."

His roommate had been trying to get his attention for the last nineteen minutes. He'd started poking Bert's cheek around minute seven.

"Bert."

Bert was not going to give in. Not this time. He had his newspaper, his tea, his chair, and the sun — he was not letting Ernie spoil this day for him.

"Bert."

He was determined to ignore him until he went away, and he was going to succeed in that goal for once!

Minute twenty hit. It was the longest that Bert had ever gone without giving into Ernie's pestering. He wasn't sure how much farther his patience could stretch. He was just about to give up and snap "What, Ernie?" when the unthinkable happened.

"Oh alright, then. Bye, Bert."

Ernie shrugged and headed for his own room. Both of them each had a small room to themselves, separate from the bedroom they shared.

(Bert wasn't exactly sure how they'd gone from occasionally sleeping over in each other's rooms to dragging both beds into the biggest room and permanently sleeping together. He didn't exactly care, either. He was too used to falling asleep to the sound of Ernie's breathing to complain about it at that point)

Bert blinked and stared at Ernie's door. Had... Had he really just gone away? Had Bert really just won? After all these years?

He put his fist in his mouth to hold back a victorious cheer. He'd won! He outlasted Ernie!

With a contented sigh, Bert settled in to read his newspaper.

Cookie Monster Elected Mayor of Small Town

What sort of idiot approved that?

Furchester Hotel Earns One Full Star

Great, the kid was never going to shut up about it now.

Slimy Wins Worm Race Semifinals

Oh, good for Oscar.

Count Count Arrested For Building Violations — Makes Bail

What else was new?

Flying Fairy School Crashlands In Field After Students Spark Fairy-Troll Diplomatic Incident

Again?

Bert sipped his tea, shaking his head at the antics of the Monster world. He wondered if humans ever had to deal with this nonsense. His mouth opened with the intention of sharing that thought with Ernie, as he knew more about humans than Bert did, when he remembered.

Ernie wasn't there. He actually left Bert alone, for once.

Bert went back to his newspaper, taking another long sip of his tea. He snuggled deeper into his chair, his face warmed pleasantly by the sun's light, and focused on his reading.

Super Grover Saves Local Restaurant — Local Restaurant Goer Not Pleased

Oh, that was... interesting. He supposed.

There was a clock in the room. Bert didn't pay much attention to it, usually. But now, every tick sounded like a sledgehammer hitting rock. Every tock sounded like a bowling bowl crashing to the ground. It was just so loud, suddenly, without any other sound to cover it up.

Bert sipped at his tea. And he'd never really noticed before, but sipping made the strangest sound, didn't it? Again he almost said this out loud, almost turned to share his peculiar thought with his ever-present companion, who loved such odd things.

Except his ever-present companion wasn't there.

Ernie had lasted twenty minutes of silence from Bert. As it turned out, Bert couldn't last ten minutes of silence from Ernie. He stood up with a huff, approaching Ernie's door with stiff steps.

How dare he ignore Bert just because Bert had ignored him and was constantly telling him to go away and usually asked him to stop pestering him at least twice a day! Obviously he should've known Bert hadn't meant it, even if Bert himself hadn't known that until five seconds ago. Yep, mind-reading was a totally reasonable expectation from one's roommate, not selfishly ridiculous at all.

Oh, shut up, Bert snarked at himself, trying to come up with a good reason why he was barging into Ernie's private space beyond 'turns out I miss you, you annoying little chatterbox'.

When he got right next to the door, he heard Ernie's signature high-pitched laugh through the wood. Bert opened the door (epiphany about how much he liked Ernie or no, Ernie never knocked before entering his room so he wasn't going to either), peering inside curiously.

Ernie was curled up on a bright yellow bean bag chair that had an orange duck pattern on it. In one hand he held his favorite rubber duck, and in the other a slim book. Mumbling the words under his breath, presumably so the rubber duck could 'hear' (Bert internally rolled his eyes), Ernie let out another tittering chuckle. Like the last one, it was unusually quiet and soft compared to his typical, unmistakeable guffaws.

That did not stop Bert from growling out, "Could you cut out that racket already, Ernie? I'm trying to read!" instead of a normal thing like, 'Come back to the livingroom, I want to spend time together'.

Ernie looked up, surprise clear on his face. "Oh hey, Bert. Sorry, I didn't mean to bother you."

"It's fine," Bert grumbled, remembering that he was trying to be nice. He shuffled awkwardly on his feet for a moment, unsure of what to say, before he thought to ask, "What, uh, what was so funny, anyway?"

"Oh, just reading from this new joke book I got." Ernie held up the joke book as proof. "Wanna hear some?"

Yes.

"No."

"Ya suuuure, buddy?" Ernie pressed, standing up and holding the book out encouragingly.

Not at all.

"Absolutely sure, Ernie."

"Come on, Bert, just one~"

Just tell me them, already.

"Just leave me alone, already." With that, Bert turned and left the room.

Ernie, (almost) never one to be discouraged, followed him. "Here's one about a donkey that wants to know what mud tastes like..."

Oh, you ridiculous man... Bert thought fondly.

"Argh!" Bert groaned exasperatedly, burying his face in his hands as Ernie continued on telling his awful joke. And then another. And another. And another...

Bert's chair was empty. His tea was cold. The sun was shining at a completely different angle, now. He hadn't gotten past the first few pages of his newspaper. Ernie was chattering nonstop and following him around, no matter how clear he made it that he wanted to be left alone or asked him to be quiet.

Things were back to normal, basically, and thank the Street for that!

For just a bit, there, Ernie had almost thought Bert actually wanted him to go away.

Things started off normal. He was trying to get Bert to pay attention to him. Bert was making him work for that attention, and pretending he wanted *peace and quiet*. Ha! Bert, wanting peace and quiet? As if! The amount of work Ernie had to put in to make sure things stayed interesting enough for that man...

But Ernie didn't mind. It was fun, and Bert was worth the effort.

Bert was being extra Bert today, though. Ernie had to resort to poking him rather early on, as he was being so stoic and unconcerned. But then he just kept ignoring Ernie. Twenty whole minutes passed without Ernie getting so much as a *glance* or a *grumble* from Bert!

And that's when Ernie began to think that, maybe, Bert really wasn't playing this time. Maybe he really did want to be left alone. The idea made Ernie sad, as he loved spending time with Bert, but he respected the other's wishes all the same and went to his own room — everyone was allowed to have off days, after all.

As much as he preferred being with Bert, Ernie was fine on his own too. He and Rubber Duckie sat down to read one of his joke books that he hadn't gone through yet, and soon enough the bit of sadness he felt at Bert ignoring him went away. He was just too caught up in the jokes to think about it!

But the thing was...

The thing was that Ernie knew that Bert couldn't have been drawn to his room by his laughter. Even when lost to his jokes, Ernie was trying to be respectful of Bert's quiet time and kept his chuckles down as much as he could. Even Rubber Duckie had kept his squeaks near-silent.

So Bert couldn't have come in to tell Ernie to be quiet, or even to ask what was so funny.

He had to have been seeking Ernie out on purpose.

Which meant that Ernie had gotten things wrong, and Bert did still want to spend time with him! He was just being extra stubborn about it today.

Well, well, well...

Two could play at *that* game. >:)

— end of "20 Minutes" —