Eight Skulls, One Migraine

by cracking_the_mind

Summary

You're a college student dammit, you don't need more stress in your life. To add salt in the wound, Sans fucks up in some fantastic way as per usual in these kinds of stories and somehow convinces you to put up with alternate versions of him. Now that Sans somehow finds a way to wiggle himself even more in to your life, you learn more about yourself than you ever really wanted to.

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A story of self-discovery, exploration of personalities, letting go of the past and moving forward.

Arc 1: Who Am I?
Chapter 1 - Ongoing

Notes

Hiya! This is my first attempt in writing anything for AO3 so please bear with me. I don't anticipate a set schedule for these chapters; I only write when I'm motivated to do so. Because, to be fair, I am just a college student dammit. I'm also a pretty inexperienced writer so please don't expect this to be something without flaws. Don't be afraid to point them out though! I don't bite too much... that is, unless you ask. *cough* Now without further ado, let's get this show on the road!
Groans Heard Around the World

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

With a groan of finality, you dump your exhausted self over your calculus textbook. You keep working on this one function and you get a different answer every time you repeat the problem. Why do things have to be so complicated…? It’s a Friday evening, and the only thing that you have on your mind right now is getting this assignment done. Not only is your calculus work due soon, but the rest of your classes either require papers or other final bits of homework before midterms start for the semester. You can barely function already with your schoolwork and jobs, let alone gigantic tests that can easily determine whether you pass or fail a class. And if you don’t pass the class, that requires more tuition money spent and longer it takes in getting your degree. Everything just snowballs out of control so fast it leaves you floundering in trying to keep up with it.

Working two dull part-time jobs on top of a full class schedule for the semester, you’ve barely any time to relax or socialize at all. While you’re no good in large groups or parties, even a relative recluse like yourself needs some interaction in their life. With a huff, you drag your head off your textbook and scattered papers on the floor of your room and head down the hall hoping that some tea will help clear your head. The short walk from your room’s doorway to the kitchen is filled with your own mutterings of discontent. While you’re making your tea in the kitchen, you can’t help but wonder in your exasperated thoughts as to how you ended up in this situation. Going to this college, having the friends that you do, and most of all, how the hell you managed to live in this house. The house you live in isn’t inhabited by just yourself; you don’t have the money to even consider doing that in your state. You live with two skeleton monsters, Sans, and his younger brother, Papyrus, that you met at the beginning of your college career and later moved in together after the first year.

You initially met the brothers through Papyrus when he was in one of your basic human anatomy classes. You showed up late on the first class a bumbling mess and the only seat that was left was up in the front row, next to a living, breathing(?), and not to mention significantly tall, skeleton. The irony of a skeleton taking human anatomy didn’t hit until later. Monsters had come up to the surface about three years ago at that point and mostly all rights had been transferred to monsters. That doesn’t mean that all people were happy with this development, however. The amount of looks of pity and just downright angry glares that you received when you sat down next to the skeleton was almost innumerable. You had no qualms with monsters regardless of what the vocal minority thought and you knew far too well that humanity is just looking for the next thing to hate. The downright giddy look on the skeleton’s face—wait how is he emoting at all if he’s literally made of immovable bone—when you sat down next to him was enough to make your already crappy day much brighter. He introduced himself as ‘THE GREAT PAPYRUS’ and you sat with him for the rest of the semester. Although his booming voice was enough for you, the professor, and the entire class to jump and stare, you couldn’t help but smile at his zealous attitude. You ended up becoming fast friends with him, mainly because he seemed to socially cling to you like a fly on a flytrap.

Eventually, after a few weeks of having the same class, he invited you to his place to have his ‘FRIENDSHIP SPAGHETTI’ and that was when you met the other brother that you learned about when Papyrus would go on one of his scheduled rants. While the other brother was squatter and more ‘filled in’—dammit how does that even work, he’s a skeleton—than his brother, he was also a polar opposite of Papyrus. Sans’s extremely laid-back personality and constant smiling made you honestly suspicious of his character and what he was really like when you first met him. He was relatively icy to you the first time you met—most likely, you assumed, was because you were human—so you didn’t learn too much about him bar his constant need to fill silence with ridiculous puns.
and praise about his brother. Though one of the best tidbits about him that you learned was that he participated in quantum physics research in the university… *how the hell does the university have the funding for that anyway??* Eventually, he warmed up to you after you’ve proven that you were going to stick around and that you genuinely cared for Papyrus and his wellbeing. He quickly became the closest friend that you’ve ever had over the months of knowing him.

As the months wore on, you became sick of the same “don’t worry about it, kid,” that he pulls whenever you show a mild bit of concern over his own wellbeing. You finally called him on his bullshit façade of forced relaxedness one day and he still tried to deny any and all things about his own inner turmoil. But that didn’t faze you. His sometimes haunted and melancholy looks he randomly gets for a few days on end screams that yes, you SHOULD worry about it. Through your companionship, when you had the time while attempting to stay afloat in life, you learned of his experiences in the Underground and how it had, quite literally, repeated like Groundhog Day.

He recalls seeing everyone he loves spared by the human child that fell down and brought to the surface, only to be forced back down due to the same person. Sans also said, with much more emotion than you’ve ever heard from him before, that he witnessed the same people that were spared brutally murdered, including him, by the kid that saved them all. While you didn’t admit it to him at that time, you had the internal revelation that the kid was the reason why you had the most intense session of déjà vu that went on for almost a week before the monsters emerged from the nearby mountain. You didn’t particularly know how to comfort him about this certain situation because it was something that you didn’t even know was possible. ‘Magic’ would always be the most apt explanation. And despite his fears, you believed his story to be the absolute truth. You don’t just make up a story of you suffering constantly and going in to *excruciating* detail about it just for shits and giggles.

You huff in mock aggravation while letting your tea steep at the thought of the bone waggling that would be added to his very brief, and yet somehow descriptive enough, explanation of how all that time fuckery worked. *Well… time marches forward finally now that Frisk can’t ever go back.* After a few more seconds, you finally break out of your internal monologuing and reverie and take a cautious sip of your scalding tea. You pull a face at the warm mug in your hands. *STILL burning and not even strong enough. I could’ve sworn my internal thoughts would keep me long enough for my tea to finish…* Grumbling to yourself for a little while longer, you finally notice how the house is relatively quiet for a change, despite its inhabitants. You’re not a loud person, but Papyrus more than makes up for the not-as-excited air.

*He must still be at his cooking classes…* You can’t help but snicker at the imagery of Papyrus wearing the tall chef’s hat. That’d make him almost eight feet and that would certainly knock off the hat whenever he stepped through a doorway. Not that’d be too much trouble though, for most of the house you live in is almost completely open-air. The only rooms that have doors are each of your guys’ three bedrooms and the two bathrooms. Even your basement/mancave/recroom doesn’t have any doors leading down to it. The house is relatively small, it being almost directly off the university campus, but certainly cozy enough for three people. The main room has a standard TV with a couch and loveseat centered around it with a grand piano—that you wholeheartedly forked over cash for… though it was used of course—sitting in the corner of the room. You could see directly towards the dining area near the kitchen when sitting on the bench of the piano. The walls were adorned with a muted beige while the carpet was a more eclectic choice. The electric blue and creamy orange zig-zags in the carpet practically screamed at you to notice them.

You can’t help but groan to yourself yet again. *God, I’m really grasping at straws here. I’m trying to distract myself from my homework by any means necessary… and that means giving myself an imaginative walk-through tour of our house!* But luckily, your musings are finally muffled by the scent of the tea being strong enough to fill your nose. You take a long whiff of the aroma and sigh.
Mint and chamomile tea was always great in calming your almost always frayed nerves. Daring to take another sip, you almost taste the earthy goodness… *Come to papa-

Knock, knock, knock, knock

The sudden and rapid knocking on your door startles you enough for you to jump and spill very hot —and very painful— tea down your chest. “**FUCK!!**” you howl while setting the down the jostled tea on the island you were leaning against. Grabbing paper towels from the rack nearby, you hastily dry yourself off in an attempt to alleviate some of the pain. Yielding only a small amount of success, you curse again, but much softer this time around.

Knock, knock, knock, knock

“I’m coming, I’m coming!” You spit at the culprit behind the front door. You stuff the paper towels in to the trash bin while you walk the few extra feet towards the front door. But when you’re about to open the door, you pause. You didn’t expect anyone over, and heck, the brothers aren’t back yet either. Cautiously, you peer in to the peep hole on the door in hopes to get a glimpse of who had the gall to interrupt your beloved tea time. Through the hole, you spy a familiar grin… and also some familiar sweat. Why is Sans knocking? *Surely he has a key… or he forgot again, the lazybones.* Wait, that shouldn’t matter. He can teleport for f**ks sake. Why is he standing outside? Studying through the peephole again, you recognize more ivory—bones?—behind him. That couldn’t be Papyrus, he’d surely make his entrance known by now. Who is that?? *Well, only one way to find out.* And that’s first to rip Sans a new, nonexistent asshole in front of his guests for something he *obviously* had no idea about. You thank the deities that the sweater that you were wearing was black, so you now didn’t have to try and cover up your tea spill in any way. With a final breath and steeling yourself in meeting someone new, you open the door ready to tease.

“You better have a good explanation…for…”

Your words die in your throat as you look around from the familiar skeleton in front of you. You find… your lazy skeleton friend but only sharper and redder? Their smile was practically like Undyne’s… no flat teeth to speak of. Not only that, there’s six *SIX!* other skeletons of varying shapes and sizes resembling the one skeleton that you’ve come to know. *I’m not hallucinating, right? This isn’t some weird stress reliever that my brain has decided to conjure out on a whim… RIGHT?!*

“uh, heh, hey y/n, i’ve got a few uh, *friends* i’d like you to meet,” Sans says, finally breaking the pregnant pause that filled the air while you lapsed in to stunned silence.

You tear your gaze away from the increasingly uncomfortable skeleton group while you level your now deadpan face towards the one you know. You blink. Once more. And third times the charm before the words he just said sink in. You mind finally begins to turn but you continue to stare at Sans, stretching the silence longer than what would be deemed appropriate. The sweat seems to increase two-fold and his eyelights shrink bit by bit the longer you stare. A red flag was already raised at Sans’s inflection toward the word friend. That wasn’t malice or something of the sort, but you can’t quite place your finger on it. Suddenly, an idea pops in to your head along with several sparks of annoyance mixed with disbelief. *He couldn’t have done that… could he? I swear to Asgore if he actually did something with that, so help me…*

“You… friends,” You state while continuing to stare flatly at Sans.

“uh… heh, yeah.”

“**WOWIE!! A HUMAN!!**”
Your gaze is practically ripped away from Sans to settle on the shortest of the bunch, who was smiling in a way that was almost childlike and practically vibrating with energy. He looked like he was wearing a smaller and bluer rendition of Papyrus’s battle body… all perfectly accented by baby blue booties, gloves and scarf. *Holy shit… he’s adorable.* The blue clad skeleton raced and reached forward to take your slack arm at your side and started shaking vigorously. He shook with so much gusto that it forced you to hold on to the side of the doorway for dear life.

“A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, HUMAN! OTHER ME!” He whirled from you, let go of your hand and placed both of his on hipbones to level a pout, that made your heart clench just slightly, at your Sans. “YOU DID NOT MENTION THAT YOUR FRIEND WAS GOING TO BE A HUMAN!” Like night and day, his eager expression returned when he regarded you again. “REGARDLESS OF HIS TRANSGRESSION, I AM THE MAGNIFICENT SANS, EXPERT HUMAN CAPTOR AND PUZZLE EXTRAORDINARE!” The other Sans’s blue eyelights formed little stars in their sockets while talking about himself.

…*he’s like the perfect combination of Sans stature and Papyrus personality. I feel like my heart is going to explode with sunshine and rainbows, this is too much.*

But. Despite being the cutest thing around right now, you feigned a slight smile, kept your voice even, and introduced yourself to him.

“A pleasure to meet you magnificent Sans, I’m Y/N.”

Small Sans appeared slightly hurt by the curt demeanor, but you honestly didn’t particularly care right now. It wasn’t the time to fangirl, it was the time to be absolutely pissed at your best friend.

The sweat increased again and his smile increased to the point of painful when you leveled your livid glare back to the idiot. *Busted. He knew that I suspected. His reaction and the other Sans just proved it.* Well, you could reprimand him right in the doorway in front of seven other similar skeletons, but what kind of host would that make you out to be? You don a smile over your anger and break eye contact with the now almost completely soaked through bag of bones.

“Well then! Come in everyone! A friend of Sans’s is a friend of mine.”

You gesture everyone inside while you hold the door open for them, your tea on the island long forgotten. As everyone shuffles inside, and while still subtly gawking at the others—*holy shit does one of them have a bony tail*—you quickly nab the guilty party by the fuzz of his blue hoodie to prevent them from hastily running—or teleporting—away from a now very aggravated you. You flash a completely-not-menacing-what-are-you-talking-about smile towards Sans while you address the others.

“Make yourself at home for the time being! Introductions will have to wait for a minute or two because I have a few very important things to discuss with this Sans at the moment. So, if you’ll just excuse us…”

The other skeletons cast looks of emotions ranging from amusement, pity, to curiosity to the one that is now hanging their head and avoiding everyone’s gaze but remained silent as you nearly drag Sans in to your room and locking the door. With a huff, you cross your arms and level a very pissed off glare while leaning against the door. Sans flinches and withers under your gaze and you haven’t even started to talk yet. *He better feel fucking guilty for this. There’s no telling the kind of repercussions this kind of thing could have.*

“My first half statement still stands. You better have a good explanation as to why the hell there are other you’s out in our living room.”
“yeah, uh, i don’t really,” He rubs the back of his skull while he idles around your messy room and avoids your eyes deliberately. “i was working in the lab by myself about an hour ago and the machine that i was tinkering with detected a large influx of magic that wasn’t native to this universe. needless to say, i was intrigued and excited to document such an anomaly that wasn’t native. i tried to pour my magic in to the machine to hone in on the magical readings and get better findings as to what it actually was. in retrospect, i may have went a little bit overboard when the machine started to short-circuit with my magic, but the magic anomaly was still getting closer. so i kept pouring magic in to try and bring it closer and document.”

Sans’s explanation sounds believable enough. Sure sounds like his giddy and completely unaware science self. You can feel some of your anger subsiding in to intrigue. But that certainly won’t stop you from telling him off about messing with things beyond our typical control. Regardless, you let him continue.

“eventually, there was a critical failure in the machine, causing it to explode, and everything went white. when i could see again, there were the others, groaning on the tile surrounding the now obliterated machine. i, uh, may have panicked a bit at that point.”

“Hell, I would have too, but way before that point.”

“anyway, when i noticed that they were, quite literally, this handsome bag of bones, i hypothesized that because of the magic phenomena and the high concentration of my magic in the machine, it was able to establish a connection to their universes and bring them here. while it still sounds sketchy, i can’t really explain it better.”

You hum in thought while digesting his words. “Did you tell anyone in the department what happened?”

“uh…” His hesitance made you narrow your eyes at the back of his skull. “that may or may not have slipped my mind.”

“Did you inform the other you’s at all what our universe is like?”

“eh, i, uh, no. i just teleported them here after they all got their bearings and got some basic information out of them.”

“Well Sans, I gotta congratulate you. You successfully proved multiverse theory.”

Sans stiffened and hesitantly met your gaze with a half-hopeful smile.

“And you went and did it in a way that is the most dangerous, backwards, and lackadaisical manner I could potentially think of.” With that, Sans’s eye sockets shrunk to almost nothing and tried to hide himself within the fur of his hoodie. “I mean, honestly! The first thing that you do when finding a magic anomaly that’s not from here is to bring it closer! There was absolutely no telling what it actually was and if it was any threat whatsoever. It could have been a universe being destroyed or something for all we know! Not only that, you had no one with you when it happened and your evidence of it happening is most likely gone with the machine. How’re you actually going to prove the theory if all of your solid findings just went up in a flash of white? You also went against not only mine, but also your coworkers’ misgivings about blatantly messing with other universes. They’re not ours to begin with. And don’t even get me started on the potential dangers of having multiple versions of you in a single area. What if it somehow triggers a paradox of some sort and everything just implodes?? Was it potentially worth risking the entire universe just to temporarily abate your unquenchable curiosity? And then you have the audacity just leave the rest of them in the dark about why and how they’re actually here and where they are. You have exceeded the maximum
level of bonehead, I swear to Asgore. You are now dubbed the living embodiment of Skeletor and you are going to have to work your way back from such a deplorable title.” When you finish your rant, you have one hand on your hip and the other cradling your head with a thumb and forefinger. Sans was still silent and sweating like your room was suddenly Florida in the summer.

“Why did you bring them here of all places anyway?”

Sans practically resembled a turtle with how far his head had retreated in to his hoodie fluff. Now that he was prompted, he tentatively stuck his skull out again and gave you a few sideglances while answering.

“like i said, i panicked. and, they uh, they’re going to be needing a place to stay while i get to work fixing the machine…”

You blanched and shot your head up to bore holes in to Sans’s skull.

“You cannot be serious…”

With a shrug of his shoulders, Sans added, “where else would they go? i ain’t holin’ them up in a hotel or somethin’ while they’re here. shit’s way too expensive, even with the kind of money i make. they also aren’t staying in the department, and regardless of how i treated them before, they aren’t test subjects. they’re people too, and should be treated like such.”

…he had a point.

“Sans. We have three bedrooms. How are we going to have room for SEVEN more bony butts under this roof?” You pressed incredulously.

“we have a big enough basement, and we barely use most of the space anyway. they can take it if they want. not like they’ll be willing to go anywhere in a whole new universe that they don’t know.”

…he had another point. Fuck.

“UGH!” You throw your arms up in exasperation. “Fine. Looks like we’ll be getting seven more fucking roommates in a three bed house. Let’s go back and tell them the great news. And maybe actually tell them what the fuck is going on because you’ve told them jack shit.”

Sans flinched at your jabs, like he should. This situation was directly caused by him and he already felt guilty about putting you under more stress than was necessary. But before you could turn and open the door, Sans grabbed your arm and turned you to face him with a serious expression.

“look, i’m sorry you’re gettin’ roped in to my mess. but i want you to be careful when you’re around them. they’re most likely dangerous.”

You snorted derisively at that.

“Sans, when I only knew you for two months and I was sleeping over at your house with Undyne and Alphys, you nearly magic force choked me to death when you had a nightmare. And that was the first time. Of course they’re going to be dangerous, Skeletor.”

Sans didn’t say anything, but kept staring you down with an even more serious expression. Sighing and rubbing your temples, you relent to the heavy tension and give a straight answer.

“I’ll be careful Sans, I promise. I don’t anticipate them outright attacking me, but if I feel threatened, I won’t hesitate to ask for help from you.”
Sans finally relaxed and released your arm. To your surprise, he pulled you in to a hug with his skull buried in your shoulder.

“thanks. that’s a load off my shoulders. i’m genuinely sorry again that you’re stuck in this mess. i’m a real boneafide idiot.”

You grunted dismissively at the pun and you could practically feel the grin on your sweater. Regardless, you returned the gesture and held it.

“You’re fine, Skeletor. But you’re lucky that you diffused this situation. We both know how well anger and stress go together.”

Sans chuckled dryly, “…yeah.”

...

“hey.”

“Hmm?”

“why do you smell like chamomile and mint tea? and why is your sweater wet?”

You groaned and pushed him off you, your face flush with embarrassment. “Your knocks are slightly jarring when you’re not expecting it…”

Sans cackled shamelessly for a moment while you stewed in shame, wiping a cyan tear from his eyesocket.

“oh my god, that’s hilarious. i was wonderin’ why you shouted when i knocked. i’ll keep that information stored for later.”

You glared the hottest you’ve practically ever had… it could practically melt steel beams. “You wouldn’t dare.”

Sans returned your glare with one having playfulness dancing around his snowy lights. “oh, i dare.”

You groaned again and reached for the door once more. “Why am I best friends with you when you relentlessly torture me with your pedantic puns and japes?”

Sans only widened his grin, “you love me.”

You snorted again and opened the door.

Chapter End Notes

Who do you think has joined Y/N in their lovely abode? Tell me what you guys think of it so far and any suggestions of the sort!

My Tumblr
Chapter Summary

You meet the other skeletons that you're now stuck with! Some may prove a challenge to befriend though...

Chapter Notes

Cue the obligatory skeleton descriptions! I feel like I went maybe a little bit too far with some of them, making it drag on for a little bit. Though what I am happy with were the conversations and how reader interacts with them. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You could hear light chatter from where you left the remaining skeletons as you made your way back towards your living room with Sans in tow right behind you. The chatting died away rather quickly once you returned from the bedroom hallway conjoining to the rest of the house, however. You couldn’t make out what was being said before, but there was no way of finding out now that their attention was focused on you once more. Well, let’s get this over with…

Once you were comfortably in front of the group, you cleared your throat once, shifted your feet from one foot to the other and gave a slight smile. “Sorry for making you wait! Sans here was just informing about how there was suddenly more than just two skeleton monsters in existence and why they had an uncanny resemblance to him,” you added with barely masked annoyance. You’re certainly still mad at him for doing this, but there were more pressing matters to attend to.

“care to tell us too, then?”

You turned towards the speaker, which was the red, shark-toothed Sans that you first noticed. That lazy drawl only confirmed further that yes, they were definitely a Sans. You nodded once with a sigh and rubbed your temples—you’ve been doing that a lot lately—with one of your hands.

“Long story short, my idiot Sans was fucking around with things he shouldn’t have-“

“hey now;”

“-and ended up pouring his magic in to a magic detector that apparently specialized in foreign kinds. The foreign magic apparently wasn’t from this universe and he brought it closer to study. The combination of whatever that magic anomaly was and Sans’s magic may have formed a connection to your guys’ universes and pulled you to ours. The machine, as you guys probably saw from the lab, was destroyed upon dragging you here. And… you guys are probably connecting the dots now, but that means we have no way of getting you home at the moment.” You grimace as you finish and take in the mixed expressions of the universe travelers.

“YOU MEAN WE’RE STUCK HERE?” You cringe internally when you note the obviously distraught face of the baby blue Sans, but nod regardless. “OOOH, PAPY IS GOING TO BE SO
WORRIED WHEN I DON’T RETURN FROM MY PATROLS IN SNOWDIN FOREST,” he bemoaned while wringing his gloves together. *Huh, so he does have a Papyrus in his universe. But this Sans’s mannerisms, like wringing his hands together, are almost same as our Papyrus.* Interesting… You shake out of your internal observations when you realized that blue Sans mentioned Snowdin, meaning that their universe’s monster population was probably still Underground.

“Hey,” you start while trying to sound soothing, “don’t worry there, we promise that we’re going to work as fast as possible to return you guys to your respective universes. And by we, I mean my Sans. I don’t have the slightest clue when it comes to that stuff.” Your Sans glares at you while you shrug and hold your hands up in a placating manner while chuckling. Despite your roommate’s glower, baby blue Sans appears to have mostly calmed due to your assurances.

You return your attention to the rest of the skeletons and address them all once more, “Now that I’ve explained why you’re here because Skeletor here so rudely didn’t tell you—"

“you’re not gonna let this go are you,”

“-I guess that I’ll go ahead with introductions since I didn’t really introduce myself properly to you all. My name is Y/N, yes, I’m a human as this Sans has pointed out, and welcome to our universe. Monsters have been on the surface for the past five years, so you all get to experience it while you’re here. Additionally, to help make up for what Skeletor has done—"

“i’ll take your usual passive-aggressiveness as a no,”

“-we’re going to be accommodating you all for the time being. We really don’t have much—sue me, I’m in college—but we do have a basement that’s used as a rec area. It’ll probably be a tight fit, but we can always go out and buy some things to make you more comfortable. And by we, I mean Sans again.”

“oh come on! you can help out with that part,” Sans complains as he tosses you an annoyed leer.

You and some of the other skeletons snicker at Sans’s misfortune but continue nonetheless, “Now that we’re in total agreement, I think I’d like to hear from the rest of you and what you want to be called. Because, let’s be honest, calling everyone by the same name is going to give everyone a headache.”

Your expectant gaze sweeps around towards the rest of the skeletons, searching for a volunteer to start. Though to your irritation, almost all of them avoid your eyes.

Yep, they’re seriously all Sanses. Avoid any confrontation as long as possible until it’s forced at them.

“Alright, I guess I’ll just have to pick one of you to star—"

“OOH, OOH! PICK ME Y/N, PICK ME!” Blue Sans was vibrating with energy again as he was waving one of his hands in the air from where he sat on the couch next to the red one. You stifled a laugh at his antics and gestured for him to continue. *I can always count on this one to be full of energy, just like Papyrus.* The blue eyed stars formed once more as he squealed a little bit and made his way to front of everyone.

“GREETINGS OTHER ME’S! I AM THE MAGNIFICENT SANS! I AM A Sentry IN SNOWDIN WOODS on the lookOut for fallen humans to capture! I live with my lazy brother Papy in Snowdin and spend time developing and recalibrating my puzzles! Mwe heh heh!” He strikes a pose—*just like Papyrus*—for a few seconds.
“BECAUSE WE ALL HAVE BEEN PUSHED TOGETHER BY THE HANDS OF FATE, I HOPE WITH ALL MY SOUL THAT WE CAN BE FRIENDS! I’M ALREADY THE GREATEST OF FRIENDS WITH MYSELF, SO WHY NOT REACH OUT TO ONES THAT ARE, QUITE LITERALLY, ME? BUT OF COURSE, WHY WOULDN’T YOU WANT TO BE FRIENDS WITH SOMEONE AS MAGNIFICENT AS ME?”

Ah yes, there’s that slight self-absorbedness we all know and love...

Regardless, you can’t help but eagerly nod with a genuine smile. “You’re definitely right! I’d love to be friends with someone as amazing as you are.” The light blue blush that passed on blue Sans’s face in reaction to your comment made your heart roll around in its early grave.

“REALLY?? Wowie, I’m SO HAPPY!”

To your surprise, blue Sans practically appeared in the middle of your vision and captured you in a bone crushing hug. You wheeze a little bit and pat the back of his armor in an attempt to get him to put you down. Holy shit he’s strong for him being smaller than my Sans. I get enough bruised ribs from Papyrus, and now I have to get used to his hugs too… great. Though, to be honest, I should’ve expected this. No monster is a pushover. To your immense relief, Blue Sans appears to have taken the hint and moves to set you back down on to the ground.

“WHO KNEW I JUST HAD TO TRANSCEND TIME AND SPACE TO HAVE MY FIRST HUMAN FRIEND? THIS IS SO EXCITING!”

As you’re collecting your breath, you can’t help but nod once more at his enthusiasm. “Agreed. This is pretty exciting. What should the others and I call you?”

In response, he settles to rest one of his gloved hands on his chin, looking to already be in deep thought. “I HAVEN’T THOUGHT ABOUT THAT, ACTUALLY. HOW ABOUT YOU GIVE ME A NICKNAME, Y/N?”

Your eyes widen a little bit in surprise at the suggestion. You point dopily at yourself and add, “Eh? Me?” He nods vigorously in response. “Uhhhh…” C’mon, think! Something witty, or creative!

“Blue!”

…

…

You nearly slap yourself at how UN-creative that sounds. The rest of the skeletons all stare at you, unamused and unimpressed. God, I’m just as bad as Asgore…

”I LIKE IT!”

“Eh??” You can only stare at the beaming ball of blue sunshine in a mix of shock and surprise.

“OF COURSE! ANY NICKNAME THAT YOU COME UP WITH WOULD BE GOOD! YOU ARE MY FRIEND AFTER ALL!”

I can’t believe he just took my shitty name in stride and even complimented me on it. He really is just like Papyrus… You quickly compose yourself by coughing a few times and then sending a large smile to Blue.
Well, if you want it then, we can move on to the others. Go ahead and sit back down.”

Wordlessly, he jumps back on to his place in the middle of the couch, peering at the others around the room. Now that that’s outta the way, let’s choose my next victim. The little shits aren’t going to volunteer, so I’m just going to force them. You grin evilly while dramatically pointing at the red one next to Blue. “You! Shark-teeth! You’re up!” His eyesockets widen a bit, but it doesn’t appear that he’s going to be making a motion to get up off the couch and away from his part-way reclined position on the armrest.

“uh, practically the same as little boy blue over here.” “HEY! I’M NOT LITTLE,” Blue interjects with a pout. The one speaking just ignores him and continues. “i live in snowdin with my bro and i’m a sentry. and… as far as naming goes, you can call me anything you want, doll.” With his final statement, he sends a flirtatious wink and the waggle of his browbones.

...oh boy. He’s going to be one of those, isn’t he.

Your eye visibly twitches while you stare him down for a few seconds longer before you respond to his flirt. Getting a better look at him, one of his jagged teeth looks to be made of gold and his eyelights are a bright red, an almost crimson color. The jacket he’s wearing is like your Sans’s but it’s borderline black with much poofier cream colored fur lining. The traditional track shorts are the same bar a yellow stripe down the side instead of white. The undershirt is probably the biggest change, with a now certainly crimson red instead of completely white. You also may think that he’s slightly chubbier than your Sans, but that may just be a trick of the light or the way he’s sprawled on the couch. All in all, his entire outfit just practically exudes one word: Edgy. By the time you’re done observing him, he has a few miniscule drops of red sweat on his skull. Oops, may have waited a little bit too long.

“Well, if that’s the case, I guess I’ll just call you Horny and Desperate. How does that sound, babe?”

You practically spit out the pet name, but the rest of the response was casual enough. The first thing he does when he meets a human is to flirt with them. The foreseeable future is going to be the death of me.

That certainly gets a chortle from the rest of the crowd, but his scarlet eyelights constrict slightly while the sweat increases a little more. Nevertheless, he pushes back, refusing to be deflected so easily.

“could i get something a little bit better, sweetheart? for me?”

I literally just fucking met him, who does he think he is? Well if he wants a better name then, how about I break out the big guns. You hum in feigned thought while you bring one of your hands to your chin. “Sure, why not? And it’s all just for you, big boy.” You end with a wink and eyebrow waggle of your own. That certainly gets a rise out of him, if the magic red blush and widened grin that appeared on his face is any indication to go by. He bought it, the poor fool.

“thanks so much, sweethe-“

“Edgy McMyChemicalRomance. That has a pretty good ring to it, don’t you think?” Your grin is almost a wide as his once was, and your eyes are no doubt sparkling with mischief while his own are now void. My own edgy teen years have prepared me for this moment… Past me would be so proud that listening to them made a difference. The chortles turn to raucous laughter, most likely from your Sans since he’s the only one that’ll get the reference, and the previous blush deepens from mortification. His red orbs flicker back to life after a few seconds and he sputters unintelligibly until he manages, “alright, cut the shit. i don’t care what you call me. just not those.”

After your own few laughs, you manage, “Fine, you’ll get a shitty name too. You’re now going to be dubbed Red.”
He lets a long, overexaggerated sigh before saying, “good enough.” You could’ve sworn you hear him mutter something along the lines of almost preferring Horny and Desperate under his breath.

“Pleasure to meet you then, Red.” You extend out your hand for a shake from him. A glint of something passes through his eyes as he pulls out his own skeletal hand from his deep pockets to reach for you. “pleasure is all mi-“He cuts himself off as you grab his arm by the wrist instead of his hand. You then turn his hand upwards to show his palm and it reveals, unsurprisingly, a joy buzzer hidden there. You grin somehow manages to get wider as you give his wrist a shake. “Do you honestly think I’d fall for that? I literally live with one of you. Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me god knows how many times he’s done it, you start to learn their techniques.”

“they’ve got ya there buddy,” Sans calls from behind you, most likely with a prideful smirk on his face.

Before Red could retort with something most likely anger filled, you relinquish his wrist and turn to the final skeleton on the couch. God, this is going to take longer than I initially thought.

“Hopefully this’ll go smoother than the last one, but you’re the one up now, Mr. Tail.”

“stars, please don’t actually call me that,” he whines while still reclining backwards on the couch, hands behind his vertebrae. You couldn’t fight the shit-eating smirk that rose to your face.

“No promises.”

The metaphorical spotlight has now turned to the final one on the couch, and good lord is he tall. This Sans in particular may be tall enough to rival Papyrus, though may lose by a few inches. Their skull has sharper features, particularly around the eyesockets. His jaw is more pronounced with a slight overbite so that his two rows of teeth are offset just slightly. Because of this overbite, you now can discern razor-like canines, one with a noticeable crack running through it, extending where they should in a human jaw. Those canines seem more for tearing enemies apart than just eating meat...

You shudder a little bit at the thought. His eyelights are white, just like your Sans’s, but there’s a certain brightness to them that hasn’t found a home in any of the others. You can practically feel the life and energy dancing in those discs. Whatever the exact reason is, it’s enchanting. His feet are bare, unlike any of the others, and are little bit bigger than your entire forearm. In other words, jesus fuck they’re huge. His phalanges and toes appear to be sharper at the ends, practically like claws and you could imagine the big lunk using a nail filer on them. His clothes were almost identical to your Sans’s but the track shorts are changed to tan cargo and almost all of his articles of clothing have been torn in some way. I bet he was just too lazy to sew them himself. And lastly, his tail. If extended, instead of curled around him at the moment, you bet it would be less than a foot off the ground if he stood. The segments end with a slightly spiked tip that certainly gave off the feel that it could be used as a means of harm as well. This Sans, just from what you could gather from his appearance, was something more wild, more feral than the others. And it’s fucking awesome.

“Anything different to report from what Red and Blue have said in regards to where you live and your own universe?” The giant just shrugged and gave a noncommittal grunt. You pursed your lips slightly and narrowed your eyes in his direction. If he’s not going to give me information, I’ll just try and probe some out of him.

“Based on your height alone, I bet your Papyrus is at least ten feet tall. You could stack like three Blues on top of each other!” you exclaim with an excited lilt. “WHY IS EVERYONE MAKING FUN OF MY HEIGHT?” You snigger lightly and give a half-assed apology to Blue. The giant chuckled and nodded his head. “yeah, my bro’s the coolest… and probably the tallest.” You hum and digest that miniscule amount of information out of him.
“Are all of the monsters in your universe this tall, and… sharp?” You inquire not-so-subtly. Way to go, me. Job well done. “Course, that’s really the only real way to survive in the underground.” You internally sigh in thanks. Thank you for taking pity on me and my lackluster prying skills tonight.

“Interesting… one last question though.”

“Shoot.”

“Can I touch the tail?”

“Is it really that interesting to you?” You can feel his gaze studying, as well as possibly judging, you as you eye the tail. It twitches just slightly under your gaze.

“Duh. Tails are awesome in their functionality, can help give tells to emotion, and just in general. Plus, it’s a skeletal tail. Can’t get any better than that.” The tail’s fidgets get slightly more noticeable after your explanation. Oh yeah, he’s definitely judging you now. Oh well.

To your surprise, he hums in thought and adds, “huh, never really thought about it that way.” You scrunch up your eyebrows in bewilderment. Now, it’s your turn to judge. Are you telling me he just has it and doesn’t do anything with it? Under your now judgmental stare, the tail curls closer to the Sans’s side. “though i’d suggest you not touch it. do other animals like getting their tails touched?”

…Did he just compare himself to an animal?

You nod at this point regardless, effectively running out of topics to discuss with him. “Welp, unless you have any other name you want to go by, I’ll call you Beast. Because, quite frankly, you look like one.” Beast’s grin stretched just slightly wider at that.

“I’ll take that as a compliment. and, no, i don’t. you could’ve done worse, though. like mr. tail for example.” He extends his clawed hand from behind his neck towards you, “pleasure to meet ya.”

You laugh sheepishly at the mention at name you called Beast earlier but grab his hand after careful inspection. “Likewise.” I’m not even halfway done yet, kill me. After the shake, you pull away with a sigh and direct your attention past the couch to the one leaning on the wall behind it.

“Alright, let’s keep this ice-breaking train rolling. You, in the white hoodie! Do you hav- holy shit, are you okay?”

The Sans behind the couch had a gigantic red cut running across their bleached hoodie and shirt. Is that… blood? But, they’re a skeleton! Magical skeleton or no, monsters don’t bleed. Their slipper-clad feet as well as mouth both had some amount of blood-like residue on it. Their right eyesocket and part of their head has been obscured by a mass of floating, flickering white pixels. Along with the cut across their chest, the most striking feature was their scarf. It looks exactly like Papyrus’s. Is that their universe’s one? But he NEVER takes off his one here… His grin isn’t nearly as big as your Sans and looks like he can easily hide it in the scarf. Despite the injuries and scarf, he’s the most similar Sans yet, but that certainly doesn’t mean anything if his state of being is how it is now.

The skeleton seemed surprised by your outburst and was only affirmed when he let out a resounding, “huh?” He finally looked down at himself and then realization flashed through his features. “oh. yeah. that. don’t worry about it, kiddo. i’m fine.” He grinned half-heartedly at you from over the couch but only went to shrink back in on himself by your completely unconvinced look. Even more so when all of the attention of the rest of the group turned to him too. The amount of bullshit that I would call if I knew him better would overload several trucks…

But, despite your inner protests, you really didn’t know him at all. He doesn’t even have a nickname
yet. So instead of just calling bullshit then and there, you resorted to, “Are you sure? You uh, to be blunt, look like you’re dying.” You rounded the couch to get a closer look at the cuts.

While doing so, you heard him chuckle darkly, “i guess you could say that, kid. though it gets hard to tell sometimes.” You were taken aback by his tone. He sounds like he’s been defeated for a long time now. It doesn’t sound downright melancholic or angry. He just sounds… empty. Your blood chilled at the correlating thoughts with that tone of voice.

“Is there anything that I could do to help?” You were wringing your own hands now in worry while looking him over. Papyrus has been rubbing off on me… Yikes, that cut looks deep. The Sans only shook his head slowly.

“i’ve tried a lot of things to help with… this,” he gestures to himself with one hand, “and it hasn’t worked, as you can probably tell.” This got dark really fast, I need to turn this around somehow…

“As long as you’re still kicking and you assure that you’re fine, I guess there really isn’t a whole lot I can do at the moment. I’m not going to pressure you in talking about your universe if it makes you uncomfortable. No matter what place you came from, this is not it.” The visible relief that could be seen on the skull of this Sans was immense.

“thanks, kid.”

You only responded with a patient smile.

“Oh, right! Do you have a name you want to be called? Because, quite frankly, my creative juices have already been tapped.” That earned a small chuckle from him and he lapsed in to thoughtful silence for a moment or two.

“…geno. call me geno.”

“Geno, huh? I’m saying it right?” He nodded. Geno as in… Genocide? What kind of universe did he come from??

Alright then Geno, it’s a pleasure to meet you.” You stick out your hand first, waiting for a skeleton hand to meet it soon. You wait for a moment or two before eyeing the skeleton in front of you. The distrust on Geno’s face is written clear as day as he stares at your hand. While kind of annoying and hurtful, you can understand where he’s coming from. I am someone he just met and I don’t think humans are common or trustworthy from where he came from. Time for a little encouragement with some slightly dark humor…

“Hey, it’s alright, I’m not poisonous. You won’t melt if you touch me y’know.” Geno visibly recoiled from you from your comment, eye black. Shit! What did I say?? After a moment or two, he seemed to snap out of whatever funk he was in before and grabbed your hand with some hesitance.

 “…right. good to meet you too, bud.”

Dammit, this got awkward. And I was doing so good too… Three out of four isn’t too bad.

“Talk to you later then, Geno.” He only nodded in response. You turned away to the last three clustered near each other.

The living room has been somewhat noisy for the past two introductions, most likely the others becoming bored waiting for so long. Hey, they need to do their introductions too. Not like they already know each other. You pick the closest skeleton that you haven’t met yet to introduce yourself to. Their back is turned as they’re in the middle of conversation with the others you haven’t met yet so now, you decide, is the time to do a little bit of your observing before even talking to
them. There was some sort of sun insignia on the creamy cape the closest one was wearing, and it
effectively cut you off from finding any more details from behind. Oh wait, there’s something like a
gold circlet he’s wearing on his head too. Wonder how much that’s worth… Not the time, me. Let’s
go say hi and hopefully not botch it like I did with Geno.

“Oh, Cape Boy and the rest of ya! I don’t think we’ve talked yet.” The caped one startled a bit when
you called out and the whole group turned to meet you from where they’ve congregated around the
loveseat. Now that you have a front view of him and the final two skeletons, you can finally finish
your mental profiling. Softer lines around the edges of the skull, two soft yellow orbs skirting around
in the sockets, and a kindly grin scream the epitome of baby-face. His outfit seems to be following a
light blue and yellow motif while accented with a line of white down the middle of his shirt. He’s
also adorned with gold colored fingerless gloves that appear to be slightly too big for his hands. The
sun cape appears to be fastened with something along the lines of a pink marble with a star shape
inside. His belt holds two identical space patterned cloths or handkerchiefs(?) while the gold middle
is engraved with two letters: “DS.” The bottoms are a solid blue that are tucked in to, unsurprisingly,
yellow boots with cyan stripes. His height doesn’t appear to have been altered any from your Sans,
but he doesn’t seem to slouch like the rest of them. He certainly knows how to coordinate his outfit,
I’ll give him that. I think it fits him pretty well, if I may be honest with myself.

Before you could continue talking to the others, you were stopped by a snicker from the skeleton
seated next to the caped one. “Snrk… ‘Cape Boy.’ That’s golden. I’ll have to use that one
sometime.” Gold Sans flushed a muted yellow—
that just made him skyrocket in adorableness, holy
shit—and hid his face behind his gloves.

“No Ink, please don’t!” Both of their voices were a pitch or two higher than the rest of the Sanses,
you noted.

“Hey, relax Dream, I thought it was gonna be worse. Maybe something along the lines of ‘baby-
face.’” The one apparently named Ink snickered for a while longer while Dream blushed even more
in embarrassment and groaned in to his palms. The other skeleton has been silent during the entire
interaction between the other two. Okay, while that was kinda rude of him to say that, I’m glad I’m
not the only one that noticed it. And speaking of noticing, what the hell is with this guy’s outfit?
Needlessly complicated is an understatement.

The first thing you noticed from Ink were his shoes. You wrinkled your nose in disgust at the mix of
tiger stripes and pastel blues and yellows adorning the sneakers. How the hell did he even manage to
find such horrendous shoes… The next thing that catches your eye was the sash of faintly glowing
rainbow colored vials and a couple of pencils hanging around Ink’s ribcage. He also appears to have
a jacket similar to Sans’s regular hoodie wrapped around his waist. Ink also is wearing some brown
unassuming shorts along with suspenders over his grey and beige overshirt. An interesting style
choice were the black and cyan patterned guards over his arms and legs, almost as if he’s
intentionally covering something since the ones on his arms don’t quite meet the sleeve of his shirt.
Most likely the centerpeice of the outfit though was the solid brown scarf that slowly transitions to
white the lower down it travels. It strikes you as odd in a sense. I expected if he wore a scarf it would
be just a vomit of colors all over it… guess I’m just assuming too early. Another part you assumed
too early was his facial features and eyelights. There’s a—from what you could tell, permanent—ink
splatter on the right side by his chin. Maybe that’s a birthmark or something? His mouth was just
like th- You froze in your facial inspection. Where’s his toothy grin? Now that is a first if I’ve ever
seen one. The ridges of Ink’s smile finally had a chance to meet and completely close his mouth,
leaving only a line in the bone for a smile. What was even more bewildering to you was that his
eyelights didn’t seem to have a consistent shape or color. Every time he blinked, the lights changed
to a different pattern. Holy shit, I have so many questions that most likely will only be answered with
magic but I won’t be able to hold back all of them. I need to do something before I make a fool out
of myself.

Let’s try and save Dream from the line of talking and earn a brownie point or two while I try to drive my actions away from reprimanding him for his atrocious fashion sense or ask too many invasive questions.

“Nah, I don’t think I’d give him anything like that. I’d probably resort to another color more than anything.” You shrug once before continuing and moving most of your attention to Ink in hopes that Dream can recover from the land of the mortified, “Anyways, as I said before, I just wanted to talk to you all a little bit, since you’re going to be living here for a while and—is that a gigantic paintbrush on your back.” How had I not seen that before?

“Oh yeah! I don’t think I’ve gotten a chance to introduce you to ‘im!” Ink reached behind and yanked the paintbrush forward and gestured it to you with a pleased expression, “This is Broomy!”

…it’s not sentient is it…? I can deal with magic skeletons that have traveled across time and space, but I really don’t need a talking paintbrush in my house right now.

You glance at Dream and the other skeleton, pleading with your eyes for a sign as to how to proceed with this situation. Dream is watching through the cracks between his phalanges and the other one watches on with an amused smile. Though neither come forward in aiding you in your interaction with a sentient(?) paintbrush. I see where your allegiance lies… traitorous assholes.

“Uh… hi?” Eloquent as always…

“We’ve been through everything together! I honestly can’t remember a time when I didn’t have them with me. See, I remember this one time where we were painting and—“ he cuts off abruptly and stares off with a blank expression. After a moment or two, he turns to us with a questioning gaze, a green hourglass and purple question mark in his sockets, “what was I talking about?”

...what?

Is he giving me an out to change the subject, or does he just legitimately not remember what he was talking about? Eh, fuck it, I’ll go for the out.

“You were just introducing yourself and rambling a little bit, no big deal,” you wave your hand in a dismissing manner in hopes of getting your point across. Ink blinks once then half-smiles sheepishly, “Oh. Sorry, I’ve got really bad memory, especially when I get excited. Nice to make your acquaintance Y/N!” You wave your hands once again to dismiss his apology but give a nod and smile at him.

You turn back to Dream who seems to finally have wrangled his blush under control and put out your hand. Once he takes it, you quickly lean in towards his skull near his ear would be and whisper before he can react, “The cape does look nice y’know. I didn’t mean anything by what I called you.” You lean back out to take in the surprised expression that then morphed in to a broad, grateful, and a somewhat relieved, smile.

“Thank you! I’m glad you like it!” Seeing actual happiness on Dream’s face makes you want to smile as well. Maybe he just has the kind of effect on people.

You relinquish your hold on Dream and turn to the final one with a tired smile. This amount of social interaction in such a short amount of time is exhausting…

“Right, you’re the last one then! You got a name or do you want me to bestow upon you my creative judgement?” You over enunciated ‘creative judgement’ with a waggle of your fingers in hopes that
you don’t have to come up with another name.

The final skeleton visibly shuddered but responded with, “Error.”

You had to restrain yourself with all your might to not try and dig in to your ears with one of your fingers to see if you had anything clogged in your ear canal. *Was that him talking or did I just decide to tune in to a dead channel in my brain?*

His voice was filled with white noise like static when he talked and now that you had a good look at him, you could understand why. Parts of Error would physically glitch itself out of existence for a split second and then reappear in their appropriate spots on his body. Speaking of his body, his bones were photonegative in a sense. His skull was a pure black and his eyesockets were misshapen and were filled with a red instead of inky blackness. One of his pupils was a pinprick of white, while the other were rings of black, blue, and yellow starting from the center. What looked like blue tears were stained down his skull toward his yellowed grin. There were also several white ‘ERROR’ messages floating around his body, slightly obstructing your observing. *He seems to be emotionally stable right now, so I don’t think those tears really mean anything.* His phalanges were yellow instead of black like his skull, but were partially covered by fingerless black and red gloves. His femur, tibia, fibula, and what looks like the rest of his feet were burgundy instead of the other two colors. *I wonder what his ribcage looks like. Is it a tie-dye of those three colors, or is it another color entirely? And I’m getting creepy again…* His clothes were very traditional when it comes to a Sans, though. His hoodie was almost completely black with a gradient transitioning to a navy blue towards the hood and the drawstrings and, from what you could see, the inside of the hoodie was an electric yellow. *I wouldn’t mind buying one of those. Looks rad as hell.* Error kept the track shorts, but now sports—*Shit if I said that out loud I wouldn’t hear the end of it*—a blue stripe.

You give a small smile to the wary skeleton in front of you and extend your hand for him to shake. Before you could utter a single word in greetings, Error swiftly step back, scowling at the extended hand. “*Don’t touch me you filthy glitch!*” His own glitches were now flaring wildly and it did not look comfortable in the slightest. *Okay, rude. The amount of hypocrisy in that slur is kind of laughable, but I’d rather portray to the others that I’m as sane as possible.* You mentally prepare yourself to give a verbal lashing, but you manage to stop and take a step back. *His reaction was too fast and he was looking at my hand the whole time. Maybe he reacted the way he did was because of my attempt at contact? Is he… haphephobic? Time to smooth this over…*

You sigh and lower your hand to rest on one of your hips. “Firstly, look who’s talking. You call me a filthy glitch when you’re surrounded by floating ERROR signs! I may be filthy, but I do not think I’m a glitch.” The glitches are starting to flare again, probably signifying that he’s getting angrier. *Are his eyes getting darker? It’s getting harder to see his pupils…* His behavior has caught the attention of Ink and Dream, who are now staring at the two of you with a mix of apprehension and curiosity. You continue before either can intervene.

“But, that doesn’t mean I’m not going to respect your boundaries. You obviously do not like being touched, especially when it’s from someone you barely know. So I’ll keep my distance if it makes you more comfortable.”

You pointedly take a step backwards while maintaining eye contact with Error, watching for his reaction. It didn’t take you long to notice that he’s completely floored by your statement and actions. He breaks out of his stupor after a moment or two and looks away, muttering something that you can’t quite hear. You’re not done yet though.

“Let’s try this again. It’s nice to make your acquaintance, Error.” You merely nod at him with a small smile on your lips. “Oh, and by the way, love the jacket. Makes you look badass and intimidating.”
You gauge Error’s reaction to the compliment.

…Ding! We have reached Floored #2, please watch your step. The self-satisfied smirk on your face has erupted in full force.

“And speaking of which, hey Skeletor!” You whirl from your place beside the loveseat, not noticing the equally surprised and impressed looks Ink and Dream casted you earlier, and peer over to find Sans chatting with Red and Beast about something you can’t quite hear. Blue is gesturing animatedly to Geno about something, most likely puzzles, but Geno seems to be playing along, or even enjoying it. To your satisfaction, Sans seems to be rolling with his new found title as he rotates his skull in your direction.

“yo.”

“Why can’t you be badass or cool looking like the rest of you? They got all the looks and all I’m left with is nothing but bare bones.” Your smirk hasn’t left yet. Sans’s browbones shot up in surprise at the semi-pun you threw at him, but reeled his reaction in to put up mock offense when he placed an ivory hand over his sternum.

”does proving multiverse theory, most likely the biggest technological breakthrough of the century, not count as something badass?”

“What? Pff, no. It just proves that you’re a giant NERD!” The smirk has grown to appropriate shit-eating levels.

“hah, okay, undyne.”

Ooh, now that’s an idea… The smirk has found an ally on the other side of your lips and has curled in to the most malicious smile you didn’t know you could make. You subtly ready yourself for a pounce.

“What did you just say about me, punk?”

Now that caught his attention. His eyelights shrunk to dimes as he started to sweat just slightly.

“uhh…”

“NGAHHHH!!” You pounce and lunge the few feet towards Sans with the most ferocious Undyne impression you could muster. To your surprise, Sans didn’t teleport away, possible due to the shock of it all, so you tackled him to the floor and started to noogie the hell out his skull while using your other arm to attempt to put him in a headlock.

“please don’t noogie the skeleton,” Sans manages to wheeze out in between his laughter. You don’t give two shits about what the others are thinking right now, you’re having fun and that’s what matters. God I needed this, thank you for this extended break from my school life.

Suddenly, there’s a sound of a car door slamming shut outside the house along with a familiar voice humming a jaunty tune. Everyone in the household tenses, and you gaze towards Sans’s terrified expression. Unsurprisingly, it mirrors your own.

“it’s paps. he doesn’t know you guys are here…”

…

“SHIT!”
I couldn't find a solid reference for Beast, so I just kind of flew by the seat of my pants. Let me know what you guys think about my choices and feel free to point out anything that needs correcting!

Credit to all of the gems that made these skeletons:
Blue/Underswap: Community Use
Red/Underfell: Community Use
Beast/Beasttale: get-rammed
Geno/Aftertale: loverofpiggies
Dream/Dreamtale: jokublog
Ink/Inktale(____tale): myebi/comyet
Error/Errortale: loverofpiggies

My Tumblr
Enter, Exit, then Reenter The Great Papyrus

Chapter Summary

Papyrus comes home from classes and the grocery store to a rather peculiar and pun-filled situation.

Chapter Notes

Sometimes I feel like I write Papyrus too over the top, but then I argue with myself that it's Papyrus. He is *almost* ALWAYS over the top.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

You and Sans both lay entangled together on the carpet, stunned into immobility as the jingling of car keys grew slowly closer to the front door. After a moment that felt like an eternity, you hissed to Sans, “Let me get this straight. Even with the extra time after you brought them here, you didn’t call or even text Paps about what was happening?”

Silence and sweating was your only answer.

“I don’t know why I expected anything else,” you groaned with a roll of your eyes. As the sound of impending doom in the shape of the Grim Reaper grew ever closer, you practically flew off of Sans and scrambled to a standing position. After gaining your bearings, you sprinted towards the door as the sound of footfalls made it to the homely front porch.

Shitshitshitshitshit. Paps is going to have an aneurysm at seeing alternate versions of his brother. He’s either gonna just fall in to a stunned stupor like I did, or spontaneously combust in to pile of bones. Hell, I would have too if I had that option.

Before you could condemn your situation any longer, the door pivoted on its hinges with extreme force and nearly in to the wall beside it. I'm so glad I added that door stopper…

“HUMAN Y/N AND LAZY BROTHER! I HAVE RETURNED FROM MY VALIANT BATTLE AGAINST THE INGREDIENTS OF THE CULINARY CAREER! NYEH HEH… HEH??” Papyrus exuberant boasting and posing with groceries in hand was cut short once he took notice of the additional company in the household. The tension in the air was palpable and tightly constricted your already panicked breathing as you attempted to greet Papyrus like nothing was amiss.

“Uh… h-heyyy Paps. Welcome h-ho-“ Your greeting was stifled by the sound of the front door slamming closed yet again, Papyrus nowhere to be seen.

…

…
Did he just up and leave??

“uh… didn’t expect that reaction…” Sans decided to pipe up at this point, earning a death glare from you after you closed your gaping mouth. “And who’s fault is that that he reacted that way?”

Sans couldn’t make a weak retort in time before an undignified snort and barely contained laughter sounded further in to the main room. After peering back at the similarly stunned skeletons, the perpetrator was revealed to be Ink, who was still shaking with mirth.

“He… he just turned heel and left! I mean, I expected something along those lines, but not something like THAT! Ahaha-mmf!” The laughter was finally muffled by Dream forcing Ink’s scarf up over his mouth and nasal ridge. Shaking your head at the antics but giving a slight smile at the hilarity of it all, you think that you should probably try and call Papyrus back in.

“Maybe we should-GAH!” You nearly jump three feet in to the air as the door is nearly unhinged again as Papyrus stepped through the doorway and striking a pose… again. That poor stopper. I’ll probably have to replace it again later this week...

“HUMAN Y/N AND LAZY BROTHER! I HAVE RETURNED FROM MY VALIANT BATTLE AGAINST THE INGREDIENTS OF THE CULINARY… career?” His over-the-top shouting transformed more in to a quiet question as his sockets trained on to the others again.

“A-and how did it go?” You attempted to feign normalcy as long as humanly possible, dreading the fated explanation.

“IT… IT WENT FANTASTICALLY! THOUGH, I HAVE TO WONDER AS TO WHY THERE ARE SUDDENLY SEVEN OTHER SKELETONS THAT LOOK LIKE MY BROTHER IN OUR HOUSE…?”

You take a long, drawn out breath as you mentally prepare for the conversation.

“Well, y’see…” Ease him in to this, I really don’t want this to go poorly.

“AHA! THERE YOU ARE OTHER PAPY! I WAS BEGINNING TO WONDER WHERE YOU WERE OFF BOONDOGGLING AT!”

…SHIT.

Blue had managed to sneak up behind you while Papyrus had walked back out of the house. And now, he was standing just before Papyrus with his gloved hands on his hips with a stern stare up towards Papyrus’s baffled features. The staggering height difference between the two skeletons added a comedic effect to conversation as a whole. Papyrus’s expression shifted to mortally wounded by Blue’s innocent accusations.

“BOONDOGGLING? I’D NEVER EVEN CONSIDER STOOPING AS LOW AS LAYING ABOUT! THE GREAT PAPYRUS WAS HONING HIS SKILL IN CULINARY CRAFTSMANSHIP! ONLY THE LAZY BONES OF MY BROTHER AND SOMETIMES HUMAN Y/N WOULD EVER ATTEMPT THAT KIND OF LETHARGY!” You decide not to dispute this claim. Lazing about sometimes has its benefits. Blue’s mood seems to have changed for the better; he’s vibrating with enthusiasm once more and stars in his gaze.

“WOWIE! IT’S SO STRANGE TO SEE A FORM OF MY BROTHER THAT’S NOT LAZY AND GUZZLING HONEY!” …Honey? “AND HE COOKS TOO! TELL ME OTHER PAPY, HAVE YOU HEARD OF OR MADE THE ILLUSTRIOUS CUISINE KNOWN AS TACOS?”

You choose to interject in to the conversation here, knowing full well that if Blue’s passion for tacos
rivals Papyrus’s love for spaghetti, you’d all be here until the next morning.

“Hey Paps! What are your plans for dinner tonight? I’m starving!” You exclaimed maybe just a little bit too forcefully. Thankfully, before Papyrus could go on any of his arduous spaghetti-based rants, he turned to you with cheerfulness in his narrow sockets.

“WELL, I WAS PLANNING ON TRYING OUT THE NEW DISH THAT WE LEARNED TODAY. HOWEVER, NOW WITH UNEXPECTED GUESTS—THAT I DEMAND AN EXPLANATION OVER, MIND YOU—I BELIEVE THAT THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION WOULD BE TO MAKE A BATCH OF WELCOME SPAGHETTI!” Well, I expected spaghetti to be mentioned somewhere in there, but this is the best-case scenario.

Instead of letting you affirm his dinner choice, he turns to Sans, who managed to sit up and is slouched against the wall, attempting—and failing—to look at ease. “SANS!”

“yeah, bro?” Beads of cerulean sweat were accumulating all over the surface of Sans’s skull.

…but the responses didn’t stop there.

“YES, OTHER PAPY?” His eyes were full of curiosity at Papyrus’s call.

“‘sup?” His tail thumped playfully on the couch with a shit-eating grin dominating his features.

“yeah, boss?” Scarlet sweat formed on his skull too, not seeming too comfortable with addressing Papyrus.

“papyrus…” He looked like he was about to break in to tears.

“What is it?” The innocence in those eyes of suns was crushing your already fully dead heart to dust.

“Yeah?” The amount of mischief one could exude from a single word question was reaching new levels tonight.

“What?” His tone and words were snippy, but held an undercurrent of amusement.

Papyrus jaw opened slightly further each time one of the others spoke, and by the time Error finished, it looked like it was about to pop out of socket. And to everyone’s various levels of amusement, he used one of his gloved hands to lift and snap it back shut. He took a deep breath, closing his eyes, shifting the groceries on to his elbows, and bringing both of his now free hands together a few inches from his face.

“LET ME REPHRASE THAT…” He now turned to you with exasperation. “HUMAN Y/N, WOULD YOU CARE TO EXPLAIN AS TO WHY SEVEN SKELETONS THAT LOOK LIKE MY BROTHER RESPONDED TO ME WHEN I ACTUALLY CALLED FOR MY BROTHER?”

…and here it is. Welp, here goes nothing.

You rubbed the back of your neck while starting, “An even longer story short, Sans fucked up-

“oh, we are not starting this again,”

“-while attempting to study magic levels from an unknown origin. Being the idiot that he is, he brought the magic source closer. Unknowingly, he established a connection to other universes with his magic and brought different versions of him along for the ride. In the process, the machine that
brought them here was destroyed. He brought them to our house, oh I don’t know, an hour… hour and a half ago? He didn’t warn me either. Anyway, we kinda decided that the best course of action to help accommodate them in our universe while Sans tries to get the machine fixed is to have them live with us.” Please don’t collapse in to a pile of bones, please don’t collapse in to a pile of bones…

Papyrus was silent for a long moment, hands still clasped before his face, the silence transitioning from expectant to uncomfortable quickly. You could have heard a pin drop in the entire house, everyone was silent, waiting for Papyrus’s response.

…

Unexpectedly, Papyrus shifted to Sans once more with a chastising tone, “SANS! ER, MY SANS! WHY DID YOU DIRECTLY GO AGAINST HUMAN Y/N AND YOUR COWORKERS’ WARNINGS ABOUT MESSING WITH OTHER POTENTIAL UNIVERSES??” Oh thank god, maybe we’ll just get away with Sans getting a stern talking to. Now that the heat was off you, you turn to Sans with a mix of amusement and smugness.

Yeah, Sans? Why is that? Please explain to the class… You decide to hold your tongue in favor for laughing a little bit at Sans’s extended groan in response to Papyrus’s words.

“not you too, paps…”

“I’LL HAVE NONE OF YOUR EXCUSES LAZY BONES! YOU CHOSE THIS COURSE OF ACTION AND I GUESS IT IS UP TO I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, TO FIX YOUR MISTAKES AS WELL AS BE THE BEST HOST EVER! FOR AS LONG AS YOU STAY HERE, YOU HAVE A FRIEND IN ME OTHER BROTHERS! NYEH HEH HEH!” He strikes one of his familiar poses with a flourish, the cherry red scarf flowing behind him from a nonexistent breeze. You can’t help but admire Papyrus’s willingness and adaptability to not only finding out that there are alternate versions of his brother in his already small house, but also that he’s going to be sharing it with them for the time being. After all, he is really great, just like he says he is.

“you’re so cool, bro,” Sans claims with open admiration. Damn straight.

“OF COURSE I AM! BUT BUTTERING ME WITH COMPLIMENTS WILL GET YOU NOWHERE, SANS!” Sans flinches and looks away from Papyrus’s pointed stare.

“don’t know what you mean, bro.”

“DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PLAY IGNORANT, SANS! YOU WILL BE DOING EVERYTHING IN YOUR POWER TO GET THE OTHER YOU’S BACK HOME! NO EXCEPTIONS! OR ELSE, I WILL REFRAIN FROM BUYING YOU KETCHUP UNTIL YOU PICK UP THE SLACK AND PULL YOUR WEIGHT!”  Ouch, Papyrus is not above threats in trying to keep Sans on track. I mean, I’m not either, but still…

“aw, paps, c’mon.” Sans looked almost desperate in his attempts to sway Papyrus in his claim.

“Hey, that threat goes for me too. I won’t be buying you shit-“  “LANGUAGE!” “-if you don’t do your own, Skeletor.” You say from where you stand near the front door. Sans still hasn’t moved from his spot on the ground near the living room.

“I already expected that from you, tibia honest. you’d deprive me from my tomato-ey fix, no bones about it.” You grimace at the smiling little shit on the floor. Ugh, I’m pretty sure I’ve heard those two at least thirty times in the past month…

“SANS, NO!” Papyrus stomped one of his feet in time with his enunciation, desperate in his attempt
to stop his brother from going on a pun tirade.

Smirking and already slightly shaking with laughter, he gestured to the ice cream that he could spot inside the grocery bags. “Alright, alright, I’ll chill. I wouldn’t wanna get the cold shoulder.” Your eye visibly twitched in irritation while Papyrus and Blue groan in sync. *And there he goes. This’ll only delay dinner and keep the rest of us from eating.*

“And even those terrible puns have followed me from our universe. Is nowhere sacred?” You cast a look of sympathy towards Blue. You don’t know how it must feel to have hope that you could have a reprieve from terrible puns for an extended period of time only to have it crushed by another version of… you… realization passes through your face.

*Oh…*

*Oh no…*

You slowly swivel your head towards the others in the living room, having a sinking feeling in your stomach. To your utter horror, the smiles from Beast, Red, and Geno have widened marginally while Dream, Ink, and Error have similar looks of realization that you just had. *Quick, think of something to distract them before the windows shatter from skeleton shrieks.*

“Oh hey guys, you wanna watch some TV while we get dinner ready? We’ve got cable so we have hundreds of channels to choose from and—“

Nope. Too late.

“I dunno Sans, it seems like snow problem to me.” Beast called from his practically permanent spot on the couch.

“Hey, i-ce see what you did there,” Red added directly after.

“Oh sleet, I think I like where this conversation is going… if you catch my drift.” Geno finished with a wink—blink(?)—from his eyesocket.

There’s two large intakes of breath from behind you and you quickly cover your ears before the building exasperation reaches its peak in the form of high-pitched yelling. You can already see the satisfaction perfectly written on those skulls of theirs.

*Oh Papyrus…*

*I am so sorry…*

“MWEHHHHH!!!”

“NYEHHHHH!!!”

Chapter End Notes

What do you guys think about how Paps handled multiverse theory being confirmed by his very eyesockets? Let me know!

My Tumblr
Peachy Keen

Chapter Summary

Dinner is served!

Chapter Notes

Don't you love it when luck decides to have a personal vendetta against you? Because that's me and the ridiculous winds on my campus right now. I managed to get some debris lodged in my eye and has subsequently delayed this chapter until now. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The following dinner was going as well as anyone expected it to go. More specifically, if there was anything that could be described as Pun Hell, this would be it. Sans, Red, Beast, Geno, and sometimes even Ink—being the traitorous turncoat that he is—incessantly threw puns at the ones subjected to their torture while dinner was being prepared and served. Papyrus vented his hatred of puns in to chopping the tomatoes while you snuck in the kitchen to aid in any way you could to get away from your personal hell. You fill your monthly pun quota within days with one skeleton, let alone five of them. Not long after you made your escape to the kitchen, Blue came careening around the corner begging to help. You couldn’t help but sympathize with his agony, so you set him to rifling through drawers to find enough silverware and bowls for the pasta.

Peeking around the corner back in to the living room, you assessed the situation to see if you could give any kind of reprieve to the two remaining that haven’t contributed to the pun war. Dream was still following the conversation—you didn’t know if you could even call it that—but you could tell from his grimace that the torment was wearing on him. Error, on the other hand, had his face buried in one of the throw pillows of the love seat to muffle his glitched screaming. Taking pity on the ones that couldn’t make an escape, you call in to the room in hopes of stalling the battle for a while. Maybe I could probe for some more information while I’m at it too…

“Hey guys, what do you want to drink? And before you open your mouth and make a pun Sans, I know what you want. But for the rest of you, is there any specific condiment that you guys like? Or something else?”

“got any ketchup?” Geno inquired while Beast nodded his assent as well. Oh, sweet summer child, you have no idea.

“You seem to forget that I live with Sans. If you mean ‘do we have an entire section of our pantry dedicated to that specific condiment,’ then yes, we do.”

Before they could respond, you ambled to the side pantry in the kitchen where Papyrus and Blue were singing their own praises about their culinary prowess and threw open the sliding door. Sitting on the bottom shelf were, much to your disdain, countless industrial size bottles of ketchup. You nabbed three of the bottles of the mixture and made your way back to the room. The looks of awe and pure adoration on Beast and Geno’s face when you tossed the skeletons their fix was almost
enough to forgive them for starting the pun war. Almost. Meanwhile, Red was screwing his face in
disgust. At least somebody else abhors the blatant chugging of a condiment. Red turned to you after
a moment and proceeded to dash your hopes and ground them in to dust.

“ketchup is fuckin’ disgusting. do you have any mustard for me, sweetheart?”

Ugh, there he is with the pet names again even when I already voiced my dislike for them. Maybe
that’s just how he is? I’ll let it slide for now if that’s the case. Do we have mustard though? I think I
recalled getting a bottle a while ago and never using it, but I don’t know if Papyrus has thrown it
out. After saying that you’d check for him, you turn to the other three near the loveseat and inquired
about their choice of beverage or condiment. To your much needed relief, Dream and Ink just asked
for water. Error is still buried in the pillow and appeared almost catatonic when you called to him.

Before you could investigate, Ink piped up, “Give him a little bit. He’ll reboot soon. All of the puns
probably overloaded him.” Well, that answers my unasked questions.

“Water for him, then.” You turned and rounded the corner to the kitchen before you paused and
reflected on what Ink just said.

...how did he know that? That wasn’t just some weird Freudian slip either, it was too specific in
wording for it. Does he know Error in some way? You rummage through the fridge for Red’s
mustard while still mulling over what Ink had mistakenly revealed. I’ll have to watch their
interactions a little closer if I want solid proof. With a mix of relief and chagrin, you do find an
unopened bottle of mustard towards the back. You set it to the side on the island counter and then
proceed to fill a pitcher of water for yourself and the others.

While the pitcher is filling, you do a double take and almost spill the entire contents when your eyes
land back on the island to the now tepid and entirely too strong tea that you forgot about. You
slightly cringe when you remember where the rest of the tea ended up. I still haven’t changed, but
dinner should be ready pretty soon. I guess I’ll just have to live with the slightly sticky sweater for the
rest of the night until I take a shower. Once the pitcher has been filled and the respective glasses have
been topped off, you aggressively dump the rest of the tea in to the sink. I don’t need any more
incidents like that again. Scalding yourself is too painful to repeat comfortably.

With the tea completely down the drain, Papyrus had declared the spaghetti finished and had begun
scooping out large portions in to the bowls Blue had provided. The house wasn’t equipped to be
accommodating ten people, so the bowls and silverware were mismatched but were deemed good
enough. Oh yeah, we’ll probably have to eat out in the living room… that’ll be the only place we’d
all fit. I’ll drag a few chairs from the tiny card table we have out there too. You let Blue and Papyrus
to bring out most of the pasta bowls while you set out the pitcher of water, drinks, and the few chairs
on the tea table near the couch. After all the food has been delivered, you position yourself next to
Blue and Papyrus across from the couch in the chairs you provided.

You spare a glance around the room in attempts to gauge the reactions to Papyrus’s cooking. Oh
good, looks like Error has regained consciousness. Sans has already somehow made a good chunk
of his spaghetti disappear. The others, bar Blue, are eyeing the spaghetti warily. Oh right, if their
Papyrus was anything like the horror stories that I heard from Paps’s early cooking days, I’d be
scared too.

“The time on the surface has only refined Papyrus’s cooking skills, if that puts any of your guys’
minds at ease.” You pointedly take a large forklful of the pasta and accompanying sauce and shove it
in to your mouth while you shift your gaze over everyone with a thumbs up. Papyrus strikes another
pose still seated in his chair next to you.
“NYEH! BUT OF COURSE! I HAVE BEEN TAKING COOKING CLASSES WHEN I HAVE THE TIME AND IT HAS ONLY FURTHERED AND HEIGHTENED MY EXPERTISE AND REPERTOIRE! BUT NOTHING CAN COMPARE TO THE NOODLY GOODNESS THAT IS SPAGHETTI!” He finishes his claim with a loving look towards the bowl in his lap, causing you to almost choke due to you forcing back laughter. 

He looks like a smitten schoolgirl… that’s our Papyrus.

Your affirmations and Papyrus’s gloating appeared to put the rest of the group’s minds at ease as they began to take a few mouthfuls. There were a few noises of satisfaction from around you—Geno looks like he’s about to cry again—while you begin eating from your own bowl. No meat this time, and a slightly spicy kick to the angel hair. A pretty good rendition this time, Paps. You jostle slightly when Blue speaks up from his bowl.

“THIS IS VERY TASTY OTHER PAPY! BUT IT DOES NOT COME CLOSE TO THE SPLENDOR THAT IS TACOS! YOU MUST ALLOW ME TO MAKE THEM FOR DINNER TOMORROW! I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THEY WILL BE A HIT!”

You panic slightly while chewing your mouthful before answering. I don’t think he’s taken any cooking classes, and from what I’ve heard, I really don’t want to be ingesting glitter. But I can’t just say no to the guy, he’ll be crushed.

You interject before Papyrus can answer, “Uh, sure you can Blue.” Most of the skeletons cast you a look of utter betrayal. Seems like most of them had the same thought process I had. “But, you’ll have to follow Papyrus’s orders when you’re cooking. It’s his kitchen and what he says, goes. You can even swap cooking tips while you’re at it!”

“OF COURSE! BROADENING ONE’S CULINARY HORIZONS CAN ONLY LEAD TO GOOD THINGS FOR YOUR MOUTH!” You snort in to your food, mind racing to the gutter as fast as humanly possible.

The rest of dinner was everyone trying to keep up with Papyrus and Blue’s cooking conversation while still picking at their food. You are somehow able to zone out even with booming voices assaulting both eardrums. I wonder how everyone will like the surface. That is, if their universe’s timeline hasn’t already made it to the surface. That’s another thing though… if all of their homes are in the Underground, do they have a similar group of monsters like Undyne and Alphys? Do they have someone like Frisk and their time fuckery? I can’t believe I didn’t ask that! Sans will have my head if I start talking about resets in front of Papyrus though…

“NYEHHHHHH!”

Speak, or think in your case, of the devil, and he shall appear. Your left ear gives out while several flecks of… spaghetti sauce land on your face and sweater while you screw up your face in a combination of pain and disgust. Well, now I’m really glad that I didn’t change beforehand. He literally had to turn and yell to even touch me. But somehow, I’m not really surprised. The room bursts in to laughter along with a few drowned out questions asking if you’re alright. If scalding yourself with hot tea, having your best friend endanger the entire universe, living in perpetual Pun Purgatory, and going deaf in one ear while getting flecked with spaghetti sauce from a screaming skeleton all in one day is your definition of alright, then I’m just peachy. You turn to the guilty party that’s sitting on the couch across from you while wiping your face with a napkin. Papyrus is spouting apologies in your now ringing ear that you can’t really make out.

“Sans…”

“yo,” Oh, he’s enjoying this.
“What did we say about no puns while we’re eating?”

“you both specified that there wasn’t to be any puns at the dining room table. This is the living room.” Your mouth twitched in to a shaky grimace when you heard his specifications. I’m gonna kill him. I am so gonna kill that smiley fucker.

“You have fifteen seconds to adequately explain why I shouldn’t launch myself over this table and throttle your neck.”

“because i don’t have anything to throttle?”

“Ten seconds.”

“because you love me and wouldn’t ever intentionally hurt me?”

“Five.”

“because i’m paying two thirds of this house’s rent?”

“Fair enough.” The room is still dying down from their laughter while you grumble and fruitlessly wipe at the stains on your sweater. Oh, I’m definitely getting you back for this. And my poor sweater too… it’s probably ruined with all of the shit that it’s been through. I’ll have to buy another, wait a second… that’s it!

“You’re paying for new clothes. Since you’ve been the cause of all the stains it’s been through today.” You point accusingly towards the still smug skeleton. He relents to your ushering while holding his hands up in form of surrender.

“fine, fine.”

“Oh, it’s not just for me. The rest of them need stuff too.”

“wait wha-”

“Just imagine! They all are going about their own universes peacefully when suddenly, a force drags them to the quantum physics lab of the university of our universe against their will. They’re left with nothing but the clothes on their backs.” You feign dramatics while putting a hand to your forehead.

“i’m fine with what i have, sweetheart.” This causes you to break your dramatic character to level a stony gaze to Red.

“Oh, don’t worry, it’s not really for you. It’s for me and Papyrus more than anything. Sans here would live in one set of clothes and a jacket for the rest of his life if me or Paps didn’t kick his butt in to gear. It ends up smelling profusely of grease after about a week and I really don’t want to put up with eight skeletons that somehow have magical body odor. So that’s why I’m dragging you all shopping tomorrow while I give you a tour of the campus and the surrounding area. Oh, and Sans is paying for it.”

Blue and Dream seem the most affronted towards your claims about dirty clothes but they all appear to see your reasoning behind it. Sans’s wallet could be heard wailing in grief from one of his pockets. You asked for it, you smiling little shit.

“And before you propose the idea Sans, they all can’t just use your clothes. Nothing would fit Blue or Beast. Beast could potentially use Papyrus’s clothes, but I doubt he’d want to live in crop tops and battle bodies for the time being.” You could physically feel the air displacement from where you’re
sitting from Beast shaking his skull. Sans looks like he’s about to say something again but you cut him off before he tries to find another half assed excuse to not pay for their clothes.

“No objections? Good!” You clasped your hands in front of you in an overzealous manner. “Thank you for being so generous Skeletor!” His only response is a groan to the ceiling.

The rest of dinner is a combined effort of you, Papyrus, Blue, and Dream in dominating the conversation so that no puns can be let in edge wise.

Chapter End Notes

I found the beginning of this chapter to be rather eh, but I like how it ended up. Let me know what you all think!

My Tumblr
Chapter Summary

Sleep comes easy for some... and the rest, not so much.

Chapter Notes

"Also the group is luckily conflictless so far ^^, well except for a few puns in the road."
-Nitty Gritty
Conflictless... HA! That actually brings tears to my now dirt free eyes when I think about what I have planned. Shenanigans will ensue. Some angsty, some fluffy and HUMERUS, and others that are just straight up violent. Buckle your seatbelts kids, because this story-driven magic schoolbus will be doing some aerial maneuvers!

Note: Tags have been updated. They don't apply to the next few chapters, but the more I flesh out this story, the more angst just kinda slips in. ...oops?

EDIT: I had a few comments that made me think that it was kind of vague that the three were writing on the paper instead of actually talking, so I edited to make it look more like that.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“that’s the last of the blankets we’ve got hangin’ around, sorry we don’t have any more.” Sans was passing out an assortment of pillows and blankets for the others in the basement while you were moving the TV and its stand as well as the consoles in to the corner of the basement. I regret every desire to have a large TV and several gaming consoles. The others are prepping a small area for themselves around the room, most staying away from each other, but you note offhandedly that Ink, Error, and Dream seem to stick relatively close.

“Sans, remind me again why I’m not passing out fluffy blankets when you’re the one that has blue magic that can move shit around.” You huff while finally shoving the stand in to place. Maybe I can just not move this ever again and just rotate it so that it’s on this wall instead...

“well, you didn’t ask to be the one to pass out the blankets. you just started shovin’ the stand so i took the next available job.” Dammit, he’s got me there. Curse my rash decisions!

“Ugh, at least I didn’t get sweaty over it. I already took my shower and I do NOT need any more stains on my clothes.” You’re dressed in your favorite pair of flannel sweatpants and simple white shirt that overwhelmingly exude the sleepwear feel. You get tired just by wearing the heavenly pants. If I ever ruin these pants, I will just breakdown wherever I am and cry. You shudder while moving the last couple of controllers to their appropriate place and attempt to alleviate your mind from such morbid thoughts.

The others certainly look tired, and some even already have noticeable bags under their eyes. Or did
they have those already? Blue looks like he’s ready pass out on his space on the floor. He’s commandeered one of your body pillows as something to sleep on and you cannot blame him in his choice. A battle body does not sound like the most comfortable thing to sleep in. Not to mention that pillow is soft as all hell. Beast ended up taking the basement couch because it fit his size like a glove. The others just went along with it because that meant more space for them on the floor. Geno took the furthest corner away from everyone—not like that mattered since there wasn’t much room in the first place—and has promptly wrapped a blanket over his head and is leaning against the wall, staring off in to space. Probably mulling things over like I will be when I lay in my bed. …okay now I just feel guilty that I have one and they’re forced to live on the floor. Maybe I can swipe Sans’s debit card for a mattress spree too…

You let out large yawn and arch your back. And speaking of beds, mine is calling my name. You call to bring everyone’s drowsy attention.

“Alright guys, I’m going to bed. Wake me if you need anything at all. While I’m not the nicest person when I don’t have my sleep, it doesn’t mean I can’t try to be. Anyways, I’ll be attempting to get up reasonably early but you’re free to sleep in ‘til around noon. After that I’ll be coming down here banging pots and pans. It’s going to be a long day tomorrow and we can’t burn all the sunlight even if sleep is a glorious siren that I will forever lust after.” You sigh dreamily, mind wandering slightly to you just lying in bed, warm and happy. I’ll be coming soon… You shake your head to finish your thoughts.

“If you can’t tell, I ramble a little bit when I’m tired. But yeah, if you need me, my room is the first one on the right once you go up the stairs back to the living area. Have a good night and I’ll see about getting you guys some better sleeping supplies soon.”

“that better be coming out of your own bank account,” Sans inquires with one his miserly looks that you’ve become rather familiar with in the past couple of hours. You snort sleepily.

“Not a chance, Skeletor. Night!” You wave a hand back towards the basement enclosure as several of the group wish you sound sleeping.

Once you’ve ambled your way off the steps and towards the bedroom hallway, Sans turned towards the rest of himself.

“if you guys need anything or have questions, now’s the time. i’ll be joining my bed upstairs if not.”

“i’ve got one.” Red’s currently sprawled on the floor, swaddled in one of the extra blankets and looking upside-down at Sans. “ya got an estimate as to how long we’re stuck here?”

Sans sighed and scratched the back of his skull. already askin’ the hard questions. “unfortunately, no. the machine that dragged you all here has been built for a couple years now and cost a very pretty penny. if i had to give an estimate, i’d say a couple months? give or take a few.” Bar Error, who just groaned and pulled his pillow over his face, the others looked either contemplative or homesick. i’m not too happy that i’m stuck with you too, buddy. Sans chose not to voice his thoughts on the matter.

“though i guess that doesn’t take in to account how long it’ll take to acquire all of the parts for it since mostly all of the machine won’t be salvageable since it, y’know, blew up. so i guess maybe even longer than that.” That made most of the contemplative looks turn to downright unhappy.
“unless you guys want to help, since you’re me an’ all. i assume that at least some of ya have some experience with physics and the like.” geno chose this time to speak up next.

“i don’t intend on going back in to a lab to work any time soon. for reasons that you probably know.” red and beast both made noises of affirmation, causing sans to sigh once more.

“fair point. this is my mess, and i guess it’ll be me to get ya back.” with the conversation topic sufficiently exhausted, sans inquired if there were any more questions. beast rose his skull from one of the pillows on the couch to shift his luminous eyes to sans.

“i’ve got one too. what’s up with their soul?” beast gestured with one of his claw-like hands upstairs, leaving only one person to be in question. sans visibly tensed when all of the skeletons’ attention were piqued at that notion. as if they could get any harder… even blue managed to pull back from the depths of sleep’s embrace to listen to sans’s answer.

“yes, i was wondering that as well. why can we not see it?” sans’s nervous expression and silence did nothing to ease the curious looks the rest of the group gave him. relenting to their rapt attention, sans finally acquiesced.

“i wish i knew, buddy. it is there, though. it’s just buried deep within ‘em. usually when somebody hides their soul like that it means that they have somethin’ to hide or something traumatic happened to them. but when i called them on it, they claimed that they honestly didn’t have anything of the sort. after knowing them this long and observing them, i could never really find anything that could hint to it, so i chose to trust them. but from what i could see, they don’t have any exp or additional love.” being the former judge of the underground, finding a soul that he couldn’t easily read, and them being human no less, frustrated him to no end. sans eyed the group’s reactions to his explanation, noticing the suspicious and thoughtful gazes of geno and error the most. they are trustworthy, just give them a chance, dammit. i almost didn’t when i met them, but look at where we are now. i’m choosing to live with them, if that doesn’t make a statement then i don’t know what will, and not to mention… sans’s internal pleading was silenced by another pressing matter that flashed in his mind.

“that being said, let me just reiterate what i said in the lab.” sans’s gravelly voice dropped an octave or two and the room grew just a few degrees colder while the room was enveloped in tendrils of magic. his hands were shoved deep in to the pockets of his own sweatpants and the torches in his eyes have long since burned out. “if you hurt y/n or papyrus, i will personally fling you from wall to wall until you’re nothing but dust and clothes, understood?” while the question was rhetorical and some of the skeletons looked unimpressed by the threat, the intent and message was clear. without letting any more questions be asked, sans flipped the light switch behind him, bathing everyone in darkness, and sauntered towards the stairs.

“night. hope you guys haven’t got too tired of sleepin’ just yet.”

with a pun used for departure, the skeletal group was left to the darkness and their own internal thoughts, knowing that sleep will not come easily.

*a few hours later*

oh look, i can’t sleep. what a surprise! not. you uttered a noise that was a concoction of a groan and whine and rolled off your mattress to the floor with an audible thud. why is this my fate so many times: unable to get back to sleep and unable to get my lazy ass to actually do something. a minute or two passes before you finally find the motivation to pick yourself up off of your floor of lazily piled calculus homework that you forgot to finish and slowly ambled your way to the kitchen for
some relaxation tea.

On the way there, you notice a figure by the window, and immediately tense. *Oh good, on top of everything today, someone’s gonna try and rob us too. No wait, that’s…* Upon closer scrutiny, the figure appeared to be Geno, staring outside with his skull illuminated by the pale light of the moon and you noticeably relax. The way the small amount of light reflected off of his pearly skull and the almost reverent look on his face unanimously decided for you to not disturb him and his troubled thoughts. Whether he noticed you or not, you couldn’t tell, nor could you care. *I just want my tea and then see if I can get some actual sleep.*

When you finally made your way in to the kitchen in the surprisingly quiet house, you fumbled through the appropriate cupboards and cabinets locating your desired tea and utensils. *Valerian peppermint tea, my saving grace for as long as I can remember. So many sleepless nights solved by your sedative effects.* You turn the stove on to boil your water while you set both the mug and container of tea and begin shuffling through the silverware drawer. *Please tell me we have one clean spoon around here…*

Your examination was cut short by a bony hand grabbing your searching wrist with such force, it makes you wince. You turned towards the skeleton in question, and it unsurprisingly turned out to be Geno. *Guess my noise broke him out of whatever thoughts he was in…*

“whatcha lookin’ for, kid?” Geno’s grin was entirely too big and his eyes were void, most likely to intimidate. You were unimpressed in your sleep-addled state, so you held his stare with one of your own. After a beat of silence, you raised an eyebrow at him in question.

“I’m looking for a spoon to serve my tea? There isn’t any need to suddenly have my wrist in a vicegrip over me trying to get some sleep. What’s got you so worked up?” You let out a large, uncovered yawn due to one hand still on the tea bin and other is still held by Geno’s death grip. Speaking of, his hand tightened a smidge after your question, but he remained silent, staring at you. *I don’t need to be harassed by a magical skeleton at some ungodly hour, I just want sleep. You’re starting to feel aggravated in your sleepy state, and it slipped through in to your words.*

“Do you mind if I have my hand back? I kinda need that to mix my tea and go back to sleep. Which you should too instead of looking pensive and edgy staring out a window at some late hour.”

Geno still hasn’t released your hand. After a moment or two of a staredown between you in the dead house, Geno finally speaks.

“what is your game?” Your eyebrow raises even higher at his question. “waiting for us to drop our guard so you can kill us in one fell swoop? what are you hiding?” You groan and throw your head up, while Geno’s hand tightens even more. *I really, really don’t want to be talking about this right now.*

“I could ask you the same thing. What’s your angle that makes you think that I’ve got some personal vendetta against you? I literally just met you all and I’ve been nothing but hospitable. You’re talking just like Sans was when I first met him and—oh. That’s probably it.” Your face deadpans while you gaze at Geno’s hostile expression.

“It’s because I’m human isn’t it?” Geno’s face gives nothing away, but you know better than to stop this line of topic so that you can clear away his immediate suspicion. “Well I hate to break it to you buddy, but that’s something that I can’t really change. Now seriously, do you mind giving me my hand back? The water’s going to boil over if I don’t do anything about it.” Sizzling of boiling water cuts through the silent house like a worn dagger. Finally, Geno releases your hand slowly while still glaring at you.
“if you start thinking that i’ll eventually trust you, i’ve got some advice for you: stop.” magic was flaring in his visible eyesocket, but not flashing light blue and yellow like sans’s, but a mix of cyan and blood red like his wounds. regardless of his words and expression, you give him another unimpressed look and snort before turning away from him to turn off the stove and its roiling water. at a different time, you would have been slightly threatened by his words, but you couldn’t muster up the fear.

“like it or not, you’re stuck with me for the immediate future. and trust me or no, i’ll say this now, i have no intention of harming any of you unless you choose to hurt the ones that i care for. so if you have any more riveting conversation, i’m going to finish preparing my tea and head back to bed. i suggest that you do the same.” you finally find a spoon with a muttered aha! and proceed to mix it all before you turn back towards geno to see if he’s still staring you down. he’s nowhere to be found.

“goodnight to you too, geno!” you call softly as you slowly shuffle towards your door and hopeful sleep.

*a few more hours later*

the basement has been quiet, save for snoring from a few of their occupants, but ink hasn’t been able to settle down. he needs to get some of his questions answered before he ends up doing something that he’ll have to awkwardly explain. settling for pestering the ones that he knows, he pulls out one of his sketchbooks and a few pencils and positions himself towards dream.

he uses the eraser butt of the pencil to prod between the eyes of the skeleton to rouse them without too much noise. dream shifted and eventually opened his sockets, bathing the room in a rich dandelion from his pupils. shit, ink forgot about that. he frantically gestured with his hands towards the heavy-eyed skeleton’s sockets and then back to his void ones. it takes a few blinks and strobing light rays before dream gets the message. ink tensely surveys the other skeletons in the room, hoping that none of the others have woken from the visually noisy display. to his relief, no one has stirred and the snoring carries on unabated. turning back to dream who’s now rubbing his sockets with his cape, ink hands one of the pencils he always carries to them and pointed to the sketchbook. wordlessly, dream nodded and ink rotated to do the same treatment to error.

the reaction was essentially the same, but instead of just blearly pupils, he earned a glare and a very irked skeleton that had their sleep disturbed. after some positioning, they were sitting cross-legged across one another, with the sketchbook turned to a blank page. ink took the honors and started scribbling.

so, i woke you guys up to try and get your opinions as to how we got here and why we’re still here.

ink turned the book with his message over towards the others and saw them nod as well.

i’m going to assume that both of you have already tried to open a dimensional portal?

both nod their assent again.

and both unsuccessfully? if so, then it’s not just you then.

dream seemed deeply perturbed by that notion, while error was growing more and more frustrated. he snatched the sketchbook from ink’s hands and began furiously scribbling.
I think it’s from whatever that dolt did with that stupid machine that stripped our power away. If I had my portals, I would have already destroyed the mess of corruptions they’ve kindly provided me plus several more.

Gingerly, Ink removed the book from Error’s fixed grip with a quirky grin.

And here I thought you hadn’t destroyed this universe yet because you thought Y/N was cute.

This drew a scowl from the glitchy one and a low sigh from Dream with a thumb and forefinger cradling his skull while Ink stifled his snickering. Error yanked the book out of Ink’s grasp.

I’ve toyed with killing all of them several times already. The only thing that’s stopping me from doing it is because there’s no telling if I’d ever get my powers back if that idiot doesn’t fix his machine. After that, I’ll repay his kindness with another destroyed universe.

Dream and Ink stared unamused by Error’s manic grin while the former finally took their turn at writing.

Do you think we were what caused that magic anomaly that brought us here? We were fighting right before we were dragged to this universe…

Ink looked thoughtful while Error glared and looked away. Ink grabbed the book again.

Maybe a combination of Error destroying one of the near universes and the resulting magical outburst and our own magic made a large enough force? That’s the only thing I could really think of.

The others nodded their agreement with the theory. Ink continued,

What are we going to do in the meantime? We can’t be involved since that really isn’t our role as protectors…

Error scoffed while Dream suddenly perked with an idea and grabbed the sketchbook.

Are you sure we aren’t supposed to be directly involved? The other times we voluntarily went to other universes. This time, we were forced here. And not to mention, doesn’t it seem a little bit too coincidental that we were so close to this place while Sans was scanning for magic?

Browbones were raised with Dream’s proposal, though neither had an immediate rebuttal to what he was claiming. Shaking their head, Ink grabbed the sketchbook for the final time.

Regardless, I think it might be best to keep quiet that we know each other and what we can do. We’ll get bombarded by questions that we probably don’t want to answer… I think that’s all I wanted for now, let’s get some sleep.

Ink finished with a shrug while the other two acquiesced as well, handing Ink his pencils.

After settling down for night once more, the skeletons drifted off to sleep, oblivious to the new silence that filled the room and void sockets boring in to them.

Chapter End Notes
I'm also floored by your guys' positive feedback, thanks for your kind words!

This universe will be running on the headcannon that souls can change colors as kids, since they are usually impressionable and moldable. Adults, usually twenty or over, are more likely to set themselves on two colors.

So the question for you all: What color is Y/N's soul? And what could have happened to poor them that made it hidden?

Tell me your thoughts on the chapter and soul-wise!

P.S. So, finals are a thing. I'll probably be able to update once more before finals kick off, so it's a little slower in updating, you'll know why.

My Tumblr
You wasted no time in your semi-conscious state to slam your hand over your alarm clock on your nightstand. Why for the love of Asgore am I up this early on a weekend of all things? Light was dimly filtering through your blinds and illuminating the drifting particles of dust near your window. You racked your brain as to why you were up before noon on a weekend, but in your state, you were drawing a blank. Well, I guess I did it for a reason, so let’s get up and get my brain functioning. Regrettably, you roll your body out of your bed and on to the floor, scattering your calculus homework across the carpet. You gradually crawled your way to the door and hoisted yourself by the doorknob to get yourself to a standing position. What did I do last night that made me so tired? I did most of my calculus homework then… nothing. I think.

Resisting the urge to slink back to your warm nest, you opened your door and made your way to the short distance to the kitchen to make yourself some caffeinated tea. There was already a significant amount of noise, signaling Papyrus was already up, and a distinct sizzling that you’ve grown to love. Bacon… Drool pools slightly in your mouth as you finally turn the corner towards the kitchen.

―DOES NOT GIVE THE APPROPRIATE NUTRITION ONE NEEDS TO- OH GOOD MORNING HUMAN Y/N!‖ Papyrus boomed from his standing position near the stove. You cringe internally but do not give any outward signs of pain at the sudden volume change. Too loud. Too early. Ugh… You grunt in response while not looking towards the skeleton and proceed to pull out a mug from a cupboard and some Earl Grey tea bags for your pick-me-up. Papyrus already has some water boiling on the stove for you when you finish preparing. He must have remembered that you were going to be up early today and prepared it. If I wasn’t three fourths asleep right now, I would be remarking that he is the best being to ever walk this planet. But talking is too much work...

―AH! THE HUMAN HAS AWOKEN! HOW HAVE YOU SLEPT?‖ You startle at the new and equally loud voice that came from a different part of the kitchen and narrowly avoid burning yourself with the water. Shakily, you set down the pot and rotate towards the island. There were two more skeletons, one clad in baby blue and another with a golden circlet, eating their breakfast. Who the… Last night’s events unfold in your memory. Oh. Duh. You run a hand through your messy bedhead and rub at your eyes.
“Oh right, skeletons,” You mutter mostly to yourself while you ignore Blue’s question about your slumber and grab the pot of water once more. Both Blue and Dream seem a little put-out at your untalkative nature, but Papyrus intervenes on your behalf.

“DO NOT MIND THEM, OTHER BROTHERS! GIVE THEM FIVE MINUTES WITH THEIR TEA AND THEY’LL BE GOOD TO FACE THE DAY!” And by that, you mean only a fourth asleep. Once you have finally filled your mug, you amble towards the final stool on the island, set your tea beside you to steep, and immediately smack your forehead on to the stone of the island. Papyrus continues on, unfazed.

“AS I WAS SAYING, YOUR TACOS DO NOT SOUND LIKE THEY HOLD THE PROPER NUTRITION THAT IS REQUIRED FOR THE MORNING! IT MUST BE FILLED WITH VARIOUS VITAMINS AND MINERALS SO THAT YOU CAN TACKLE THE DAY WITH ENTHUSIASM!”

While you can’t see at the time, Blue somehow puffs up his cheeks in a pout, somewhat indignant.

“AND I’M TELLING YOU, TACOS CAN BE PREPARED FOR ANY MEAL OF THE DAY! YOU JUST NEED TO ADJUST WHAT IS IN THEM SO THAT YOU CAN GET THESE SO CALLED VITAMINS AND MINERALS. WHAT DO THEY DO EXACTLY?” I am so glad that he didn’t try to make them for breakfast…

“They… well, I’m not too sure about the specifics. But I know that they’re good for your health! I recently learned that in my biology classes! My professor’s lectures are so informative!”

“I think I’ve heard about them before… but aren’t they really for humans? We just digest this food magically.” Ah, a voice of reasonable dissent. Let’s see if Papyrus has really been paying attention in his classes.

“AH! YES, ALMOST ALL MONSTERS THOUGHT SO TOO UNTIL RECENTLY! I LEARNED IN THE SAME CLASS THAT RECENT STUDIES HAVE FOUND THAT MONSTERS DO ACTUALLY REQUIRE SOME AMOUNT OF THESE VITAMINS AND MINERALS TO KEEP THEIR MAGIC FLOWING AND CONTINUOUS! PLUS, IT’S GOOD FOR YOUR OVERALL PHYSIQUE!” You snort sleepily from your position as your mind makes a connection to Sans. So he could actually work off that magic fat if he wanted to. But he just can’t give up his bad eating habits.

Once Ink had made his way up from the basement, the group elected to move your conversation to the card table in between the living room and the kitchen while Papyrus and Blue finish up cooking and cleaning, despite your now mostly awake protests. It’s always a losing battle with him, however, and Blue didn’t make things any easier. You’re now sitting with Dream and Ink, who’s eating their breakfast, while waiting for the others to emerge from downstairs or from their room. Ink’s been interrogating you about what you have planned day today and you’ve been floundering what exactly to say.

“So you haven’t really been planning what to do, other than giving us a tour of the campus and then taking us shopping?” Ink asks incredulously. You shrug while clutching your mug to your chest defensively.
“Let’s be honest here. Anything that I do have planned will end up going down the drain anyways. Things barely go like expected with just my Sans and Papyrus, and I don’t want to bore you guys to death. I thought it’d be good to let you guys enjoy the surface and the sun for a while if you aren’t used to it. Hang around the campus parks and just enjoy nature. Ebott Forest University and the surrounding area prides itself on its nature trails and conservation.”

This seemed to pique the interest of the two but before you could continue, you could feel a presence emerge from behind you and place their bony hands on both sides of your chair. The hair near your neck brushed against most likely their skull before they decided to speak.

“good morning, sweetheart.” Red’s husky voice combined with him waking up recently made it drop an octave or two in to appropriate sultry, narrator level. His voice’s proximity and nearness to your ear made you shudder, but you forced it down. You feign normalcy while taking a sip of your almost-gone tea.

“Hey Dream, can you pass me the newspaper that’s right there? Oh, and good morning Red. How did you sleep?” Dream passes you the newspaper with a questioning look, and Ink definitely looks entertained by your unfortunate situation. You roll up the newspaper slowly in hopes of not drawing the attention of the one still standing behind you.

“alright, sweetheart, don’t worry about me. though i guess it would be even better if you-“

THWACK!

“gah! what the hell was that for?” Red had recoiled away from the chair and your raised arm with the newspaper. His skull was slightly flushed with embarrassment while Ink and Dream crack up at your paper defense. You can’t help but smile a little bit too sweetly at him.

“You know full well why you received judgement from the newspaper hammer. It’s too damn early for your flirting.” Red shook with anger and mortification a moment or two until he was able to play it off.

“oh? so there’s a time where my flirting is okay?” Fuck, I was hoping he didn’t catch that. He must’ve found something on your face that betrayed my inner musings and his shark-teeth rose in to a smirk, gold tooth glinting off the light of the near window. You groan while lowering your brandished weapon and shaking your head.

“You know what I mean. Just go get your food and eat before I beat this paper to a pulp on the side of your skull.” A deep chuckle resonated from him but decided to play along and head in to the kitchen.

Error rose shortly thereafter, looking grouchy and irritable like he was the entire time last night. Geno and Beast came out together and immediately begged for coffee. I know that feeling. You apparently held eye contact with Geno for a little bit too long because he now settled with staring at you whenever possible. Guess he’s still sore about last night. Eventually, you had to force your way in to Sans’s room to get him up at a reasonable hour.

“Skeletor, get up. You’ve got work to do.” Unintelligible noises and a grunt from under the covers was your only response. You scoff before throwing the covers away off and away from his form.

“nooooo,” he whined petulantly. He can be such a child sometimes, I swear.
“You even managed to outsleep alternate versions of yourself. It’s impressive, I must admit.” He paused for a moment or two, most likely recalling what you meant. He didn’t deign your comment with a reply before he just crossed his arms over himself and roll over. *Like hell you’re going back to sleep.*

“Such a child, I swear,” You mutter. In a fit of exasperation, you swiftly maneuvered your hands around his ribcage and lifted, earning a surprised squeak from the skeleton.

“y/n! what are you-“

“Treating you like the child you’re acting like.” You hoisted him so that he’s pressed against your front and adjusted his struggling limbs like a reverse piggy back.

“n-no, i’m good! i can get up!” In the dim light, you could make out his almost completely blue skull. *Good. Maybe this’ll motivate him in the future.*

“Nope, not letting go.” You deftly turn on your heel and walk out into the hallway while still attempting to pin the skeleton to you. *Having next to no mass can have its advantages when trying to carry them.*

“y/n, please!”

“Do you really think that your pleading is going to do any good at this point? I’m not letting you go so that you can promptly teleport and lock yourself up in your room.” Finally realizing the futility in his struggles since he can’t teleport with you holding him, he slumped in to you with a groan.

Once you made it to the living room, the unspoken amusement passing between all of the skeletons as you carried the abashed one to the kitchen made you grin eagerly. *Light-hearted embarrassment is always the best way to make sure someone doesn’t repeat stupid actions.* Once Sans’s walk of shame was finished when you plopped him down on to one of the stools on the island, Papyrus turned from his cleaning, unsurprised.

“SANS! DID YOU ATTEMPT TO SLEEP IN AGAIN WHEN YOU WEREN’T SUPPOSED TO?” If Sans could turn any bluer, he could be recruited to Blue Man Group or Eiffel 65. That seemed to answer Papyrus’s question as he sighed dramatically. “SUCH A LAZY BONES!” Your snickers earned a hot glare from Sans which made you laugh even harder.

“If you just listened to me, you wouldn’t have been put in to that situation.” That just earned another groan from him which made you laugh even longer. But what he didn’t tell you was that he greatly enjoyed the proximity.

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Once Papyrus has sufficiently cleaned the kitchen once Sans ate, he had claimed that he should be off for his regular exercise with Undyne. Blue formed stars in his eyes again once he heard about his training.

“WHO KNEW UNDYNE HAD SUCH PASSION FOR FIGHTING? DID YOU GET TO JOIN THE ROYAL GUARD, OTHER PAPY?” Well, that answers my question about if they have an Undyne in their universe. *Filing questions about her occupation for later…* Papyrus made a long, drawn-out sigh and slowly shook his head.

“ALAS, THE ROYAL GUARD DISBANDED ONCE MONSTERS CAME TO THE SURFACE YEARS AGO! BUT! THAT DOESN’T STOP ME SPARRING WITH UNDYNE!
"you're so great, bro." Sans called from his spot at the table. Papyrus struck one of his famous poses with a prideful ‘NYEH!’ and a wish farewell before he was gone and out the door. Sans stood from his chair and sauntered towards the door as well.

"guess that’s my cue to head out and start workin’ on the machine. if ya need anything, just have y/n text me or somethin’." He had his hand on the doorknob while you managed to snag the scruff on his hoodie before he could get out of more responsibilities.

"Oh no you don’t! You still have something for me.” You hold your other hand out, palm up expectantly. Sans’s eyelights are shifting side to side with a little bit of sweat forming on his skull.

"uh, don’t know what you mean.” You roll your eyes at the coy response. You decide to just close the gap now before he starts trying to pun his way out.

"Your debit card, Skeletor. You’re paying for this trip.” That earned a defeated sigh from him before he fished for his wallet and held the card out to you.

"was kinda hopin’ you forgot about that… you know my PIN already, but don’t go too far.” You shot a too-large grin before pointedly plucking it out between his phalanges and placing it in your own wallet.

“WHAT IS THAT TINY THING CALLED A DEBIT CARD?” Blue’s skull was tilted to the side slightly in question while staring intently you. Your eyebrows shot up in bewildered surprise before they scrunched together in thought. Right, they used gold Underground, they all probably have no idea about human technological advancements. Or even human culture. You gulped at the sudden realization of the enormity of the task you’re about to undertake. Good lord, today could end terribly if I don’t keep a close eye on them. You try to give a good enough explanation that could be proven as interesting to techies like Sans.

“It’s a personalized card that can be used to pay for things from a bank account. It uses a magnetic strip on the back to identify whose card it is and automatically takes the allotted money from the account. All without having to use any kind of gold or other kinds of currency!” That certainly gained the attention of most of the skeletons.

“so, you’re sayin’ that card is just able to tell who’s card it is?” Beast seemed incredibly interested, hanging on to your words. You gave a shrug and said,

“More or less. It has to do with magnets and other electronics that I’m not super familiar with. Human technology has really advanced while you guys were in the Underground, if you couldn’t tell from my phone or some of the appliances in the kitchen.” Sans cuts off the conversation there, not allowing any more questions to be asked.

“right well, we could probably go on all day about human technology and its machinations, but i got a machine to rebuild. catch ya guys later.” Sans’s eyes rested on the others for a beat or two before he gave a mock salute to you and was out the door too. You didn’t waste any time in trying to keep things organized so that you can just survive today.

“Right, so! We’re going to be heading out soon too so I just want to get on with it so you guys can have fun on the surface.” Apparently, patience isn’t something that all Sans’s exhibit. Blue is bouncing and unable to sit still while others are casting glances out the windows intermittently.

“Firstly, please, for the love of anything that is holy, try to stick together or that you can see some of
us. None of you have phones that work here and even though you’re skeletons and most likely stick out like a sore thumb, it’s always a hassle looking for someone.” None chose to debate the issue, so you choose to continue on.

“Second, because we’re going to be a large group of skeletons and one human, we most likely are going to earn a few stares. Humans are still trying to adjust to monsters, even after five or so years. Don’t let them get to you, because most of the people around here either have neutral or positive outlooks since we’re so close to Mt. Ebott. They’re most likely curious more than anything.” A few skeptic glances towards one another was your only interruption in your pause.

“Thirdly, I just wanted to apologize on behalf of the human race if we run in to somebody that decides to make a scene. Do not attempt to harm them unless they attack, please. Only disarm if you’re forced to. Having to deal with cops on top of everything else is not going to pleasant for anyone.”

“Cops?” The glitchy one speaks! You nod your head with a sigh.

“Human law enforcement. Guns are a thing that you don’t want to mess with. And since you’re literally from another universe, any legal issues would likely fall on mine, or Sans’s head and they’re an absolute pain with the amount of bullshit that they put you through.” And speaking of pain, I should probably get this out of the way too…

“And one last thing. I should probably say this before anything happens. Not that I expect any of you to do this, but if any of you decide to hurt Papyrus, I will break both of your fucking kneecaps, capiche?” That earned expressions of surprise from the skeletons in the room, followed by some dark looks. I’m not suspecting you for fucks sake, I’m just protecting ones I care about!

…

A derisive snort broke through the now tense silence.

“cute.”

Red.

“the lowly human thinks that they could ever threaten a monster and get away with it? and i was beginning to like you too. if you really know your sans that well, you’d know what he’s capable of. you’d know just how dangerous we actually are. so, sweetheart if you really want to follow through with that, do you want to have a bad time?” Magic was flowing freely out of his expanded solitary iris and shark smile was too wide on his skull. The others are looking between the two of you disapprovingly, while Blue and Dream look ready to intervene if necessary while Error seems extremely amused by this altercation. The crimson fire leaking of his eyesocket certainly was intimidating, but you refuse to back down. Not when Papyrus was on the line. You’re going to have to bluff and speculate, but you will get your point across. This probably isn’t going to earn me any points in their books, but it has to be done.

You fold your arms and keep your gaze focused on the threat at hand, refusing to give. You give a scoff yourself before speaking after a few strained moments.

“And here I thought your flirts actually meant something. But you do have a point,” you concede with a thoughtful hum. “What could a lowly human with an intent to hurt ever do to a powerful skeletal monster?” Red seems to take this as submission so he parts his jaw to speak. You continue before he can bask in self-induced pride.
“But, the real question is this:” You lean forward in front of Red, but you speak loud enough so that everyone could hear you.

“What would happen if a human child decided to slaughter the entire monster race for fun?” That shut his magic eye off in an instant. Bingo.

“And they succeeded, several times.” You lean back and gauge the reactions of the others. Beast and Red have similar expressions while Geno looks even worse off than he did last night. Dream was eyeing you warily, Ink maintained eye contact with you with morbid curiosity, and Error looked like he was enjoying every second of this conversation. Blue just looked confused. Satisfied, you speak then to everyone.

“Your expressions give me more answers than words ever could. Yes, I know what happened down there and I’m sorry that you guys have to suffer through it. But it can’t happen here.” You turn back towards Red with a hard stare.

“So, if you don’t think that I can’t or won’t do anything, remember that. Not that I think you’ll have a tough time doing so.” You flash Red a wide, sickly sweet grin and a tilt of the head.

“Still think I’m pretty cute, huh?”

You let the information sink in for a moment before pivoting and walking towards the door. Let’s try and lighten the mood before it can’t come back.

“Now then! Now that that’s all over and done with, let’s get out and in to the sun. Welcome to the surface!”

You open the front door with the wary skeletons in tow out in to the open world.

Chapter End Notes

I still think Reader's cute. But gee, don't you think that was a little too far?

FINALS, HNNNG. Why must they be a thing and torture me so? I may, emphasis on MAY, get an update out early May, but we'll just have to see on how finals end up going.

My Tumblr
The guarded looks some of the skeletons held melted away immediately once they stepped out in to the fall sunshine. You could truly see pure awe and even some form of long-lost nostalgia on the crinkling faces of some of the monsters. The skeletons stood stock still on your dinky patio for several minutes in silence while you looked on with a realization that hit you harder than you ever could have imagined. They’ve been deprived of something I considered natural all their lives. The blue, never-ending sky, the occasional flowing breeze, that distinct smell of storms approaching at night, and even the sun… ever present in its rise and fall on the visible horizons. It’s an odd sensation, really. Your emotions swiftly flicking between warm pride of what you can call your planet, and then suddenly crashing down with vicarious guilt, knowing that humanity is the one that imprisoned monsters for centuries and eventually even forgetting about them altogether. 

This is what it must have looked like, five years ago, when monsters reached the surface. Ecstatic smiles and hopes to build a better future in harmony. But what can’t be forgotten is that generations lived and died without breathing a breath of fresh air. Didn’t get to experience the sense of wonder the stars could evoke and what kinds of stories that have been passed on from parent to child about them. Didn’t get to see their children laugh and frolic in an open field of grass. Didn’t get a chance to truly live like they should have. All because of humanity’s fear of the unknown. It’s ironic, in a sense. Humans have taken great strides in discovering and pioneering newfound ideas and even other planets in hopes of contact of another species in space. But when it came to such a kind and peaceful race that already existed on our planet, but lived a different life that humans did back then, we fought, slaughtered, massacred them and eventually pushed them all down a mountain to rot. And to even extinguish the idea of monsters completely, any and all records of who they were or what they were capable of, were pillaged and burned. Lost and forgotten to human’s fearful ignorance. What did survive is what can be found in certain fairy-tales and myths, telling of fantastical beasts and where to supposedly find them. Though that’s all it remained for centuries: myths. Not a true, set-in-stone fact about what happened how many years ago and about the monsters that lived under our feet ever came to light with the initial scouring of information when monsters resurfaced.

You had to snap yourself out of your inner admonishments before it transformed in to vocal self-loathing of your species. They all probably have the same, or similar mindsets when it comes to humans, if Red’s words and Geno’s actions were anything to go by. They’ve been left to stew in their
unjust imprisonment for so long, it’s probably culminated in to some toxic feelings. But that’s where I can hopefully come in. Yeah, humans can be pretty shitty, but we have improved considerably in some areas. There’s been those who have welcomed them with open arms, and there are only a few very loud individuals who truly wish to push the monsters back in to the mountain. That’s what I’d like to show them when they’re here. Not all humans are bad, and I will prove it.

Knowing that you’re set in your goal in changing the skeleton’s views of humanity fills you with… something. Something that you can’t quite place, but it’s a certain something that you hold dear in your mindset. What is that exactly?

…

…

…eh, you’ll figure it out later. For now, you can wait as long as they’d like to stay there and gaze outward and upward, and simply take in their expressions.

Though what you did find to be an interesting fact is that Dream, Ink, and Error weren’t really looking at their surroundings either. They were looking at the others. Two with some form of contentedness, and one with their ever-present grouchy disdain. When you caught the eyes of Ink with a raised brow, he hastily turned away from you and out towards the road. Do you really think I’m not gonna read in to that? This is all becoming way too convenient that they always seem to gravitate towards one another and that their actions regarding the surface are similar. Now was certainly not the time to call out Ink and others for their behavior, so for now, you just pretend to write it off.

You shift your gaze back to the others and smile again, the guilt being pushed away for the time being. After a moment or two, you swivel your head and simply drink in the surrounding area with a new-found light and appreciation. The gentle swaying of the trees in the breeze to the rustle of the fiery mess of leaves that pile on the ground and from those that still cling to the branches. The sky is almost perfectly clear, with a few wisps of clouds high in the atmosphere slowly drifting across the ocean of blue. Knowing that your Sans enjoys space and stars, you take a stab at having some form of easy conversation between you and the skeletons once more.

“If we’re lucky and it stays clear for tonight, we can get a beautiful view of the fall stars.” You say from your point on the empty driveway, head upturned. Blue thankfully rose to the occasion.

“YOU MEAN THE STARS CHANGE FOR DIFFERENT SEASONS?”

You shake your head while still keeping your eyes on the drifting clouds.

“Not exactly. Based on our orbital position around the sun, we get a different picture as to what’s in the night sky. The stars themselves don’t change, but our spot in space does.”

“W-WOWSERS. THIS IS ALL SO BEAUTIFUL! THIS IS WHAT I COUL’VE ONLY DREAMED OF… AND MORE!” I mean, if you count a road, a couple of squashed-in houses, and a few trees as something akin to dreams, then more power to you. I probably couldn’t exactly feel what they’re all feeling right now, being so accustomed to what I’m seeing now.

“Hey, if you think this is beautiful, you’re going to love the botanical gardens and parks around here. The autumn flowers should be blooming by now. C’mon guys, there’s more sights to see than a couple drab houses! Let’s get walking!”

Before you could finish your last sentence, Blue bounded away from you in the opposite direction.
The walk to main campus was relatively uneventful while you attempted to keep Blue from running off in every direction. The others seemed content to just watch you struggle in herding the smallest skeleton.

“Y/N WAS THAT A CAR?!”

“Yeah, Blue.”

“THAT’S SO COOL! WE ONLY HAD WATERY CAR MAGAZINES WE PICKED UP FROM WATERFALL! IT DOESN’T COMPARE TO THE REAL THING!” He’s glorifying the rusty buggy that just puttered by, spewing out smoke at us. Huh.

“I REALLY WISH PAPY WAS HERE TO SEE ALL OF THIS! HE’D PROBABLY NEED SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO JUMPSTART HIS LAZY BONES!”

“heh, tibia honest, i bet he’d really like this, too.” Geno, please no…

“UGH! AND THAT’S ANOTHER THING! MAYBE HE’D TONE DOWN ALL OF HIS INCESSANT PUNS!”

“sounds like your bro has a real funny bone.”

The sound Blue subsequently makes has you frantically searching for an out before he blows a gasket. Ah!

“There it is, guys! Ebott Forest University!” You sweep your arm out towards to the now visible modern-looking buildings down the road. Without much of another word, you continue on with a pep in your step.

The closer you got to campus, the more populated and busy the sidewalks and streets became. To your utter relief, the stares were kept mostly to a minimum and both monster and human passersby didn’t pay much mind to your group. That’s a good sign, hopefully. As you pass by the furthermost buildings, you turn your body to face the skeleton group behind you while you keep walking.

"Right, I’m going to go ahead and talk about where you can either find me or Sans if you need us and we’re not around. You all obviously won’t care about the actual campus, you’re not prospective students, so I’m gonna skip over all of that jazz.”

“you’re a student here?” Beast asks offhandedly, they’re all still watching their surroundings with a more subdued awe than before. You nod while casting a look behind you to make sure you don’t end up tripping on anyone.

“Yup, I’m a late second year, Papyrus is nearing to graduate, and Sans, as you could probably guess, participates in research on campus. I’ve lived around here my entire life, and I absolutely love it. So, when I found out I was accepted, I was more than happy to stick around.”
“what’re ya studyin’?” This question caused you to scratch the back of your head sheepishly.

“I’m… not entirely sure yet. I’ve got the rest of the semester to decide what I want to study, so I’m using all of my time working on my required courses.” Making a quick sidestep in time before you ran in to someone that’s stopped on the pavement.

“You’ll find me in these couple of buildings on most days.” You gesture widely towards the buildings surrounding the area. “and in between classes, I typically hang around Main Square or in one of the cafes if it’s bad outside.” You spot the increasingly bored look on Error’s face so you pick up the pace slightly before they all decide to split up on you.

“Sans would be in the physics lab, obviously, if you ever need him. It’s on the bottom floor. You won’t catch me dead in there, so I’ll just show you the building and you can explore it if you ever want to.” Now Red has joined Error in the bored category, so now is the time to take them off their metaphorical leash before they make a break for it.

“Okay! That’s really the last of what I had to show you. This way, we can hang out in Main Square for a while and let you guys see the sights around there.” You quickly pass through an overhang with shrubs and bushes and reemerge back in to the sunlight in to Main Square.

Central campus is your favorite part. It’s got all of the essentials in one easily accessible area. The pathways around the park area resemble a crosshair, with a large circular fountain that’s been known for water shows that some of the engineers design in their free time in the middle of it all. Around the pavement, there’s ample greenery with extremely large, and incredibly old aspen trees with a line of seasonal flowers surrounding them. The gardeners always have their work cut out for them when it comes to maintenance, especially with pesky college students. It’s always relatively busy, whether it’s people walking their pets or the crowds around the overflowing cafes. Despite the low hum of constant noise, you find yourself at peace here more often than not. You enjoy taking your bungee hammock and tying between the trees and taking a nap or just sitting on the edge of the fountain reading a book.

You take a large contented breath and sigh, turning back around the face the others.

“Here we are! My favorite place on campus! We can just hang around here for a while and you can go do what you want. But please, remember what we talked about. I don’t want to go on a manhunt for you guys.” You take the time to look at each of the skeletons in the face. There’s restless energy in all of them, Blue being the worst of them in that case, ready and waiting to explore. With a shooing motion, you let go of your charge.

“Go on, have fun!”

…

For being alternate versions of someone that you’ve seen sprint maybe once, they sure can move fast.

You can’t help the startled laugh that escapes you as you see all of them go different directions. For you, though, you end up taking a spot in the grass next to one of the unoccupied aspen trees and just relax in the shade. Maybe I can catch up on some of the fanfiction I haven’t been able to read, like the fandom trash that I am. While you idly flip through your bookmarked stories, you can’t help but wonder what the others have been thinking about regarding their situation.
Beast doesn’t know what to think about this situation. About how he got here, how long he’s going to stay here, or you specifically. He was just sitting at his sentry station when he suddenly found himself splayed across a lab floor. He’d initially feared that he’d nodded off and had another nightmare, but when he found a smaller version of himself staring wide-eyed back at him, the notion that this was reality smacked him like a ton of bricks.

But then that wasn’t the biggest surprise, it was then that this Sans had willingly opened his home to a human. And what’s worse, this human’s soul is buried so far in themselves he can’t even get an accurate read on them. After living countless times where his only interaction with the species was with a child with what seemed like split finely between a demon abomination and a pure pacifist, how could anyone that’s an alternate him ever do something as asinine as that? However, watching them interact with everyone has blown whatever judgements about humans Beast has had right out of the water, effectively leaving him floundering as to what to think. They’re so buddy buddy with this Sans and Papyrus, that they even had the audacity to threaten himself and the others about harming Papyrus—not like he ever would, his instincts practically forbid it—and then threw one of his largest and most hidden trauma right in his face as reinforcement.

How did they know that?

It only leaves two options, either that they themselves are this universe’s anomaly, or that Sans had told them himself. Now that Beast is thinking deeply about it, the first option is increasingly unlikely. If there are in fact alternate versions of himself, it could be assumed that there are alternate Frisks and their time warping abilities. And that one other thing that they said,

“Yes, I know what happened down there and I’m sorry that you guys have to suffer through it. But it can’t happen here.”

Did something happen to this universe’s Frisk? Why did it not trigger a reset or even a load? So many questions, not enough answers. But one thing is for certain that if they know enough about their Sans, Frisk, and Papyrus, it could be assumed that they are known and trusted in their own group of friends. But why? What happened before he got here that allowed for them to be so open with part of the species that locked monsters below a mountain to be forgotten?

His own suspicions about them have been mostly cleared, mainly because they’ve earned the trust and respect from another him and his brother, but that doesn’t mean that he’s going to be lowering his guard any time soon. Not when there’s suddenly humans everywhere. With so many new scents, sights, and information that he’s just not used to after living so many days over and over again, his nerves and instincts are going absolutely haywire. Protect and preserve. But protect who? And from what Y/N has told them, monsters have been given full rights and should not be threatened unless they come across someone truly evil. The souls around him right in the square are all bright and have little to no EXP or LV, meaning that he’s most likely not in any danger.

And then there were the ones last night that were up who-knows-when and scratching on a sheet of paper—

“So, you’re the little sister?”

This new, high pitched voice was coming almost directly next to him and caused Beast to visibly jump in place and sit up from his place in the grass he’s been laying on quickly, locating the source. A little girl, most likely not even six years old, with a blue bow in her auburn hair and large, inquisitive hazel eyes. And a holder of one of the brightest souls of kindness he’s ever seen. Beast visibly relaxed and hunched himself over, making his size a little less intimidating, and meeting the
eyes of the girl with a wide smile.

“hey, kiddo. what’s up?”

The girl hooked her arms together behind her and looked down and away, seemingly embarrassed with their situation. Beast waited patiently for the girl to muster up the courage with whatever they were going to ask of him.

“Uhm, I… I see a lot of you guys in the park right now, and I wanted to ask… how, uhm, how do you eat?”

…now that was not what Beast was anticipating. He let out a loud guffaw at the now even more abashed girl in front of him. He had to stifle his laughter when she started to stutter out apologies and looked like she was about to run away.

“hey, hey, it’s alright. no harm in askin’ questions.” He looked her dead in the eye with a conspiratorial grin. “d’you really wanna know?”

With Beast’s compliance, the girl immediately perked up and nodded quickly, seemingly impatient to find out the answer. Beast looked away to both sides of him and leaned in even closer and put up a clawed hand next to his mouth, and quickly whispered in a hush tone.

“magic.”

His grin grew even wider as the girl’s face went from excitable, to contemplative, to a form of mild irritation.

“No fair! That doesn’t count as an answer!” She huffed while puffing out her cheeks in a pout. Beast held a low chuckle for a good moment or two before plucking a blade of grass from the ground near him.

“i’m serious. watch this.” The girl now held that wide-eyed curiosity again as he raised the blade of grass to his mouth, parted his jaw, and slipped the grass inside. ew, okay maybe not the best example. He swallowed and allowed the grass to fall out again on to his undershirt from where his spine and skull meet. He plucked it off of him and waved it in front of the girl, who was staring at him with awe.

“see? told you it was magic. most stuff just goes right through me.” He added with a wink while the girl burst in to giggles. His tail batted the ground near him once or twice in satisfaction from the positive response from the child.

“You’re funny, Mr. Skeleton. I like you. So how do you go-“ The girl was cut off when another woman called out in his direction. A soul of weathered patience.

“Ashe! Ashe, honey, don’t go running off like that—oh!” She seemed to finally notice him as her expression turned one of surprise to apologetic.

“nah, don’t worry, she was just curious is all. besides, i got pretty thick skin.” Ashe burst in to giggles again at your pun while her mother let out a startled laugh of her own.

“See momma, he’s really funny and nice! I like him!” The mother smiled down to Ashe with an
emotion that could only be described as maternal.

“That’s nice honey. C’mon, how about we go get something from the café nearby?” Ashe squealed and immediately darted off towards the direction of the nearest café. “Ashe, no! Oh dear…” She heaved a heavy sigh while running a hand through her hair before looking back at Beast again with another smile. “Thanks for entertaining my daughter. I’m sorry again if she was bothering you…” Beast cut off her off before she could apologize again.

“hey, don’t worry ‘bout it. seems like you’ve got your hands full with her.” He flicked his head in the direction Ashe ran off to. “might wanna go after her before she runs in to any trouble.” Her eyes widened before she said her goodbyes with a wave. nice kid, and with a nice mother that didn’t seem to have a problem with monsters. huh…

Beast’s gaze was drawn to Y/N where they were sitting under one of the trees, where they were gazing back at him. so they saw that, huh? not sure how I feel about that. and if that isn’t the story of my life for the past twenty four hours… Despite his ruminations, they seemed to just smile at him and look away towards where the others were hanging around in the temperate sun and cool breeze.

…maybe this won’t be so bad.

Error knew exactly to think about his situation. He hated every single second of it. He’s been grumbling to himself while toying with his strings in his hands, forming different ways to make knots or weaving patterns. How dare some lowly glitch strip his powers away and then have the gall to threaten him about what he can or can’t do. Him? He could kill them all. It would be so easy. With just a few of his strings and a flick of his wrist, he could tear through those wastes of space’s souls while feeling his own LOVE grow even higher. Though what would probably be an annoyance was that stupid Creator and his naïve lackey. They always turn up wherever he goes to interfere with what his rightful job is. And no matter what he does to get them to stop, he can’t shake them, even here of all places. Just another unoriginal Classic pacifist timeline that’s soiled its self with interactions with other unneeded universes. He’ll be proud when he finally gets rid of this place once and for all. He will count the days when he finally has his powers back so he can see this world crumble around him to nothing but raw energy.

But he can be patient. He can wait for his chance to get out of this worthless glitch and back to work. He’ll probably even be able to catch up on Undernovela when he gets back too, being the Asgoro fan that he is. But he’s going to have to wait for months. Months stuck with that antagonistic Creator and other voidspawns. Truly, this is what hell looks like to a monster such as himself. Nothing but those worthless puns and having worthless forced interactions and being around those worthless beings.

But there is one thing that could potentially hold his attention for more than a second.

You.

Your soul isn’t visible, and he’d be lying to himself if he said if he wasn’t curious as to what it looks like to be so hidden. But that’s it. A one trick pony. Once he pulls out your soul and sees for himself, then you’re back to being as insignificant as the others.
Although…

It certainly was entertaining to see a human no less being so knowledgeable about a Sans before. Sure, it’s happened before and based on that disgusting multiverse theory, it will happen infinitely again, but he hasn’t personally seen it to this degree. And then they just used one of the biggest torments of a Sans’ life like it was nothing just to try and prove that their threat was genuine. It being a pleasant surprise to see both the Creator and others so deeply perturbed by how much a human knows about them would be an understatement.

And then they even had the nerve to talk to him and act like they knew something about him. What do they know about me? Nothing! It filled him with absolute frustration and another emotion that he certainly doesn’t want to spend the time discerning when they felt like they just figured him out in a blink of an eye. Error balled the strings in his hands again in a fit of irritation as he glared daggers at you from across the square. Slowly, his mind began turning, processing, considering.

And a plan was formed.

Chapter End Notes

Error, honey, what are you doing? :)

Let me know your thoughts on the chapter!

Also, I've already had a job lined up for the summer, so if updates still aren't frequent, then you'll know why.

My Tumblr
Don't Brush Off Opportunity (Part One)

Chapter Summary

You defend Blue from the horrors of college and then question your new sense of normalcy.

Chapter Notes

...hi. Sorry for not uploading for almost a month. That doesn't mean I'm no longer interested in the story or the fandom, not by a long shot. But now I'm working full time as a landscaper at a plant nursery. I'm working ten plus hours a day and then have to deal with clients on top of it so at the end of the day, I'm both physically and mentally exhausted. I've been doing nothing but working and sleeping as of late, so apologies if updates are slow. I'm going to keep writing this no matter what though!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

**You to Skeletor:** “Yo, just wanted to update you so that you know that things have been surprisingly okay so far. Only have had to worry about Blue running off in to the streets. Other than that, the others have been pretty tame when they’re not ogling at the scenery.”

You finish typing out the message to Sans while mentally taking stock of where everyone had eventually wandered off to. Blue has wasted no time in attempting to befriend others in that he’s talking to a few guys that visibly reek with bad life choices and too many parties. You resolve to intervene on that later even though all of them seem to be enjoying the company.

Red is also not-so-surprisingly chatting up two girls who are looking increasingly uncomfortable standing there. He’s probably laying on that Red charisma that you’ve been exposed to several times in the past twenty-four hours a little bit too thick for most people to be comfortable with. A few moments later, from what you can discern from your place in the shade, it seems like they’ve beaten a hasty retreat in the opposite direction while Red stares off at them knowing that he’s probably struck out, shrugs, then trudges down towards the fountain. *He probably flirts with anything that moves…*

Beast, Ink, and Error are all taking residence in the shade of different aspen trees around the park all doing something different. Beast looks like he’s taking a nap, but you know better than to fall for that. Ink appears to be drawing in a sketchbook of sorts. *Where did—you know what, no. Not gonna question it. He probably has some form of storage in that ridiculous outfit. Or it’s magic, the default answer when you try to explain anything monster related to a human.* Error is the hardest to decipher since he’s the furthest away from you and seems to be fiddling with something in his lap. Blades of grass maybe? You’ve caught him staring at you a few times throughout the day and you can’t tell for sure why.

Dream and Geno are sitting together by the fountain, seemingly chatting while staring at the moving and undulating streams of water. That seems to pique your interest the most. From what you could
glean from the past half a day, you presumed Geno would be the most standoff-ish towards any of the others. Well, the most standoff-ish except for Error. He seems to be a special case.

You heave a contented sigh and gaze up in to the sky again, now with noticeably more cloud cover. Making a mental note to check the weather for later, you stand from your place by the trees and stretch your stiff muscles. You may have been sitting in the same position for too long because it’s certainly uncomfortable working your muscles again so that they function correctly. Once you deem yourself comfortable enough to move freely, you head towards Blue where he’s still talking to the questionable delinquents. You catch the end of their conversation.

“Yeah man, it’d be really cool if you could make it. We can make it worth your while.” You narrow your eyes while standing at a distance behind Blue in an attempt to stay polite. *What did they just invite him to?* You can’t see Blue’s expression, but you can tell that he’s invested in whatever they’re talking about.

“It sounds like so much fun! However… I am not from around here, so I will have to see if I am available.” The boys look slightly disheartened before slapping the same nonchalant smirk back on their face.

“No prob, little dude. It’s tonight at nine. Gamma Delta Delta, you can’t miss it.” Your eyes widen and almost fall over yourself in closing the distance before Blue makes any more mistakes in fraternizing—*dammit Sans*—with those guys any longer.

“Hey, Blue! We’re going to be heading out. Can you help me gather the others?”

Blue whirls to look at you with a giant grin that would make your heart wither and die if it hadn’t already done so yesterday night.

“Oh, Y/N! Guess what! I’ve tripled the number of human friends in mere hours! By the day ends, it will have increased exponentially!” He puffs out his chest, still clad in his armor, awaiting your recognition. You can’t help but give it to him.

“That’s great, man. C’mon, we don’t have a whole lot of time left before we need to head back.” The guys seem to take this as their cue to leave with the daggers that you’re sending their way. *I can’t believe they’re choosing to corrupt this poor innocent soul with their frat ways. Especially Gamma Delta Delta. Their parties have ended up with cops busting in more times than I can count.*

“See ya around, little dude. Don’t forget!” Blue waves enthusiastically at their retreating forms as you continue to bore holes in to the back of their heads with your protective nature rearing its head fiercely already.

“I won’t! Goodbye other human friends!” You can’t help but feel a mighty bit apprehensive as to what they invited him to and see if there’s any way in talking him out of it.

“So, uh, Blue, I overhead a little bit while I was walking over, but what were they inviting you to?” His eyes formed little stars as he brought his balled-up hands together near his face in extreme anticipation.

“I believe they invited me to one of their so called frat parties! They said that I would fit in and have so much fun playing their different games with beverages!” You choke on your spit while inhaling sharply and attempt, yet fail, to keep your composure while you’re now hunched over in a coughing fit. Your mind is travelling every which way at attempting to see any positive outcome from that encounter and find nothing good in coming from it. *Blue, the supposed cinnamon roll, fitting in with those lecherous frat
guys?! Bull-fucking-shit. They’re probably gonna try and get him plastered and or stoned and make him do something embarrassing or uncomfortable. Those cretins, attempting to use Blue for cheap entertainment. NOT ON MY WATCH! You snap out of your racing thoughts by Blue pausing and continuing in a more subdued, yet still excited manner.

“What even is a frat? And Gamma Delta Delta?” You frantically search to find a good excuse that convinces him to avoid the party while still keeping things vague. Blue looks on with a mildly concerned expression while you slowly put yourself back together.

“Uh… a fraternity, or in short, frat, is a group of *wheeze* guys that supposedly have the same kinds of ideas or aspirations. Depends on the type.” Blue looks somewhat interested and you feel the guilt in having to shoot down his new friends, even if they’re frat guys.

“But Gamma Delta Delta is one of the frats that aren’t really constructive in their ideology. They host extremely unsafe parties that get in trouble with the law almost weekly. So, it’s best if you avoid them and their parties if you don’t want to be arrested.” Is he even drinking age? Sure, he may act somewhat like a child, but there’s a certain air that radiates maturity about him. Even if he is of age, I doubt he’s got any kind of appropriate identification. Best to not risk it. Much to your fears, Blue’s face falls with a dejected ‘OH…’ as he turns to look at the retreating figures. Suddenly, he perks right back up as he looks back at you again.

“But that means that they’re just in need of guidance! Only the magnificent San-er Blue could help them in their troubled times!” Goddammit, make this harder on me why don’t you. Let’s pull the cooking card in the last-ditch attempt to end this quickly.

“While I think that they’d appreciate your attempts at setting them on the right path, I don’t think it’s something that you’ll be able to attend. You wanted to cook your special tacos tonight, right? We’ll probably be back pretty late so it’ll push dinner close to party time.” Totally not pulling most of this out of my ass. Nope. Blue seems to take your words in to consideration with an audible hum and a gaze drifting upwards towards the sky in thought.

“I suppose you are right. I will have to attend one of their later parties that you said they would no doubt be hosting!” Ah, shit.

“We’ll have to see, Blue. Let’s go grab the others!”

You challenge him in hopes of distracting him about upcoming frat parties and to see who can collect the most of the remaining skeletons. Blue accepts with aplomb and wins with a four to two count. Not like you were completely trying, but hey, even if you were, he probably would have beaten you then too.

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Skeletor to You: “k”

You cannot believe what you just discovered in your new message from Sans. The fucker just k’ed me! Does he have any kind of actual texting integrity at all? Hoo boy, if you could reach through the ever expansive, and sometimes extremely freaky, data of the internet and smack Sans upside the head, you would do so without a breath of hesitation. If there’s one thing you dislike about Sans’s lazy demeanor, it’s his texting skills. It drives you up a wall when he does things like this. Is it seriously too much effort to expend that additional miniscule amount of energy to type out the rest of the word or maybe make one coherent sentence that has some form of grammar? It is not that hard to
maybe have a little bit of reciprocation that you even cared or processed what was sent in the text beforehand. Are you nitpicking? No! …maybe. …probably. Okay, yes, you were definitely nitpicking. But it’s not like you actually tell him about your grievances with his texting form. He’ll purposefully text even worse just to annoy the hell out of you, and that’s something you don’t want to encourage.

Since you’ve spent the past few moments glowering at a single letter on a messaging app on your phone instead of looking where you were walking like someone who was responsible, you collided with the skeleton in front of you that had apparently stopped in their tracks. You staggered back a step or two—they didn’t move or even react, further cementing that these guys are stronger than they look—and prepared to apologize before stopping yourself and took a good look at who was in front of you.

Even though you were supposed to be leading the group, you’d fallen back behind the rest of them unconsciously while scowling at the text you got from Sans and your internal monologuing about Sans’s short—UGH—comings. He has completely and utterly ruined my sense of humor as well as my appreciation for wordplay. Okay, that’s kind of a lie. He can get a laugh out of me, but it actually has to be a good one. Not one that I’ve heard over nine thousand times beforehand; such as literally anything that involves bones. But I digress… why are they still standing and staring like that?

Ink wasn’t one of the others that you managed to rope in to corralling Blue around instead of yourself while you were navigating around town to get to the nearest clothing store, so he’s been hanging towards the back, watching the others attempt your previous job. Not so funny when you’re the one that has to police an overly energetic skeleton that acts like he has the key to a candy store, now is it? And now here he is, standing in the middle of the sidewalk of the commercial district you were in, staring perpendicular of your line of sight, towards one the corner stores in the immediate area. The name was prettily lettered with calligraphy and in a rainbow of colors in the window of the store.

**VINCENT’S ARTIST EMPORIUM: EVERYTHING AN ARTIST WILL EVER NEED**

An art store? I mean, I guess it’s kind of cool looking. But there’s probably others like it around…

You follow Ink’s line of sight in to the window of the store, where an ‘antique’ watercolor brush set was displayed with ‘fancy’ glass casing and its own special ‘brush holder.’ In other words, most likely a giant waste of money. Why is he so interested anyway?

…

Wait…

He has a sketchbook with him somewhere with him and several pencils…

He has an ink splatter on his chin that’s still present even after sleeping on it…

He has a gigantic paintbrush fastened to his back that has its own name…

His name is Ink for fucks sake!

Why did it take so long for you to connect the dots for something that was so blatantly obvious??

This time, you couldn’t stop yourself from slapping your face with your idiocy while Ink started to vibrate visibly, much like Blue. From behind your hand of shame, you could make out new stars in his sockets, one yellow with a light blue center, and the other having only solid light blue. Oh come
“Hey, Ink, we can come back at some other time, but we’ve really—“

“Blehhhhhh!”

Without warning, Ink vomited up an inky black substance that splattered all over the sidewalk and your shoes. You freeze completely when you hear the wet slapping of whatever he just threw up impact the ground, your mouth attracting flies. Completely unperturbed by the fact that he just spontaneously vomited, Ink then immediately raced forward into the store, with its store bell chiming mockingly at your slightly outstretched form from where the artist stood.

…

What the fuck.

Your baffled and slightly unnerved presence from the events beforehand garnered more stares than what your skeleton posse attracted all day, some having disgust others with various degrees of amusement at your misfortune. You’re still failing to process what the fuck just happened to you while you gaze at the watery black vomit stupidly.

“you, uh, alright over there, sweetheart?” The others seemed to have finally notice your, as well as Ink’s, absence, evident by them turning around and finding your shocked state. Lifting your bowed head, you stare at the group, mind finally kicking in to gear. Without answering, you turn your head to the store front, spying Ink frolicking between the store shelves without an absolute care in the world, back to his vomit, back to the now increasingly confused others, then back to the vomit again. You sigh tiredly and look back at the skeletons again with a shaky grimace.

“You know, considering the previous circumstances as to how this situation even was possible in the first place, I don’t know why I’m even surprised by this turn of events.” This only proceeded to confuse them even more.

“ya gotta cough up some details, kid. what happened?” Your entire face twitches in response at Geno’s unassuming questioning. Even when they don’t even know what the hell happened, they manage to find a way to pun about it. What even. You decide to take out your irritation towards lame puns on the store owner. You glare at the calligraphy of the name with a hatred only someone who’s just been vomited on by a magical skeleton that probably ruined your shoes in the process and then left stunned and stupefied by the perpetrator would know.

“Gee, thanks Vincent! Thanks for making my claims about plans falling down the drain come true!” You’re not really answering any of the skeleton’s questions, but you wouldn’t know where to start. Oh, you know. Ink just decides to vomit and then rush in to a store like nothing even happened when we would like to actually get back to the house at a decent time tonight! You huff in aggravation while bending down to try and salvage your shoes while the others look on, still confused on your actions and Ink’s whereabouts. You lick your fingers and attempt to scrub furiously at the blackness, only to find it smudging around the original stain as well as coloring your skin a more subdued grey-black. This texture, color… and even scent—ew—are familiar to something you know…

…

Wait.
Don’t fucking tell me.

You exasperatedly groan while throwing your head back to the skies while two skeletons’ skulls flash with recognition.

“It’s ink. Of COURSE it is!”

Chapter End Notes

Goddammit Ink.

Props to knifehappypsycho to inadvertently guessing this bit with Ink.

Don't forget to point out any mistakes if there are any (who am I kidding, of course there are) and let me know your thoughts on the chapter!

My Tumblr
But Wait, There's More!

Chapter Summary

Clothing warehouses, man. They're giant mazes.

Chapter Notes

Time flies, doesn't it? Welp, almost anything and everything happened to delay this chapter two and a half months. Job sucked the life out of me, zero motivation to write because the chapter kept fighting me at every turn, some much needed vacation to get away and some fresh ideas, other family problems, and then finally moving back to college to top things off to where we are today. Have a long chapter as recompense!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“You M-a- Hey! What’d I do?” Ink says as he scrambles behind you while keeping one of his hands on your grip on the nape of his scarf. You’re currently marching yourself as well as your oversized baggage towards the exit of the art emporium in hopes of actually getting to the preferred store in the next half an hour. You take note of how surprisingly plush the scarf your holding is, but yet it carries an underlying solidity. What’s with these skeletons and their preference for great clothes? Well, ‘great’ is an entirely loose and subjective term, when you’re reminded of the entire outfit Ink has on.

“We don’t have time for your prancing around a novelty art shop while we actually have things to do before it gets dark tonight!” The tone in your voice lessened to something softer when you continued. “Plus, you threw up all over the sidewalk and my shoes before you ran in, so I wanted to also make sure that you’re okay.”

You cast a sideways glance behind you towards the one struggling to walk normally in a relatively awkward position. He’s settled with walking backwards while keeping his body weight towards you as you drag him along. Additionally, you’re pretty sure he’s just playing along with your actions; he could probably free himself relatively easily if he wanted or needed to. Ink meets your gaze with a quizzical expression.

“I did?” He deflected your concern over his well-being completely and opted for playing ignorant with relative ease. …or, he just forgot. There’s probably a good fifty-fifty chance either way.

“Yup.”

“Huh, I can fix that. One second.”

Ink finally realizes that he can walk on his own and parts your grip when he pulls out ‘Broomy’ as you both leave the shop, the bell chiming with its annoying, yet still kind of charming, pitch.

“Have a good day!”

From you stalking Ink like a predator watching unassuming prey when you first came in after him,
and then finally pouncing and subsequently half-dragging the monster out of the shop, the store clerk had been watching with an all too amused expression. It probably was the highlight of his day to see another student drag out a friend like a disobedient child in what is probably a relatively dry job. You cast a wry look of complete exasperation at the knowing clerk, and step outside after Ink just in time to see him swipe his brush against the ebony stain on the sidewalk. In an instant after the brush made contact with the ink, it vanished without a trace.

You give a whistle of approval as Ink sets Broomy back on his back.

_Calling all janitorial staff, a single skeleton has put them all out of work._

“This does that work with all kinds of stains or just your own self-induced vomit?” _The new kind of ShamWow: Mmmmagic!_ Ink makes a dismissive shrug as he explains.

“Nah, I use ink as a form of magic for me, so I can just brush it away and be used for later.” Damn, you thought you had a new business idea that would make you more than $18.99 plus shipping and handling. Your internal businessman is now weeping at the potential loss. _But on the bright side…_

“Awesome! So then, can you get the stains off my shoes too?” You point to where ink has stained your crimson sneakers, spattering it with its own kind of fabric leprosy. Ink takes a look at your sneakers with a hand on his chin and an appraising hum before nodding approvingly after a moment, but doesn’t make a move to actually get off of the stain. You arch a brow at his inaction.

“So?”

“I like it.” He says in an oddly final tone.

“…and? You can get rid of the ink on it right?” He gives a half-hearted shrug while the others watch on with disinterest.

“Sure, I could.”

“…and?” You try once more.

“It looks better this way.”

“…and??” You press for the final time. If he’s really going to make you work for it, you won’t let him hear the end of it since this was his fault anyway.

“So, I’m not going to take it off.” _What the hell._ You stare at Ink with a flat expression.

“Ink.”

“Hmm?” He’s not even looking at you anymore, with him eyeing the art store again dangerously.

“You have absolutely no room to talk about what looks good on shoes.” You gesture at the accused’s footwear in its ‘eclectic’ entirety. You hear a few noises of agreement from the others before Ink finally recognizes your voice in that he looks down at his pastel and tiger print shoes and then turns to you. He genuinely looks kind of hurt. _He actually thinks it looks good? Well crud, now I feel kind of bad. But he’s getting what’s coming to him for beating around the bush. And by that, I mean by being blunt._

“What’s wrong with them?”

“I could stand here and explain why your shoes look gaudy and the rest of your outfit is just overly
complicated in general, but I’d like for us to be back at the house before midnight tonight. Let’s keep going before you rush off to Vincent’s again and see if I can find some replacement shoes for me at the store too.” You push past the mildly upset Ink and his stuttering rebuttal and continue on without giving any sign of actually recognizing his argument. Meanwhile, lagging behind the others as the group finally starts to move again, Dream and Error share a wordless glance of amusement at how fast you threw Ink, of all people, for a loop.

---

Let’s see if these suckers are comfortable. You finagle your foot in to a potential replacement skate shoe that will hopefully avenge their fallen predecessors and their run-in with illness. Once your foot is comfortably set, you tie the laces and stand from the stool in the shoes section of the clothes warehouse and decide to take a lap around the store to gauge comfortability. With each step, you note the differences between your feet and keep walking in the near deserted clothing store. You can completely understand this store being like a ghost town; it’s a Saturday and early evening, which means that either almost all students are out partying or relaxing at home.

Except for you.

Because your best friend decided to fuck around with the multiverse.

And now you’ve been thrown in to what feels like a shitty fanfiction where science doesn’t make sense and literally any plot holes can be explained with a hand wave and a single blanketing word.

Before you can continue your train of thought, you catch sight of Beast in the supposed ‘Big and Tall’ section with a rather disgruntled expression on his sharp features. With his tail flicking back and forth quickly behind him and by the way his mouth is subtly moving around on his jaw, he seems to be grumbling to himself. Feeding your curiosity, you make your way towards and eye what has him so riled up. After a while of watching him rifle through some more relaxed clothes, you fail to really see what’s really bothering him. In that case, you take the next logical approach. And that is to inadvertently sneak up behind him.

“Hey, Beast, what’s up? You look kinda peeved.”

He jumps and whips his head to lock eyes with you before partially relaxing again with a sigh and looks back at the racks with a furrowed browbone. *Oops, startled him. Probably not a good idea to keep doing that.*

“hey, kid. still lookin’ for new clothes.” He mutters incoherently while setting a piece of clothing back down. “nothin’ really fits though,” You spare a few looks at the racks of clothes and gawk at the absolute enormity of some of the articles. *Forget barrel chested people, some of this stuff looks like they’d only fit freaking boulder chests.*

“Holy hell,” You whisper as you pull a sample shirt from the nearest clothesline and hold it up to your torso.

Yup.

It looks just like a potato sack had a big burly cousin called pumpkin sack that decided to pack on a few pounds for an upcoming lifting contest. Beast chuckles at your baffled expression as you gingerly set the sack back on the rack with the rest of their close relatives.
“right? they even got stuff that would be too big even for me. nothin’ i’ve seen have the right dimensions for me yet. an’ i’m going to need pants tailored for the tail, too.” You hum while scanning the rest of the clothes selection.

“Right, the tail. Oh,” you snap your fingers in sudden realization, “they actually recently added a monster section somewhere in here to accommodate the different body types of monsters. See if you can find some stuff in your size of pants over there.” This causes Beast to look up and have his animated eye lights roam over the overhead signs for the new section before he spots the aforementioned sign and sets down the cloth in his hand.

“guess i’ll head over there instead. don’t got all day to try on every piece of clothin’.” You fling your arms up over your head in form of gratification at his response.

“Thank you!! Someone here knows that we’re kind of on a time crunch!” Beast merely winks back at you as he trudges his way over to the monster section. You spare another intimidated look back at the gargantuan clothes and skitter away, keeping an eye out for any of your other charges.

Not long after your first encounter, you spy Dream having a near identical expression to Beast earlier. Except he appears more distraught rather than annoyed, evidenced by the clear worry lines around his eyesockets. While it’s not exactly your job to keep your skeleton stowaways happy, you have quickly realized in the past half day that you would never want Dream—or Blue, for that matter—unhappy or sad because of something you could have prevented. You’re really not sure if developing such an attachment to them in such a short time is healthy… Welp.

Regardless, you meander towards him, this time with the actual intention of sneaking and observing why he’s acting this way. Instead of grumbling, Dream’s rather silent while sorting through the clothes. His arms and free hand are bare; as in, he’s apparently not found any clothes that he’s interested in. At least Dream’s not gargantuan like another certain skeleton monster… so he’s got that going for him. What’s odd though is that while you’ve been near him, you’ve felt a noticeable change in your mood. Any lingering annoyance with Ink? Gone. Exasperation that everyone’s pulling you every which way with absolutely no regard of your requests? Practically nonexistent. Anxiety that all of your assignments and midterms are piling up on top of you and you still haven’t finished anything?

Definitely still there.

…but lessened.

...

Weird.

You finally decide to stop running your brain in circles when you don’t have the answers and to just talk to Dream and see what’s bothering him. You make your way across the rack he’s searching through and cross your arms on top of them. A few second pass by, and he still hasn’t noticed you… even when you’re right in front of him. Are you that good at not having a presence, or is he just that oblivious? You’re going to hope that it’s the former, or else that may well be a genuine problem. You lift a hand up and wave at him.

“Uh, Dream?”
Dream manages to tear his lights away from the clothing in front of him and on to your form with jerk of his body and a high-pitched squeak. You barely restrain yourself from squealing at his adorable outburst, mainly to help him save face and not embarrass him more than he already had last evening. You choose not to comment on his actions and just wait for him to compose himself. Speaking of, Dream recovers relatively quick, and runs a gloved hand along the back of his skull, eliciting the dull, raspy sound that you’ve correlated with bones grinding together. When you were younger and when monsters hadn’t been freed, you’d never have thought you’d live to hear it unless you were some form of mortician.

“S-sorry! Didn’t see you there…” You chuckle at his thoroughly embarrassed expression but move on quickly.

“You’re fine, Dream. In your defense, you seemed to be pretty deep in thought,” You give a small smile when his posture relaxes ever so slightly. “‘Anyways, I just wanted to ask, you looked pretty upset while you were looking through the clothes. Did they say something mean to you? You want me to teach ‘em a lesson?” You pronounce your faux threat against the articles of clothing with punching one of your hands in to the palm of the other. However, your attempt to keep the conversation light didn’t seem to go over all that well, hence Dream’s face faltering slightly with your questioning.

“No, no, nothing like that,” he assures. “It’s, um… I just didn’t find anything that I was really looking for, that’s all.” You squint at his uncomfortable fidgeting while he’s saying this.

Something must really be bothering him to act this way. He wasn’t like this at all when we did our introductions… You try again to alleviate the unneeded tension in Dream’s shoulders.

“What I like to do if I ever need to go clothes shopping, is randomly pick something off the racks while not looking and try it on, even if it doesn’t really fit me. You may just find a new style that you like. It’s worked for me quite a few times, so I can attest to it being at least somewhat functional. Like so…” You don’t look away from Dream while one of your hands roams over the assorted garments before pointedly snatching something out of your eyesight and picking it up to your field of view and on to your chest to see if it’s remotely your size.

…

…

*I thought I left the big and tall section.*

You had somehow chosen the largest, most baggy looking hoodie you’ve ever laid eyes on. The hoodie itself could probably stretch down towards your knees if you didn’t want to bother with wearing shorts for a lazy day in. You could just imagine even grabbing one of your queen size blankets and wrapping yourself up on the couch with your laptop and some popcorn and just binge watching several movies or documentaries. But alas, you’re now living with skeletons that don’t even remotely know you. Midterms are also steadily approaching, which means even less time to relax. You probably would probably buy it for yourself then and there if you found a reasonable excuse.

“Well… it’s always hit or miss, I guess. I would totally get it just to wear around the house, but now that you’re all living there, you probably don’t want to see me in it immediately.” You perk at the red dot on the sales tag. And see that the original price would have been way more than what you would’ve been willing to spend. *Lousy companies trying to make money like it’s something to do. Who do they think they are?*

“It’s even on clearance too,” you whine to yourself while still hovering over the more and more
comfortable looking hoodie.

...

Wait, clearance?

After an immediate investigation, it turns out, that the entire clothing section is clearance, in all of its mainly gaudy glory. No wonder you found something so enormous outside of its respective section. You give Dream a questioning look that he immediately flinches at.

“Uh, Dream? Why are you searching through the clearance section? I can bet that you can find stuff that you like literally anywhere else…” He flinches once more but remains silent to your question. He’s resorted to fiddling with the pink marble that fastens his cape, and avoiding your gaze out of nervousness. You really don’t think yourself as an intimidating person, despite your word choice. Did you come off as that?

Well, I did recently threaten them with reset trauma, so… Regardless, why does he look so unnecessary guilty over something so trivial?

You continue to eye Dream while he seems to be having an internal debate with himself, before shrinking and withdrawing to make himself look smaller. He still doesn’t look you in the eye while he finally speaks in an even smaller voice that you have to strain to hear over the faint store music.

“I just don’t want to be a burden…”

...

Well, geez.

Rip my heart out and tear it to pieces while you’re at it.

You maneuver around the clothing rack and rush to Dream side, ready and willing to help cast aside that train of thought right here and now. He somehow shrinks on himself even further, with your proximity while you lay a hand on his clavicle despite your better judgement. And to your surprise, he doesn’t flinch away. With such a nearness to him, you were able to make out a faint smell of something similar to freshly baked non-chocolate cookies. The type of scent that warms the heart and soul, no matter the circumstance.

“Hey, Dream. Look at me.”

He still doesn’t comply, while he shifts his gaze frequently to focus on anything but you in front of him.

“C’mon, please? I just want you to look at me.”

Reluctantly, he meets your eyes with shaky, yet still incredibly warm and bright, amber lights. His face could only be described as absolute guilt. You give a reassuring squeeze with your hand before you start.

“You were brought here against your will, and you couldn’t have done anything about it. Sans is financially stable, heck, he probably has money to burn, so don’t worry about any kind of money worries. Sure, you may be crashing at mine and Sans’s place, but that doesn’t mean that you’re a mooch. I genuinely enjoy your company, even from how short we’ve known each other. I don’t consider you a burden, so please don’t consider yourself as one either. It’s okay to be selfish once in a while.”

You’re searching his skull for any sign of reaction as Dream stares at you, wide eyed. You’re starting
to feel a little bit nervous as he continues to bore holes in to you, and your worst suspicions are confirmed as beads of yellow, small, and almost glowing beads of magic fleck the edges of his eyesockets. Before you could react, Dream hunches forward and breaks down in to sobs, hands covering his face. SHIT.

“Shit,” you voice your own thoughts as you’re now even more frantic in trying to comfort Dream as you scan over what you said in hopes of finding where you went wrong. Even if you’re unsure of what you did wrong, you’re going to be kicking yourself for this for a long time. “I don’t know what I said that made you like this, but stars I am so, so sorry so please don’t cry-“

“No,” Dream’s voice was firm, yet still choked from the recent waterworks. “It’s okay, it’s my fault. What you just said reminded me of my brother is all…” Well crud, now you just feel like the worst. You could relate to missing someone important to you though…

“I’m still going to apologize, because I didn’t know. So, I’m sorry. On top of that, you’re now stuck being away from them and your own universe for so long, you’re bound to be homesick.”

Dream lets a watery laugh, a sound devoid of any real mirth or happiness, with his hands still over his eyes. A strange reaction from someone who practically radiates kindness. Despite his previous assurances, you feel like you brought up an old wound that could never heal.

“Y-yeah…” His voice was shaky, but still held that firmness from when he cut off your apology. You rush to cover over what you hope to be the only sore spot that you’ll take note of to avoid later.

“You must really miss him, huh?”

Dream finally looks up at you with that question, now back up to a fully standing position, his face set with what can only be determination, despite the remnants of tears.

“More than anything.” His immediate sure response works a broad, even slightly proud smile out of you.

“We’ll get you back to him, don’t worry.” You give another reassuring squeeze to his clavicle.

This causes Dream to fidget again and look away. You’re worried that you might have ended up saying something wrong again. Not like it’s the first time, but still.

“Dream? You alright?”

He’s got that face again where he’s internally debating with himself. You can only guess what’s going on inside his skull at the moment. You watch on patiently and let Dream sort himself out. After a beat or two of hesitation, he seems to have come to a decision and looks at you fully again.

“My brother… he’s-“

“hey, sweetheart, what do you think about this?”

The deep, abrupt voice from behind Dream cuts him off like he did to you earlier, and you start slightly since you were entirely invested in to the conversation you were previously having. Behind the equally startled Dream, lies Red, leaning on one of the clothing racks with his entire ribcage and spine exposed and staring at you with waggling browbones. The crests of his pelvis could be seen above where his shorts started. But the real kicker is not just that Red’s half naked in front of you.

He’s wearing a fucking lacy bra.
From where you’re standing stunned, you can also make out that little red dot on the price tag, meaning it too, was on clearance. What that says about the manufacturing and the materials of the bra, you don’t want to know.

He’s wearing a fucking discount lacy bra.

Even better.

“like whatcha see?”

And even when you were having such a serious conversation, your immature side decides to rear its head at the worst possible moment as you decide to make an incredibly unattractive snort and fall in to a giggle fit. Goddammit, why do I do this to myself. You finally manage to break your laughing after a full minute while Red just watches you with an infuriatingly triumphant grin. With Dream, his brows have knitting together in a form of slight confusion.

“Red, oh my god, do you even know what that is?” You can kind of guess that he does, since it looks like he even put it on properly. Fuck, he even made the effort to actually work it. I have to give him props for that. His smirk only grows wider as he hoods his sockets, trying desperately to pull off the sexy vibe. But it’s honestly only hilarious to you.

“course i do. just wanted to drop by, since i bet you’re a little strapped for puns right ‘bout now.” You try and fail to give him an annoyed glare, your laughter doesn’t seem to have the right effect.

“To answer your question, it could be better. You could at least have conjured some boobs with it too so that they kind of fill out. Once you do that, I’d say you could pull it off pretty well.” Red’s smirk rises as you realize your dreadful mistake.

Think before you speak, man! You’re already verbally backpedaling before he can get a word in edgewise.

“Don’t do it here, holy crap! Just go put your shirt on and go put the bra back where you found it. I am not buying that for you so that it can be used against me later.”

“ahh, fine, fine. whateva. i got other shit i can do to mess whit ya.” He turns from the clothing rack and saunters off towards the dressing room. You call after him once you have another realization.

“And that includes other underwear! Don’t try to hide it, because I will look through the clothes you’re buying!” You can still hear the groan, even if Red was already out of sight behind some of the shelves. You huff in his direction while you simultaneously realize that you were interrupted and then just ignored Dream for a good couple of minutes. Turning back to him with an apologetic look, “Sorry, Dream. What were you saying?”

To some relief, it seems like Dream was lost in thought and may have just ignored the conversation in general. He even starts out his thoughts before looking back at you.

“Oh! Uh, it’s nothing. I’m going to go look for some clothes someplace else.” You give him another questioning look that he doesn’t shy away from. You don’t expect him to spill his life story to you, even if you feel like you got a little closer to him today.

“Well, if you’re sure. You can always come talk to me, if you want someone to listen. Remember what I said, okay?”

An appreciative smile was sent your direction with a much more cheerful ‘I will!’ was called to you as he walked off.

Oh right, you still had the hoodie in your hand. Maybe you could find some use for it…
You to Skeletor: “Finishing up at the clothes store, will be back within an hour, hour and a half. You back yet, or did you want to meet us on the way back? We’re at the place where I usually go if I need it.”

You send the message back to Sans, choosing to ignore the lack of effort on his part and just continuing on updating him what’s been going on. You turn your attention back to the group that took you almost half an hour in trying to assemble because at least one person was missing.

Sure, the clothes warehouse was pretty big, but not to the point where’d you get hopelessly lost in it. But somehow, when you asked for Blue’s help again in finding everyone, he wound up missing for ten minutes as you gathered up everyone else on your own. Electing yourself to go and find him, you searched through the shop, only to find him two minutes later at the back, hopelessly lost even though he staunchly refused to say so. His embarrassed, and even more adorable, blush said otherwise. But when you finally got back, Ink decided to fuck off somewhere while you were gone, and that took another ten minutes of fruitlessly searching, only for him to reappear back at where your group was at earlier. Needless to say, you were completely done with this store in general.

“Okay, everybody has at least three to four sets of clothes, yeah?” No one objects as you finally usher everyone to the checkout after a few hours.

“Here, Beast, I actually found this in clearance and I think it’ll fit you. Do you want it?”

“oh, uh, sure. thanks. didn’t think i’d get a new jacket too.”

The headcount attests that everyone is accounted for, and your shoulders sag in relief that none of the others just decided to leave for whatever reason. Your left foot in particular is starting to feel sore, and you can’t wait to get back and just eat some of Papyrus’s food, attempt some of your homework, and go to bed. Even though it’s probably only close to seven in the evening, it’s been an absolutely exhausting day. You’ve ushered everyone towards the register, but keeping Red as last as to investigate his clothes as you said you would.

Blip, Blip, Blip

The sound of things being scanned fills the quiet storefront as you shuffle through Red’s picked out clothes. To your complete unsurprise, all of them are either black, red, or yellow with black. Chalk one more point up to the nickname of Edgy McMyChemicalRomance. After you’ve pulled all of the articles inside and out—even the boxers that he’s chosen—as well as checked all the pockets, you hold them out for Red to grab.

“Kay, these are good.”

Blip, Blip, Blip

“ya didn’t have ta look, sweetheart, i’m totally clean.” A dry look was given to him for his obvious lie.

“I’ve known you for literally a day and I could practically swear to my grave that that is not the case. Your pockets now, too.” Red’s eyesockets widen marginally as sweat begins to bead on his skull. Another dry look was given in turn.
“You didn’t think that I’d not look in the pockets on your existing ones? How stupid do you think I am? None of you answer that.” You direct the end of the sentence to the rest of the group that was listening in.

“DO NOT WORRY, HUMAN Y/N! I CAN TELL YOU WITH THE UPMOST CONFIDENCE THAT YOU ARE CERTAINLY INTELLIGENT!” You’ve known me for a day… but I’ll still accept the compliment.

“Thank you for the kind words, Blue,” You give a smile as he lifts his bag of clothes off the counter. You hold out your hand for Red to start placing all the underwear that he’d be trying to steal out of the place. You’d like to keep shopping here, thank you very much. But not in a long while.

“Hand it over.”

Red groans in defeat, and pulls out at least three pairs of panties from each pocket of his large jacket and plops them unceremoniously in to your hand.

*Blip, Blip, Blip*

You give him another pointed look when he supposedly finishes.

“All of it.” He groans again while pulling out that blasted bra from the hood of his jacket and tossing it at you instead of placing it in your outstretched hand.

“geez, can’t catch a break.”

“You’re probably still hiding something somewhere… but I’ll choose to believe that’s the end of it. I can’t be bothered anymore.”

You hand all of the female undergarments towards the poor sap that has to work the register on a Saturday night shift, and pull out Sans’s debit card to pay for everyone once Red’s got his stuff all checked out.

“That’ll be $340.87.”

You give a low whistle while swiping the card, picturing the look of misery on poor Skeletor’s face when he checks his bank account next. That comforts you slightly while cautiously inputting the PIN, making sure that none of the others see what it is. Even though they may not entirely know how to work it, you’d better not risk one of them swiping the card unchecked. While you don’t want to say that they’re irresponsible, you don’t want to deal with Sans when he finds out.

“Have a good day!”

You didn’t miss the envious look the employee sent you as you and the skeletons were walking out the door, out to enjoy the rest of Saturday, unlike them.

“Everybody does have what they need, right? Just double checking?” A chorus of agreement meets you as you finally head towards the freedom that is anywhere but here. That is, until the security at the entrance starts blaring at you as you walk by. You almost scream. *Son of a…*

“Red. Honestly. I would’ve thought that you’d at least steal something that doesn’t have a security tag on it,” You say heatedly while you walk back with the others. You can tell that a lot of them are dragging their feet too… at least it’s not just you who’s done with this shopping trip. The asshole in question had the fucking gall to actually start snickering at the group’s misfortune.
“it ain’t me, sweetheart. i don’t got the sole for that.” he gestures towards you as he over enunciates his pun. you have to pause and process his words before you actually register what he says. you whip your head down to your feet and subsequently slap your hand over your face, groaning in to your palm.

there it is, on your left foot, is a security tag on the shoes that you completely forgot about until now.

God, i’m an idiot.

Chapter End Notes

Y/N is so done. So, so done.

Also, Y/N going to be kicking themselves even harder when they realize that they literally made an embodiment of positive emotions cry. Way to go.

AND! I made a tumblr. Come bother me with questions. Or don’t. It’s your choice: My Tumblr.
Chapter Summary

After an existential crisis, you deal with pesky people and skeletons alike.

Chapter Notes

Have an 8k chapter!
This was an absolute joy to write and this is my favorite one by far.
It took so long because I wanted it to be pretty polished, and I wanted to kickstart the burn as fast as possible.

I hope you enjoy this as much as I did writing it!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

A collective sigh passes through the group as you finally, finally leave the arduous task of buying clothes behind. As you step out into the open air, a mild breeze blows through the area, filtering through your hair and through your clothes, to carry on further down the street. The clouds have layered and blanketed themselves across the visible horizon, only leaving a small ring for the sun to set in. You note offhandedly that the others won’t be able to see the stars tonight unless it clears unexpectedly. Now that the sun has begun to finish its orbit in the sky for the day, the overcast sky was painted like a canvas with fiery reds, tangerine oranges, and just a hint of a deep purple that borderlines blue. All of these colors arranged themselves in respect to their distance from where the sun is setting, and eventually fade and shift to the deep purple before all visible light finally fades as another part of the world watches the sunrise the next day over.

For once, the rustling and crinkling of the plastic bags holding their purchases has stilled to near nonexistent as the skeletons absorb what they’re viewing. Cracking a small smile at the once again awed faces, you subtly attempt to snap a picture to save for later for memory. You resist the urge to fawn over the photo to avoid detection or suspicion of the ones photographed and to avoid being forced to delete it. Maybe I could frame this if given the chance later down the line though… Now that you’re out of that blasted store, your mood has brightened considerably since it seems like that you’re making progress back to the house. Also, Sans still hasn’t texted you back, so you assume that either he’s back napping or still working on gathering the parts for the machine. You shrug while pocketing your phone while feeling a little bit guilty that you’d have to break the others from their reverie. Maybe I’ll take a different route so that we’re walking towards the sunset for a while. You hum before breaking the silence.

“Shame. Doesn’t look like the stars are going to be out tonight.” You give a shrug while one or two of the others glance in your direction before staring back at the sunset. “Though it’s not the like the stars or you guys are going to be going anywhere any time soon, so there’s always tomorrow. Or hey, maybe it clears up during the night.” You start to walk down the street towards the burning ball of gas on the horizon before turning back towards the others with a wave, the outline of your body cast in a golden, almost ethereal light from behind.
“C’mon slowpokes! We’re burning the rest of the daylight we got left!”

“heh, can’t argue with that fiery passion.”

To your credit, you only jumped a minute amount before whirling towards the perpetrator behind you. He always does this on purpose. Though at least it shows that he reads your messages and was willing to walk back with you which is thoughtful on his part, given how lazy he is.

“Geez, give a person a little warning why don’t you. Or even a text? A text could make a world of difference.”

“no need to flame me in front of all the others. at least give everyone the decency to ignite an argument back at the house.” Mother fucker, that was both pun and word play at the same time. Based on the subtle upturn of his grin, you can definitely tell that he knows you caught on. You can hear a groan or two from the group to your right, meaning that they’ve regained some form of awareness of their surroundings again. You seize that chance to turn the tables and get everyone moving again.

“The only thing you’re inciting,” you stress the non-pun word, “is for us to be here past midnight if Red and the rest join in. But you’re right about one thing,” you grab Sans’s sleeve and proceed to drag him along while motioning for the others to start walking again, “let’s get back before you start another pun war with unnecessary civilian casualties.”

Well, that lasted long.

You failed in your one self-imposed duty.

The number of casualties has risen.

May whatever is holy have mercy on your soul.

You, Blue, Dream, and Error have taken the initiative to walk a few paces ahead of the conflict raging behind you, trying desperately to block out the poor attempts at humor. Maybe you could distract yourself with looking at the surroundings like the others? Blue is being uncharacteristically quiet while the unfocused baby blue eyelights scan over the surroundings, Dream appears to be in the same situation as Blue, while Error, well, he’s doing a thing where he continues to ignore everyone else’s existence unless it’s entertaining to him. His closed off posture and gestures while keeping any eye contact as glares and nothing more gives him prickly barbs that skewer anyone that dares approach him. Is he always like that? Or is he just not a fan of groups? It’s hard to tell, since I’ve got less than ten words out of him in the past day.

While you’re off in your own mental wonderland in hopes of distraction, your brain decides to undergo a bout of introspection that you’ve been purposefully ignoring. It’s been something that’s been nagging at you constantly for the past day, but you’ve kept putting it off in favor of keeping your attention to what’s happening around you in that moment. I really shouldn’t start having deep thoughts while I’m supposed to be keeping an eye on the others… But your brain isn’t having any of your avoidance tactics when you try to use them this time, so unwelcome thoughts surge to the forefront of your mind as you continue to stare ahead listlessly, unaware of anyone approaching.

Multiverse theory has been confirmed right before your very eyes.
That thought alone is enough to drive a chill through you. Your universe is already confirmed to be almost fifty billion lightyears in size and over thirteen billion years old, while even then, Earth itself is a speck of dust collected on top of another speck of dust. A tiny blip on the universal radar that will eventually fade to the nothing of space as time marches forward relentlessly. Well, relentlessly is subjective because of time magic, but your brain decides to just tune out that logic once it surfaces. The place you’ve known and existed in is only a tiny portion of the Earth’s history, where countless numbers of living things, both sapient and not, have lived and died before you, as well as many on this very soil that you’re walking on.

And then with that information, there is a potential of limitless universes that exist on another plane of existence. Out there where there are even more countless beings living and dying, continuing the cycle of life because that’s what their basic instincts tell them to do. Live. There are some who do just that; successfully passing down their genetic code, surviving that one long winter when others didn’t, making a name for themselves, writing history and leaving legacies in their wake.

But even then, that’s all it is. Basic instinct of survive and reproduce. Live and then die and have others take your place. What’s more, you’re not even certain that you’re unique in some sense of the word. You’re living with eight different versions of the same skeleton, all from different universes. If there’s different versions of yourself out there, then what overall purpose do you serve in the grand scheme of things? If there are other you’s out there, who’s to say who’s original and the others just some off-brand copy? Who are you even if you aren’t the only you that’s you?

A feeling of insignificance crashes down upon you with such intensity, it almost makes your knees buckle while you’re walking. There’s almost no feeling you loathe more than thinking that you’re unimportant, so why does your psyche decide to wage its own war against your beliefs? Even so, you do try to be a realist in situations rather than just staunchly optimist or pessimist. You try to evaluate the facts and come to conclusions and opinions based on it, but that seems to be playing against you now. In a small attempt to ground yourself to now, you wrap your arms in front of you and grasp your elbows, digging shallow crescents in to your skin. You’re starting to give yourself a headache with your near cyclic thinking, but you don’t seem to be able to stop yourself from still-

“What can I say? I couldn’t have brushed off that opportunity!”

A couple of snickers emanate from the group behind you as you’re jarred out of your thoughts by the over-enthusiastic pun from Ink. Seriously? Art puns? I’m not even surprised, just disappointed. You shake your head as the conversation prattles on as puns are launched back and forth at one another. Maybe it’d be best to endure the pain and just listen to the conversation for now… Nah, too painful. Looking at the scenery it is.

The sun has almost fully set at this point, and the lamps around campus have been lit, setting the park you’re passing through with shadows cast every which way from the multiple light sources around you. The scene kind of reminds you of something out of stories where there’s people collected around a bonfire, dancing in a circle, where all the people’s shadows are standing tall behind them. With the bonfire so close, the shadows would be moving and swaying to their own silent music that one can only dream to hear. While it’s not a direct parallel, the amount of shadows a single person casts here would be more than enough. Then again, these light sources are still instead of flickering…

You’re once again jarred out of your thoughts by someone almost yanking your arm out of its socket and to the side, nearly causing yourself to stumble and fall only to be caught by another arm around your side. The arm and hand were… fleshy. Who the…?

“What the-“
“Don’t worry, I’ve got you. You’re safe now.”

The new voice came from a man who looked not a whole lot older, as well as taller, than you. A full, unkept beard, beady blue eyes, and a plastic smile greet you as you look him over. You actually recognize this guy, and you don’t think this is going to be a pleasant encounter. You’ve seen him around campus, preaching from a religious text that you can’t immediately recognize. He walks back and forth in populated areas on campus and basically yells at everyone that they’re all damned unless they convert to whatever religion he’s got. You haven’t really paid much attention to him before, mainly because you’ve caught bits and pieces of his preaches while walking to class, and you’ve found that he amends his preaching to subtly add anti-monster sentiment. He obviously can’t outright state that he hates monsters, because that would almost immediately void his permit to preach his beliefs on campus. But now that he’s here and he still hasn’t removed his arm from your side, you’re really getting the feeling that this isn’t going to be good. Let’s play ignorant for right now and confirm what his intentions are first.

“Safe?” You respond listlessly.

“Oh of course.” He shifts the frame of his body so that he’s blocking you slightly from the others who have killed their pun war to watch the new development. Even Error finds this noteworthy to watch. “You clearly looked uncomfortable while walking near these… monsters, so I came to save you.” That plastic smile he’s keeping smeared across his face grew slightly larger, stretching his face in all the wrong places. You can practically smell the distaste radiating off of him when he said ‘monsters,’ but at least he had the decency to kind of mask it. Emphasis on kind of. Sans and the others obviously picked up on it too, as most of them have shifted to a defensive stance. He seriously had the balls to not only make a scene, he made that scene when there’s eight monsters right there! Either he’s crazy, or stupid. Probably both. And this guy still hasn’t moved his goddamn arm… ugh.

“You thought… I didn’t like being near them?” You say, dumbfounded. Though it’s most likely not for the reason he’s thinking.

“I couldn’t just stand idly by when a lovely damsel was in distress and being harassed by monsters.” He lowered his voice as he spoke this, for added sultriness. Too bad this guy is giving you all the wrong signals and he called you a fucking damsel. You don’t know how he decided you look like a girl, since you look, sound, and act almost completely androgynous, so he’s probably taking a gamble about your gender there. You don’t really care about him gendering, you’ve been called both anyways, but where you draw the line is him not-so-subtly blaming monsters for your discomfort. It was your own damn fault for your bad line of thinking, and he took it as his chance to bash them. The nerve of this guy! It’s not his fucking decision who I associate with! If you want subtlety, I’ll give you fucking bluntness.

And by that you mean, is playing him right in to your hands and then sweeping the rug out from under him. That always yields the best reactions. You finally break eye contact with the creepy preacher and glance at Sans meaningfully. He responds with a wink, ready and waiting for your next move. He probably caught the way your eyes glinted in the pale yellow light while listening to the asshole, so he knows what’s coming next.

This emotional whiplash is going to kill me tonight...

Sans rocks on his heels while waiting for you to initiate your plan, observing the other him’s and
gauging their reactions. Red, Beast, Geno, and Error are all bristling with barely restrained anger. He too, would be on the verge of snarking back to the guy if he hadn’t been through this song and dance so many times before. Dream and Blue look incredibly uncomfortable with the way the man had just inserted himself in between you and the others and acting like they were to blame. Ink is just watching on curiously, but rather unaffected by the words thrown at him. Sans doesn’t really blame any of them for their reactions, it’s probably their first, or maybe one of their first, times being harassed for being monsters. Now, the heckling doesn’t really get under his skin. Heh. He’ll probably have to tell you that one just to see how annoyed you’ll get. But for now, he’s good to just let the show unfurl and see how you’re going to deal with the asshole. and the curtain rises…

“Oh, thank you for saving me,” you cry, with just a little bit too much innocence, and take a step back from the man, removing his arm from your side. Sans thought about moving his arm with magic, just to get it back to a respectable place, but he reeled the impulse in to keep the preacher—he recognized the guy too, he’s been yelled at by him a few times while around campus—from screeching that they’re the work of the devil or some other religious antichrist. He’s heard that one too many times before too. With your step back, you lunge back towards the man with both your arms around his neck, drawing a wheeze from the man. Sans snickers, amused at your antics in keeping the guy from talking while you set your trap.

Now that you’ve got some form of control over the guy’s body, you maneuver so that the preacher is facing completely away from the group while you’re facing them. More precisely, he won’t be able to see what you’re going to sign. You release one of your hands from behind the guy’s back as you still thank him profusely and begin to sign.

P-L-A-N-A

Plan A? Fine by him, less work he’s got to do. He shoots you a wink in recognition while you continue on luring the guy. Now he really can just sit back and enjoy the show.

“i fuckin’ knew it, they’re a monster hater.”

….or not.

“what the hell you livin’ with them for?” Red snarls to him while the other angry ones have a similar look of betrayal on their skulls. Dream, and Blue especially, look someone just kicked their favorite puppy right in front of them, laughed in their face, and then proceeded to kick their favorite kitten for good measure. Ink just looks confused at your actions. Sans just rolls his lights around in their sockets and gives an amused huff. They obviously haven’t learned sign.

“just watch. plan a is pretty straightforward.”

“P-Plan A?” Blue stage whispers through his unshed tears.

Sans only responds with a slight upward curve to his smile.

“Oh, thank you for saving me,” You cry just little bit too loudly. Inwardly you cringe at both your bad acting and having to get closer to the creep. The man wheezes and looks taken aback at your sudden reaction of wrapping your arms around his neck. Your hands twitch as it passes through greasy neck hair, but you soldier on and give Sans the signal with one of your hands. Ooh, this may
not have been the best idea. Everyone else looks either extremely angry or dejected. Well, I have to follow through with it now that I’ve started though. The preacher recovers quickly and wraps his arms around you, pressing you to his chest before releasing, as you thank him again. He smells distinctly of nicotine and bad decisions. You’re going to need at least three showers after this.

“It certainly isn’t a problem, miss. All in a day’s work as a disciple. They can make anyone uncomfortable.” Oh great, now he thinks he’s playing the hero. I wanna barf. You step away again and give him one of your own fake smiles as you stare into his button eyes. It seems that he’s hook, line, and sinker, so you’ll be wrapping this one up quickly. Based on the hushed talking you can hear from the skeletons, it doesn’t appear that all of them took what you said lightly. I’m realllly starting to regret doing this, so let’s add some extra ‘oomph’ to get the message across.

“I, um, I’d like to ask you something, if that’s okay.” You say as bashfully as you can while struggling not to let your disgust for the bigot show on your face. You keep your eyes lidded and look through your lashes as the plasticity to the man’s smile now turns lecherous. You suppress a shiver in turn.

“Of course, anything for a lady.”

I think I actually did just throw up a little bit in my mouth.

Casting a leeward glance behind the man, as if afraid the monsters will overhear, you motion him forward so you can whisper. He sees your glance and complies without complaint as he leans forward so you can say what you wanted. This is almost too easy...

You lean in slowly, letting your breath ghost across the ridge of his ear while before you take in a breath.

Were you going to whisper?

Fuck, no.

You’re going to blast out his eardrum.

“STAY OUT OF MY FUCKING LIFE!!” You bellow with all of your might directly into his ear canal, channeling your inner Papyrus, even though he wouldn’t approve of your methods. Naturally, the preacher is sent reeling away, clutching his ear, emitting a sound of pain. The skeletons all look utterly aghast at what just unfolded, while Skeletor looks a combination of unbelievably proud, and… was that fondness? You cast him a wink of your own, giving a sign that you’ve got his back… spine… whatever.

“Ow! Holy shit lady, what the hell?” Eloquent, isn’t he? And I thought he was my hero to come and rescue me from the big, bad monsters! Naturally, the preacher is at least a little miffed that somebody that he supposedly saved just blew out his ear. His eyes are gleaming with anger in the yellow light of the lamps, easily portraying the wrath that’s swirling in that off-blue. Crossing your arms, you give him your own glare.

“What gives you the right to just waltz in to our group and claim that you’re ‘saving’ me? This guy,” you walk the short distance towards the skeletons and grab Sans’s hand, interlacing flesh and bone, to pull him towards you. He complies with a lazy drag of his feet and a very faint dusting of blue that you don’t fail to catch. “happens to be my best friend. And these are his…” you falter and inwardly panic, searching for something to call literal alternative versions of Sans, “cousins… that I’m showing around. You didn’t save me, you were just flaunting your bigotry!” Good save, me. I actually thought of something instead of just stalling like an idiot like I usually do.
Caught red handed, the man chose fight in the fight-or-flight defense, and growled back to you, “So now the monsters are taking our women and turning them in to whores. You should join them back underground for all I care!”

This earns him a dry laugh and eye roll.

“Once again, your thoughts and beliefs don’t give you the right to belittle something that I truly believe is the right choice. I honestly wonder if the religion you preach under is just an excuse to hate monsters while using a college permit to shield yourself. So, I’ll say it again. Stay out my fucking life.”

“LITERALLY!”

Everything stills.

…

It seems time itself freezes as everyone stops and gawks at Blue for his outburst. Only just then realizing everyone is staring at him, Blue turns back to you with an all too innocent gaze.

“What?”

…

Your entire view on the energetic blue skeleton has shifted dramatically.

You’re not sure if you should laugh or cry.

Deciding for you, Ink hunches over with wheezing laughter, and everyone else quickly following suit. Even Error is desperately trying to stop himself from laughing in front of everyone else. Except the preacher isn’t having any of it, because any thought of interspecies relations makes him want to retch and throw things, if his expression is any indication.

“You’ll all burn in hell! You’ll never know the light of what my god can do for you, you filthy heathens!”

With his last threats, he huffs and storms away, knowing that he’s not going to be making any ground in changing your decision.

Recovering from your painful laughter, you realize that you’re still holding on to Sans’s deceptively warm hand, and drop away, to wipe at your face for any stray tears of laughter.

“heheh, nice one y/n. that was one of the cleanest ones to date.”

“Right? Sometimes I wonder what goes through some of the bigots’ heads when they see monsters. ‘Oh no, something I don’t understand! I have to immediately hate it and refuse any and all interaction with it!’” You lower your voice to about the level of the preacher for your mocking. Earning a snicker from Sans, you high-five—which is still kind of painful no matter how many times you do it, ow—while everyone else collects themselves.

“So, cousins?” Beast inquires with a quirked brow and still incredibly amused grin.

“Ah… right. I couldn’t just say that they’re all alternate versions of Skeletor. That’ll just end up freaking people out unnecessarily.”

“Plus, it’ll cut back on explaining.” Sans interjects, but you end up giving him a knowing look that
he pointedly looks away for.

“You just don’t want me to explain it, cause I’m going to say it’s your fault. Which it rightfully is.”

“…right. we were walkin’ back, weren’t we? c’mon, i don’t wanna stick around if that preacher comes back.”

You roll your eyes, but don’t argue. Sure, now you’re ready to leave.

“UM, Y/N?”

You perk and turn to Blue, who looks troubled, which you immediately furrow your brow out and prompt him to speak.

“What… what was that back there?”

“You mean what I did to the preacher?” He nods. “Well, it’s something Skeletor and I do sometimes when we run in to monsterphobes that are looking for a confrontation.” You give everyone else a sheepish grin and rub the back of your neck. You can still feel the remnants of the preacher’s grease on your hand and immediately have to suppress a gag. “Sorry for not warning you all. I uh, kind of had to keep going with it once I started.” Blue seems to relax at your words, an incredibly hopeful expression blooming across his features.

“So… so you didn’t mean anything when you said those things?”

You flinch and immediately feel guilty for inadvertently playing with the emotions of the skeletons, but assuage his concerns nonetheless.

“Yeah. I didn’t mean anything by it. It was only to get the guy in to a false sense of security. Sorry… again. I probably should have warned you beforehand.”

“We’re… we’re still friends, right?” You would have swept him up off his feet and nuzzled his face at his adorableness if you weren’t reminded at his comment earlier. Blue is not as innocent as he seems… You give him a genuine smile that hopefully conveys your feelings.

“Of course, Blue. No bigot is going to change that.”

At this comment, you’re immediately trapped in another vicegrip-like hug that forces your recently regained air out of you. There goes another rib…

“Ooh, I just knew you didn’t mean it! Thank you for staying my friend! I’ll make sure the tacos are extra delicious tonight!”

Oh right, the tacos are still being cooked tonight.

Shit…

Your phone pings as you finally make it back to the house and unlock the door, which is rather peculiar. Maybe Papyrus was still out? Odd, he’s usually back by now. You check your phone once you’ve made your way inside.
THE GREAT, AWESOME, AMAZING, ETCETERA PAPYRUS to You: “GOOD EVENING HUMAN Y/N! PLEASE INFORM SANS AND MY OTHER BROTHERS THAT I WILL BE RETURNING IN ABOUT HALF AN HOUR! SPARRING WITH UNDYNE TOOK LONGER THAN ANTICIPATED, AND I MUST ACQUIRE A FEW INGREDIENTS FOR BROTHER BLUE’S TACOS TONIGHT!

NYEHFULLY YOURS,

THE GREAT PAPYRUS”

Sweet, sweet Papyrus. He ends up texting like a letter whenever he’s especially excited about something, so this dinner where he’s going to be helping Blue must be something that he’s taking very seriously. You inform the others as such, which earns you a chorus of grunts that you deem as an acceptable reply.

You immediately flop face first in to the couch, relishing in being able to lie down after excruciating hours of standing and moving. The others descend to the basement to put away all of their new clothes downstairs while Sans takes a third of the couch for himself. That is, until he stands up almost immediately afterward. You turn your head from face first in to the couch cushion to the skeleton that’s now standing, asking a silent question.

“i think i forgot my phone in the lab.”

“Go get it then, lazy ass.”

He reaches down to flick you in between the eyes, eliciting a whine from you while you re-bury your face in to the cushion.

“that’s what ‘m doin, dingus. though i don’t really remember where in the lab though.”

“So, you’re saying it might take a bit.” Your voice comes muffled from the fabric of the couch. Sans chuckles while he adds,

“can’t hear ya.” Complying without really thinking, you turn back over to repeat, only to get flicked in the face again. In turn, you swat at his hand before yet again turning back in to the couch. He’s feebly trying to suppress his unmanly giggles at your reactions.

“Jackass. Go get your phone.”

“fine, fine. be back in a bit.”

With that, there’s a rush of wind against you and a burst of magic that even a human can detect, and Sans is gone from the house. Alone for a little bit at last…

You can’t help but have your mind replay the day, and how it went. Even though you ended up threatening them all, most have seemed to have taken in stride, or understood where you’re coming from. If they have a Papyrus to protect, they should know the feeling. Blue nearly got coerced in going to a Gamma Delta Delta party, which you don’t think is the last you’re going to be hearing about one of those. You heave a sigh in to the cushion at that thought. Ink just being a general ass, not cleaning your shoes and then just doing whatever his little soul desires is going to be very draining… And lastly, that creepy preacher that you had to drive away. That actually turned out rather well once you explained yourself. I think I broke one of my records for it!

But even though you think the day went relatively okay, you can’t help but feel that you’re still forgetting something. It’s not the shoes… you did end up buying them after having to sheepishly go
back to the cashier and explain your situation. It’s something else… one of the first things about this trip.

And then it hits you.

You lurch bolt upright from your position on the couch, startling the skeletons that were starting to reemerge from the basement.

“I forgot to get a sweater!!” You exclaim and then subsequently flop back in to your position face down in to the couch.

“I’m so forgetful today,” you groan.

“I can help with that!” Ink chimes in while the rest have finally filtered back upstairs to lounge about, waiting for dinner. Undoubtedly, there’s going to be another pun war that you’re going to have to take cover for; it’s inevitable with so many Sanses around. You push that thought aside to half-assedly address Ink.

“I don’t need your clothes, you just bought them,” you mumble in to your facial implant on the couch.

“No, it’s not that! C’mon stand up, I can show you!”

He’s being way too cheery for this… is he that excited to show me? After a moment of deliberation, you decide to indulge Ink, and subsequently roll off the couch and on to the floor. Almost immediately, your spot on the couch was taken by Red and Beast, who just give you a smirk while you stand up.

Turning your attention back to Ink, he’s unfastened Broomy from his back, seeming incredibly eager for whatever’s going to happen. You stretch a slight amount, feeling some tension that you’ve accrued throughout the day ease away.

“What was it that you wanted to show me?”

There’s this glint in Ink’s eyes that confuse you even more in what he’s intending on showing you that’ll somehow remedy you forgetting to buy clothes. He brandishes Broomy towards you, the numerous charcoal gray bristles only a few inches away from your face.

“It’s simple, just stay still, yeah?”

God, he’s so eager, it’s honestly kind of adorable. You nod your go ahead for whatever Ink’s about to do. There doesn’t seem to be any red flags being raised with how Ink is acting, plus there’s all the others who are here already to stop it if something goes astray.

“Ready? Try this on for size!”

In a flash, Ink flicks Broomy lengthwise across your body, and you can feel the overwhelming presence of magic in whatever he’s doing all over your limbs. The magic itself is loose and flowing, like a river that moves ceaselessly. And just like that river, there’s still the power that lays hidden just underneath the surface. Power that you certainly don’t want to be on the receiving end of. Still, Ink’s magic gives that feeling that it isn’t outright hostile, but not warm and welcoming. A stark neutral to someone as flamboyant as he is.

The magic coalesces around you, and seems to take shape, forming some form of shell as far as you can tell. When the paintbrush passes over your face, you’re forced to close your eyes and patiently
wait for Ink to finish. When he finally pulls away, there’s several small intakes of breath from around
the room.

“holy shit,” Red breathes from behind you.

“that’s… some use of magic,” even Geno seems slightly impressed for whatever happened.

“W-WOWSERS, Y/N! YOU LOOK STUNNING!”

You arch a brow and turn your head towards Blue, pushing away your long, wavy hair from your
face, wondering what prompted that compliment.

…

Wait, since when did you have long hair?

You pull at the strands that keep flowing in to your face seeking confirmation, and yes, the pain that
shoots through your scalp testifies that it is your hair.

“Hmm, I think the hair could have been dyed a little darker so that it matches better with the dress,
but I think it turned out pretty good. I haven’t had much practice with things that actually have hair.”

Ink is giving you that appraising look that you saw at the art store, and you stare right back,
flabbergasted. What does he mean, ‘dress?’

Daring to look down, you stifle a gasp yourself.

Instead of the casual clothes that you wore for the day out, you’re suddenly outfitted in a fitting
obsidian dress that gradually transitions to navy the further down the dress you go. Specckled
everywhere on the dress are silvery dots that makes you believe that Ink just ripped this out of the
starry night itself and weaved it in to a dress. The bottom of it is pleated in a way that any slight
movement you make prompts the dress to languidly flow and shimmer with even more silvery stars
in the night sky. Not to mention, the dress is incredibly soft and even comfortable to wear, it would
even make Mettaton jealous of its craftsmanship.

Normally, you would wear suits for formal occasions; dresses make you more feminine than you
would like most of the time. But you think you can make an exception for this because holy fuck, is
this gorgeous or what. You don’t plan on keeping that a secret to anyone.

“Ink, this is amazing! Your magic can do this?” You probably look like some starry-eyed child who
just found their latest obsession. And dammit, you may have just found it. With your praise, Ink
gives you a bashful smile.

“Sure! It’s not like I just carry around Broomy for cleaning up messes.”

“Do you actually design clothes? Or do just like playing dress-up on people?”

“Mmm, little bit of both? It’s a hobby of mine.”

So, you’re able to make and design such extravagant clothes, but you’re dressed like you just
waltzed out a secondhand shop and wore out whatever you found… It seems like some of the others
have come to the same conclusion, what with the looks that Ink is receiving and obliviously missing.
Whatever, he can dress however he likes, even if it is contradictory. You choose to carry on the
conversation so that you don’t get even more hung up on it.

“What other clothes can you just conjure out of magic?”
Ink brightens at your question as he brandishes Broomy again, seemingly excited to show more.

“Anything that I can imagine, I can create!”

There’s a sharp movement from out of the corner or your vision, but you were too preoccupied marveling at the fabric of the dress to turn and see who moved.

“For example,” he swipes over you again with his brush, causing his magic to cascade through you once more, “it can be something casual!”

You’re not given a large amount of time to observe what he made you wear, but at least your hair is back to your normal short-ish length. You’re starting to get the feeling that he’s not addressing you anymore, and just using you as model for a demonstration for the others. Before long, he flicks Broomy over you for a third time. You suddenly feel incredibly suffocated with whatever you’re wearing.

“I can use it to make clothes for any type of weather! Like this giant snowcoat for example!” Oh god why, take it off, please. Once more, bristles envelope your vision, but the same stifling heat you’re suddenly experiencing doesn’t go away.

“I can even do multiple layers! I can also make it…” There’s a lull in Ink’s speech, and you catch an expression similar to one last night when he addressed Papyrus. You’re going to learn to be incredibly wary of that face from now on. Before you can read in to it, Ink swipes at you again, alleviating the extra layer of clothes. There’s an immediate loss of insulation, causing you to shiver involuntarily and move to wrap your arms around yourself.

“Nothing at all!”

A cold draft passes by your bare arms and you shudder. Did it suddenly get a lot colder in here? What is he having me wear now?

Or, more rather, what he isn’t making you wear. Your clothes have been stripped away, leaving you bare, standing in the living room, with nothing but your underwear on. You’ll be partially glad later that you didn’t wear anything ridiculously embarrassing that would make the situation even worse than it already was for you.

Everyone seems to register what Ink did when he immediately starts to snicker at your frozen expression, and the room burst in to a chorus of chuckles. You’re still frozen to your spot, feeling goosebumps crawl over your skin as your brain finally sputters in to gear.

Ink just forcibly stripped you.

Right in front of your new housemates that you’re going to be living with for probably the rest of the school year.

You’ve known them for twenty-four hours and Ink deemed it okay to pull this kind of prank already? What kind of social culture did he live in?

You don’t think you could feel any more mortified in your position.

It takes a lot to make you blush, but even now, you’re feeling a small portion of your body’s blood rush to your face. You’re glad that you aren’t all that concerned with the condition of your body, else this would have been an even more traumatic situation than it is now. How someone could be both simultaneously burning in the face and freezing everywhere else at the same time isn’t something you can comprehend in your situation. Your mind is screaming at you to just run in to your room to get
away from their eyes, but your wounded pride won’t allow for that.

Instead of moving, you stupidly stand your ground, and level a partly scandalized, partly angry glare at Ink, who’s covering his mouth and his obviously shit-eating grin, shaking with poorly restrained laughter. His zygomatic arches were glowing with the colors of the rainbow, which you would have been cooing at if you weren’t nearly naked.

“Ink!! What the shit!?”

“Pftahahah! Your face! Stars, that’s always priceless!”

“Give me back my clothes, holy fuck!”

“Hahahaa nope!”

He popped the ‘p’ sound with the amount of smugness that you couldn’t even fathom.

“What do you mean, no!?"

He only chose to laugh at you more instead of responding, cementing that you were certainly going to get revenge for this. Based on the laughter that was still echoing around you and the amount of aid that you’re receiving for this, read: none, you’re going to go ahead and have the revenge encompass them as well. As you’re left stewing in the middle of the room because you just couldn’t leave it like this, because you were too goddamn stubborn to let Ink win with this. What could you do that would be embarrassing for all of them that would match how you felt right now? Where you just want to crawl in to a hole and never leave, that is, until your face didn’t feel like it was going to melt off the bone at any second.

…

Wait a second, bone. That’s it!

Nobody notices the deliciously diabolical smile that grew on your face as you slowly relaxed your hunched posture, too caught up in the moment.

An eye for an eye.

You drew your hands together out in front of your chest, stretched your fingers against each other, and finally laced them together.

Or, in this case, embarrassment for embarrassment.

Poised and ready to launch your lightning counterattack, you draw one last deep breath while your devilish smirk reappears.

This is going to be fun.

With one swift movement, you extend your arms, fingers still laced together, palms outward. And just like you intended, there was a resounding CRACK! as all ten of your lower knuckles stretch just a little more. The laughter is cut off instantaneously, all of the skeletons choking on their own breath.

The house was immediately filled with a deafening silence as their gazes are locked on to you once again. They already look incredibly uncomfortable. Perfect.

“H-HUMAN… WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?”
Blue is treading carefully, though he almost definitely knows what just happened. You take that as your cue to proceed.

“What, you mean this?”

You extend your arms again, this time faster and with your hands clenched, subsequently popping your elbows. They all choke on their breath again, this time a faint blush appearing on nearly all of their skulls that you relish in. Ink looks like he’s ready to lose it, though he hasn’t tried to hide he’s affected by your joints popping. *Is that a win? Maybe. But I’m having too much fun to stop now.*

“y-yes, he means that. you do know-“

Geno’s voice was muffled through him burying his face in to the scarf to stop other people from noticing the blush that’s peeking out of the edges. You cut him off because you can guess what he’s probably going to say.

“Yes, I know what this is and what it means.”

You end your sentence with pushing your chin to both sides, eliciting two more loud pops that have the others shuddering and avoiding your unrelenting gaze.

“but h-how’re-“

“What? You never seen a skeleton with a little *meat,*” you go for the big guns this time and stretch your back to the side, hands at your hips. You sigh as a cacophony of cracks and pops resonate through the house, “*on their bones*?”

Skeletor would be proud.

A blushing mess, but proud nonetheless.

With your spine adequately popped, that appeared to be the *cracking* point for several of the skeletons. After your pun, Ink immediately collapsed to the floor in a fit of laughter, while Beast emitted a high-pitched whine from where he’s retreated in to his new hoodie.

“f-fuckin stop, you idiot!”

*All talk, no walk eh, Red?* You hum while slowly, painstakingly, popping the second row of knuckles on your right hand by bending it to the side with your other hand.

“See now, that’s the problem. I will, if Ink gives me my clothes back.”

“INK!!”

Several voices immediately ring out to the skeleton who looks like they’re in physical pain from laughing so hard. Tears have threatened to spill out of one of his sockets.

“Ahaa, I-snrk-can’t!”

“*what do you mean you fucking can’t?”*

Error has the drawstrings of his hoodie drawn as tight as possible, trying in vain to keep away the blush that’s threatening to engulf his skull.

“I-hahah-forgot what they look like!”
“Well that’s a darn shame, don’t you think,” you say as you roll your wrist, absorbing the scandalized expressions, etching them away in to your memory. You don’t think you’ll be forgetting this for a long time.

“they’ll run out of,” another shudder as your start on the other hand’s knuckles, “joints eventually.”

You give a short laugh, capturing the smugness that you can feel radiating from your being.

“That’s where you’re wrong my good man! I have this thing with my collarbone that lets me continuously crack it if I stretch the right way.”

The utter horror that washes over everyone’s expressions—except for Ink, he seems to be in even more pain that before—is satisfying beyond written words.

“So, you better help Ink jog his memory fast!”

You roll your clavicle like you said you could, and sure enough, there goes another relaxing crack. You’re going to be a limp noodle at the end of this, but it will be so, so worth it.

“Ink, please!”

Man, if they weren’t desperate before to make you stop before, they are now.

CRACK!

“just give ‘em some fuckin’ clothes, broom boy!”

You snort a Red’s attempt at an insult in his flustered state. Aww Red, you can do better than that.

“Hahaa I told you,” CRACK! Ink seizes up for a moment on the ground, “I don’t t-“

“Do it. Now.”

The pout he sends Error’s way loses its effect while he’s still blushing like a condensed rainbow and trying to suppress his painful laughter.

“But-“

“INK!!”

“Pft, okay, okay!”

You watch on amusedly while Ink attempts to stand on wobbly legs, popping the third and final row of knuckles. The look he sends your way as he picks up Broomy off the ground is hard to decipher. He looks both simultaneously incredibly impressed that someone was able to best him at ‘pranks,’ while he takes it as a challenge to up their intensity. You finally feel a lance of regret course through you at that. What did I just unleash upon this world...

Not letting you fester in your own regret, Ink swipes the brush through you again, immediately placing you in casual wear. You consider it an upgrade from you had on initially. The material is like that of the dress, comfy and easy to wear. There’s a collective sigh of relief as you stretch, gauging the flexibility of the clothes.

“Pleasure doing business with you,”

CRACK!
...you give a sheepish look at everyone’s betrayed expression just as there’s a loud crash by the door.

“Okay, that one was an accident, I swear.”

That crash seemed to have been Sans when he teleported back to the house... and right in to one of the chairs by the card table. He must’ve stumbled, knocked the chair over, and crashed to the ground. He hasn’t bothered to get up yet, limbs splayed everywhere, flush face towards the ceiling. You walk your way over and stand up above him with a knowing grin.

“Hey Skeletor, you find your phone on the floor over there?”

Once he recognizes it’s you, that flush deepens, sealing the deal that he must’ve heard that accidental joint point when teleporting over.

“uh, it was in the lab,” he states dumbly, still staring up at you. A moment after, he seems to collect himself and looks over at the others, studying their faces. You try and not let your malicious smile creep on to your face too much, but Sans must’ve caught on when they’re still trying to cool down their flushed face, not meeting either of your gazes.

“what’s been going on?”

You hum, poorly feigning ignorance as everyone’s blush darkens a shade again.

“Oh, nothing. Just teaching them about human anatomy.”

The look Sans sends your way is pointedly ignored.

Chapter End Notes

Goddamit Ink, Electric Boogaloo.
Fun Fact: I had the idea for last bit well before this story was thought of, so I'm delighted to see it finally come to fruition.
We have one, maybe two more chapters to go before things start to become more segmented and less linear. Plus that'll help with the burn too. (°‿°)

Let me know what you guys think! As always, don't be afraid to point out mistakes/have criticisms!
Come drop me a message at my Tumblr
Blue String of Fate

Chapter Summary

You should've just gone to bed.

Chapter Notes

I could've had this to you guys like a month ago, but I ultimately scrapped almost all of it because it was choppy and I intensely disliked it. And then my birthday happened. And then midterms came and kicked my ass. But I think it was worth the scrapping because I like this version much much more.

Bother me on Tumblr!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Blue's cooking was surprisingly pretty edible, but that reprieve was most likely Papyrus's doing, if the clatter coming from the kitchen that you were desperately trying to ignore means anything. The tacos were relatively generic, just ground beef and all of the other usual toppings like lettuce, cheddar cheese, diced tomatoes, sour cream, green onions, and glitter. MTT glitter to be precise. Who could miss the label of a lounging humanoid robot who practically resembled a blazing star—now that you think about it, that's probably what he was going for in the first place—with how much glitter he had plastered on to him?

MTT Brand Edible Glitter: Sparkle Up Your Meals!™

Somehow, Blue managed to sneak the glitter in to his tacos despite Papyrus's watchful eye, claiming that it would further enhance the taste. Of course, Blue exaggerated his claims with something along the lines of 'EUPHORIA OF THE MOUTH,' but you can only handle so much exuberance in one day, so you did end up tuning him out, only replying and praising if addressed, in favor of stuffing your face full of tacos. You never did manage to eat lunch while you were out today.

Being the ever-thoughtful person that he is, Papyrus planned ahead and kept the only attainable glitter the edible kind on the premise that Blue did manage to find it in the pantry and get it past him. Papyrus had weaned himself off of adding glitter to his meals well before you two met, so he had found other, more creative, as well as thankfully edible ways, to add flavor to his cooking. You would assume that he purposefully kept the glitter within reach to moderate the culture shock of proper human cooking Blue would undoubtedly have, as well as add a little bit of challenge to his first time supervising another person in the kitchen.

Which definitely turned out to be a mistake.

Glitter... glitter everywhere.

Smattered across your face, somehow absolutely everywhere in your hair, clinging to your hands, caked under your fingernails, the entire front of your brand new magically produced shirt and pants,
and even more infuriatingly on your new shoes. You barely even had to move, and you lit up like a
disco ball with how much light you reflected. By no means are you a barbarian when it comes to
table manners and the etiquette, but you honestly wonder if it’s even more adhesive than regular,
non-edible glitter. Or maybe it’s a Mettaton thing. Probably—no, definitely a Mettaton thing.

You’re going to be coughing up glitter for days.

Even after your now mandatory shower that night you still find a considerable amount of the
damnable substance now in places you’re sure were covered while you were eating. How it
managed to collect along the curve of your spine is beyond you.

In the end, you blame Sans.

With night completely descending upon your corner of the world again and with the clouds not
letting up in their cover, you bid an early night to the monsters, leaving them to their own devices,
and finally decide to stop procrastinating on your pile of homework. It’s a well fought battle, with
blood, sweat, and tears on one side, and maniacal laughter that relishes all the pain it doles out to any
that dare to attempt to cut it down on the other. For these kinds of showdowns, you always pray with
your heart and soul that you end up being the latter.

Ha.

You crack yourself up sometimes.

Basked in the pale blond light of a cheap bulb in an even cheaper desk lamp, you look up from your
laptop and current philosophy paper you’re laboring on and check the time.

4:05 AM

_Ugh, and I have work tomorrow. I guess I should head to bed soon._ All of your current work was
finished an hour or two ago, but since you were feeling weirdly productive in the wee hours of the
morning, you went ahead and started working a paper that wasn’t due for a while. Standing from
your chair and stretching your arms above your head, you resolve to sulk down the hallway to the
kitchen to fetch yourself some water before retiring for what’s left of the night. Tea would take too
much time, and you’re starting to feel exhaustion already creep up on you since you’ve gotten out of
your productive mindset.

Unsurprisingly, everyone else has already gone to bed, leaving the house silent bar the foundation
settling and the occasional snore that was just loud enough to carry. You idle in the hallway after
turning off your desk lamp and closing your door for a while before heading to the kitchen, letting
your eyes adjust to the near nonexistent light of the house. Turning on any of the lights was out of
the question; that ran risk waking any of the light sleepers down in the basement. The minute light
filtering from the cloud covered moon is all that you’re working with.

In the unsettling darkness as your pupils dilate, the rest of your body gives an involuntary shudder as
the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end. There’s supposed to be at least someone bickering,
shouting, arguing, moving about, cooking, laughing, groaning, punning, _something_. It’s a wonder
how quickly you’ve gotten used to the untuned symphony, with the residents as their conductors,
that has permeated through the house for the majority of the time the others have spent here. With the
now packed house you live in, the sense of calm and deafening silence that radiates throughout feels
outright wrong. In this state, the shadows seem just a little longer, stretching out to claw at your ankles as you pass by. The darkness, even with your improving sight, just a little darker, threatening to swallow you whole with ease. The sounds just a little louder; the settling of the house like shattering glass. Even your autonomous movements, like breathing and heartbeat, echo in your ear at such an intensity that gives no aid in assuaging your mental state. A spike of contrary restlessness settles in to your mind, as you can’t help but feel a growing sense of paranoia.

Why am I feeling so uneasy at the middle of the night? I navigate around here in the dark all the time. I shouldn’t be on edge about this. There’s nothing to fear.

So why can’t you shake the feeling that there’s a pair of eyes on you somewhere?

Acting on your first hunch, you move to grab your phone for its flashlight functionality, only to find that you left it in your room. Cursing in your mind, you slowly swivel your head around in the kitchen to stare out any of the windows, looking for a creeper of some sort that you can pinpoint as the source of your anxiousness. You would personally beat the crap out of them while waiting for the cops to arrive if it was the case. Give them what-for for being incredibly creepy and trespassing on other people’s properties without their permission, especially late at night. You don’t need any gravity magic or bones to disarm or incapacitate someone. The self-defense classes that you took years ago always prove to be handy in a pinch. Hell, maybe I could use one or two of the moves that I’m learning in karate right now…

That train of thought derails as you’re unable to locate the reason for your unreasonable unease. What’s even more unreasonable, is that the feeling started almost immediately after you opened your door, which means that whoever or whatever is supposedly watching you was waiting for you to leave your room. At that thought, a chill goes through your spine as you head back towards your room, giving second glances towards any of the murky shadows in the living room and hallway. You muse that this paranoia could be an aftereffect of the emotional whiplash that you already suspected you were going to get. That’s what it’s got to be, rig—

You pause outside of your door.

It’s ajar, with a sliver of darker darkness coming from your lightless room.

You definitely closed your door when you went to the kitchen.

…but right? Or did you just think you did?

Shaking your head, you resolve to just step in to your room like nothing’s amiss, which is most likely the case. The logic side of your brain that you adhere to most times keeps stating that any kind of danger is horribly out of place with ten people currently residing in such a small house. If there is an intruder, they’ll be dealing with more than what they bargained for. Even still, your emotional side is getting louder, screaming and making noise that something is off here. Your logic asks for specifics of what could be wrong, only to be drowned out by more screaming. A stray thought points you towards the metal bat that you keep underneath your bed, but you ignore the urge to go digging under your bed for better access. Instead, getting to bed sounds like a much better option.

As you expected, you can’t see anything out of place as you half walk, half feel your way to your duvet and settle down for the night. Phone charging? Check. Alarm set? Check. Hair completely dry? It’s been hours since you showered, so duh. Work uniform has been washed recently? You think so. Seems like I’ve got everything…

With your mental checklist finished, you relax under the covers of your bed, still clinging to the hope that whatever is making you this on edge is just a figment of your tired imagination. Really though,
why would they choose this house of all places to rob or creep on? There’s plenty of other places out there that’s certainly are in a more affluent area than just a college town. They’re not going to be getting much out of it even if they succeed in subjugating everyone here. Debit cards can be cancelled, phones begrudgingly replaced, and who knows when the last time you carried more than fifty bucks in cash was? You sigh against the pillow you’re resting on and feel your awareness begin to drift off.

That’s right… there’s nothing to fear.

…

…

That was definite shuffling in your room.

Instincts kicking in to immediate overdrive, you snatch your pillow from under you and hurl it towards whatever it was in there with you because dammit you weren’t just going to be a sitting duck. As fast as you possibly could, you grab your phone from the stand and leap from your bed and away from the source of the noise, which, to your dismay, was away from the door leading to the hallway.

There was a noise of surprise with a soft whumpf! from whoever was in your room and their impact with your pillow as your hands fumble with your phone switching on your phone’s flashlight. Once succeeding, you point the beam of light towards the intruder as you move in swift motions towards under your bed, aiming for the metal bat. Though the red void and yellowed scowl you find leering at you from across the room gives you pause before you fully crouch down for the weapon.

You continue to stare down the intruder with a baffled intensity, who stares back undaunted, for what feels like a single moment stretching for an eternity. Finally remembering that you have vocal chords, you break the silence.

“Error? What the fuck are you doing in my room?” You whisper-hiss, hoping to keep your voice from reaching for the others. While yes, this is creepy and incredibly uncalled for, the others don’t need to be woken with you shouting at Error at four in the morning.

“Looking for chocolate, what else?” He counters immediately. His staticky voice echoes through the area with a low hum that you would find somewhat relaxing in any other situation. A stab of irritation passes through your visage as you silently regard him, adrenaline slowly ebbing.

“Have you been the one that’s been watching me?” You must know this now that you suddenly have a reasonable answer to your feelings before.

“…”

You’re taking his silence as a confirmation as that uneasy feeling immediately latches back on to the forefront of your mind. There’s your emotional side shouting to any that would hear that they were right and it’s only going to get worse.

“…why?”

“…”
Another beat or two of silence as Error continues to glare at you. His gaze is pointed and laced with those same barbs from earlier that you can swear are cutting you internally. What’s even more, the look doesn’t entirely seem like it’s directed completely at you, but through you. You can only guess what’s running through his skull right now.

“Are you going to answer my questions, or are you going to continue to silently stare at me at four in the morning just because?”

“…”

You’re unsure whether you’re more annoyed or unnerved at his silence. In the end, annoyance wins out as you finally stand straight, round the corner of the bedframe, skirt around Error, and head towards your door.

“Well, if you’re not going to say anything and there isn’t anything you need, kindly get out and don’t do that-“

Before you can finish your tired scolding, black and yellow bones materialize over the frame of your door, barring you from going out.

Or, more precisely, trapping you in, your mind kindly provides. You whip your head back towards Error in reaction.

“At this point, you and I both know it’s not going to be ending that easily.”

At that obvious threat, you tense and hold his stare. Instantly, the air shifts to the overwhelming sense of danger as Error’s scowl grows in to something more sinister at your response. Adrenaline is already steadily flowing in your veins again and is setting your mind racing for alternatives, eyes glancing back and forth between Error and various places around your room. *Fuck, what is he trying to do? This is not good! Screw not trying to wake up the others, I may actually be in trouble here!*

Drawing in a large breath, you open your mouth to scream for Sans, only to be cut off by a flash of blue that temporarily blinds you as a sudden pressure constricts around the lower half of your head, effectively muting your plea for help. The smell of ozone and another overbearing smell that you can’t quite place invades your nostrils from whatever is clamping over your mouth and leaves you slightly lightheaded. At the jarring action of whatever just muted you wrapping around your head, you drop your phone, as well as your light source, sending shadows flying across your walls before thankfully falling face down, leaving some light in your otherwise dark room. Now that your hands are free, you scrabble to find the edge of whatever is stuck to your face and pry it off to try and scream again. But the material doesn’t give any sort of reprieve. You try once more with all of your might, but yield the same results. You’re about to try again, but are interrupted by mocking snickers.

“It’s no use trying to get those off. So, try and scream if you can.”

Error’s skull is bathed in shadows that cut and chisel his already black skull in to angular, irregular shapes due to the ground lighting from your phone. He looks less lifelike and cartoony like the others, and more like something you’d find in a Tim Burton fantasy. Your glower at Error has him chuckling again, and you’re keeping yourself from doing anything completely rash like rushing him. *If he’s able to both block my door and silence me without batting an eyelid, then there’s no telling what he’s truly capable of. He’s holding all the cards here, and he’s making sure that I know it. But I can’t let my fear show… that’s probably what he’s looking for. What can I possibly do…? There’s the window, but that’s all the way across the room and I’d have to break it without Error intervening. I don’t have my phone directly on me anymore, so that’s out too.*
Shit, what can I do?

Your mind finally locks back on the bat under your bed again even though you know that’s probably not going to have any effect on the situation whatsoever. *Fuck it, it’s worth a try just cowering in a corner.* Your body immediately reacts accordingly, vaulting over your bed with a dexterity that you didn’t know you had and swing yourself downward, feeling for the bat you know is there. Before you even reach the edge of your bed, you feel an all-encompassing pressure around your body, the telltale sign of gravity magic, as you’re flung back on to the mattress of your bed, facing the ceiling.

“Really? What were you even trying to do there?”

You struggle to lift your head over the effect of the blue magic and give another smoldering glare while attempting to roll over and try again, only to be immediately crushed under another wave of magic.

“There’s really no point in struggling.”

*Fuck you, I’m going to struggle even more because of that.* What you would give to scrub that snide look off of his entirely too amused face. Error makes a *tsk* sound at your continued squirming on the bed.

“Fine, if you want to make this harder on yourself, let’s do it this way.”

This time, you’re able to catch what that blue flash was this time and witness chords of what look the equivalent of condensed blue magic conjure off the tips of Error’s fingertips and dart towards your wrists and ankles. Even though it’s been ground in to you that trying to move under the effects of the magic aren’t going to be useful, you attempt to get out of the way of the thread-like objects. As the thread winds itself around your wrists and ankles, Error lifts the blue magic completely, only to have all of your appendages stretched out to the corners of your bed frame before you can even react. To your relief, your neck is not restrained, so you can finally get a good look at what’s binding you spread eagle.

The thread is humming gently against the vulnerable skin of your wrists, and give no quarter for movement in your arm. Underlying that hum, you can feel a tempest of magic, chomping at the bit to be unleashed, to obliterate, to maim, *to destroy.* A magic that’s angry at the world, and wants to bring it down with them. That is, that’s the feeling you get from the chords anyway. You’re certainly not a monster, so you’re just basing it off the interactions you’ve had with magic before. Your panicked state of mind is probably exaggerating your perception of Error’s magic to this extreme extent.

At least, you sure hope so.

“Do you like them? These strings make fantastic puppets.” Error says, breaking you out of your over-analysis. You whip your head back to him, still keeping any kind of fear from showing in your eyes and now limited body posture. At this point, concealing your understandable fear is probably more for your sanity and rationality than anyone else’s.

“Now then, let’s finally get down to business. I want something from you.”

You give him an incredulous look. Clearly, this is more of a demand, but it’s not like you can say anything. You’re completely at his mercy at this point, and the furthest depths of your mind are already wailing that they don’t want to die. Logic is trying desperately to keep all of your emotions and instinctual urges in order, though it’s a futile effort. Error’s hollow smile quirks slightly in one corner as he raises one of his hands again and points towards your chest.
“Your soul.”

Your hammering heart immediately plummets to your chest at the implications behind those words. However, Error isn’t finished.

“I’m not stupid, though. Hurting you isn’t going to help anything, so I’m just going to look at it,” he says with a nonchalant shrug. “Then again, I could cleave through your soul as easily as scissors go through paper with my strings, but what’s the fun in that?”

There’s another meaning to his words there, but you can’t quite place it. It’s not like you’re going to have any time to ruminate on those words though, as he continues talking. You’re starting to get suspicious that he enjoys hearing himself talk with all of this monologuing, but now’s not the time to think about that.

“So, I’m just going to make this quick. I’m going to pull out your soul, get a good look at it to see for myself, then we can both go about our merry ways, deal?”

You give him another look.

“What, skeleton got your tongue?”

This motherfucker.

“Now, just hold still.”

His chuckles die out as he approaches the corner of your bed, as your body instinctively tries to curl away from the looming threat. Another string materializes in his hand and it slowly gravitates towards your chest. All you could do is watch on helplessly, chest heaving, as the string begins to phase through your thin pajama clothes towards where you know your soul is located.

Instantly, the feeling of something foreign and completely unwanted inside of you leaves you reeling and struggling with a newfound vigor. There has to be something you can do to get him away from you! This repulsive feeling coming from knowing something with harmful intent is aiming towards your very core of being gives you the sickening feeling of being violated in the worst way possible.

“There you are…” You hear Error mutter this through his face of concentration, a look of calm in contrast to what his actions are causing you to feel.

At that moment, a feeling of absolute zero and searing fire courses through your body causing you to scream in to the strings and screw your eyes shut, blocking out any other sensations than what’s going on inside of you. There’s a tugging sensation inside your body and you’ll be damned if you’re going to allow Error a view of your soul like this. You haven’t shown anyone your soul, not even in an encounter, and you’re not going to let that end tonight! You refuse to just be casually manhandled just for the sake of his own curiosity!

“What…? What are you doing?”

You’re writhing on your bed at this point, tugging and lashing out at the bindings of strings on your bed frame, causing your bed to rock on its box spring. Another muffled scream rips through you as the dichotomy of feelings inside of you intensify to agonizing and nearly unbearable.

Even so, you hold on, even in your weakening mental state.

“How’re you just let go already, you idiot!”
You refuse.

You can feel your consciousness slipping, black spots appearing in your vision when you dare to open your eyes. You just want Error would give up and get out!

Get out, get out, get out,
getoutgetoutgetoutgetoutUTGETOUTGETOUTGETOUTGETOUTGETOUTGETOUT-

There’s a sudden crash to where you think your door is, a rush of air billowing past you, and the pressure in your chest is suddenly gone. At the sudden relief, your gasp for air from your nostrils. You’re still heaving as your bindings are suddenly released as well, and someone is drawing you up against them on the side of your bed. They’re warm, and incredibly comforting to your still violently churning thoughts. You finally open your eyes, expecting to see Sans or even Papyrus. Unexpectedly, you find Dream gazing worriedly at you, browbones set in a crease that you wish you had energy to wipe away with a brush of your thumb.

“You okay?”

Is that even a question? Reeling in the snark even if you still aren’t able to speak, you give small nod. Frankly, no real bodily harm has come to you, aside from chafing from where the strings were on your wrists and ankles. The thing that you’re most worried about is how worn out you feel from nearly having your soul forcibly extracted from you. Dream doesn’t seem like he believes you when you say you’re okay, but sets down something that looks like a staff on your bed and uses both hands to reach to the nape of your neck.

“Let’s get these off of you, alright?” His tone was calm and soothing, and you practically feel yourself melting in to him. You gave no resistance as the strings around your mouth fell off, and in response, you immediately started coughing up glitter when you tried to draw in more breath than what was allowed in your lungs. Dream ended up rubbing your back while holding you up with his unoccupied arm, and you can feel yourself coming down from your adrenaline high. Now that you have some form of spatial awareness other than you and Dream, you catch wind of another conversation happening in your room.

“-what were you thinking doing that? Killing them is a surefire way for us to be stuck here for even longer!”

“Don’t give me that, Ink. You know for a fact that I could’ve killed everyone else the hour we entered this universe. But I didn’t. I wasn’t trying to kill them, only trying to see what their soul looked like. You also know for a fact that I wouldn’t jeopardize the opportunity that would get me away from you.”

There was a lull in their conversation, most likely Ink giving Error a skeptic look. Why are they talking so familiarly? And… what was that about killing us all??

“…well,” Ink sighs and deflates, as if all the wind was taken out of his sails, “at least that confirms that your strings still work. It’s just so odd, the machine just taking away our hopping powers. I haven’t seen anything like this before.”

…what?

You can feel Dream tense behind you as he pauses in his ministrations on your back and Error go rigid, but Ink continues obliviously.

“What did their soul look like anyway? Was it two colors like the other human adults? Or was it
“Even if you didn’t rudely interrupt me when I was pulling it out, I wouldn’t tell you.”

*They’re back to talking like I’m not right here and not just grossly violated a couple of minutes before this. Wonderful.* There’s another pause as Ink perks and gives a thoughtful hum.

“Tell you what: I’ll let you pull out their soul if I get to see it too, yeah?”

**Um, no??** A pit of dread settles in to your stomach at the thought of going through that ordeal again. And you certainly don’t like the grin that grows back on Error’s face. Despite that, he scoffs cross his arms to give one of his familiar glares.

“What happened to that precious ‘non-involvement’ you always adhere to?” Ink only shrugs in response. There’s a sudden intense grip on your shoulder as Dream speaks up before you can say anything.

“No! What’re you saying?! You can’t just treat them like an object to be observed!”

Ink finally turns around from where he was facing away from you and regards Dream, ignoring you. He looks genuinely confused.

“Dream, you-“

“I won’t let you!” Dream raises his voice in an uncharacteristic upset manner, which you immediately cringe at.

*Shit… they’re gonna-*

Too late.

“y/n what’re ya-“

Sans takes this moment to appear in your doorway, now with significantly less bones blocking it, and pauses, regarding what he’s seeing in your room at nearly five in the morning.

The low light of the phone on the floor being the only source of light, your bedding and pillows tossed about the room haphazardly. Your completely bedraggled appearance, still being clutched against Dream, and all the slightly glowing blue strings that are strewn across the floor and bed. The other two that look frozen, caught in an act that they know they shouldn’t have been doing. And, most importantly, being a monster that can see well in the dark due to the low light Underground, are the evident angry red chafe marks on your wrists and ankles. Sans immediately draws the conclusion that anyone would see in this kind of situation, and now that pit of dread feels ten tons heavier.

Sans’s eyelight gutter out and regard the others with a menacing thinly stretched smile. His voice reverberates throughout the house, apparently not caring for waking the others either.

*“what did i say.”*

The tension in the room skyrockets, once again as magic presses down on the entirety of the room.

“geez, why the fuck are ya all so damn loud? it’s like five in the- oh.”

Out of your view, you can hear several shuffling of feet, but Red is the only one who you can see from you position in your room. He’s clad in one of his new black tank tops minus his jacket, but
usual shorts. His red lights have been flicking between the people in your room and Sans, adequately confused.

“are we interruptin’ somethin’, or?” Geno speaks up out of view and you think you can hear a rumble of confusion that probably belongs to Beast.

“What? What’s Going On In There?” Blue’s voice calls out as well.

Well, shit. Now at least Papyrus isn’t awake.

You really need to stop thinking these kinds of things.

Almost immediately after you think that, another door creaks open with Papyrus’s voice ringing out.

“Y/N? Are You Still Awake? You Know Staying Up This Late Isn’t Healthy.”

An awkward silence falls on the occupants of the house, no one particularly sure how to start up a conversation as to why everyone was forced awake at such an ungodly hour.

And at this point, you snap.

Several silent giggles escape out of your mouth before devolving in uncontrollable, hysterical, and most likely borderline insane to everyone else, laughter at the absolute absurdity of the situation you’ve been put in. You don’t know why this is so laughable to you now of all times, but you can’t stop. Maybe you had a slight psychotic break from tonight, maybe it’s the existential dread from earlier today, maybe it’s even the emotional whiplash, or it’s all three combined in to one perfect storm of ridiculousness. Only now has it truly set in how peculiar the situation you’ve been thrust in to is.

And fuck it’s hilarious.

Your life really is a shitty anime!

After several awkward moments for the others while you try to stifle your laughter, you’re finally able to speak.

“Geez Error, I didn’t know you wanted to jump my bones that badly.”

The eye twitch you received in response from the glitchy skeleton and the snort of laughter from Ink were both intensely gratifying. After another bout of giggles, and with all the seriousness you could muster, you directed a piercing gaze at the two as they shifted uncomfortably at your sudden scrutiny.

“I think it’s time we had the chat that we should’ve had last night.”

Chapter End Notes

Oh yes, it's time for "The Talk" (TM) aka Grilling Session next chapter. Keep your eyes peeled for that when it comes out. I've said it before, but the next one shouldn't take as long to come out.

Let me know how you guys like this! It's definitely a more serious/heavy chapter, and
I'd like feedback as to how I wrote it. See how I can improve and whatnot.

Also, don't forget to point out mistakes so that I can fix them!
A Grilling that Would Make any Dad Jealous

Chapter Summary

You believe that things like these are best served medium rare. Never well done. Like, who does that?

Chapter Notes

BAMM!! Guess who got an update in a week and a half!? This overworked college student! At least it's not a month in the making this time.

Bother me or send me stuff on Tumblr! I can take asks in character for ESOM, so if you want any more exposition, ask here!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The first few birds have begun to sing their melodious songs and the nocturnal animals have started to settle in to wait for the moon to rise once more. Lampposts have switched off, with a small amount of natural light beginning to filter about. The sun hasn’t quite risen from the horizon, leaving the world cast in an early morning gray haze, with only the earliest of early risers beginning to stir. A type of serenity makes itself known only in these kinds of hours, where this slice of the world is finally waking from its sleep and going about its morning routine. In other words:

Why the hell are you up right now?

All you wanted to do was grab a glass of water and go to bed because you were being productive and working on things like someone responsible. But no, it seems like life has decided to fuck you over once more and give you no sleep when you thought it was a clever idea to pick up a morning shift. The definition of death wouldn’t begin to describe you once you finish your shift in the coming hours. And then your sleep schedule is going to be even more fucked up because you know you’re going to end up crashing when you get back, and that’s going to screw up you getting up for classes on Monday and ugh, you’re not going to bother thinking about the rest of the repercussions for now.

You sigh and take a sip from your golden flower tea and adjust the blanket wrapped around you with your free hand. There’s a rustle or two of clothing from around you, but the silence otherwise reigns supreme in the house. Uncomfortable doesn’t begin to describe the quiet as the other residents are expecting you to start the conversation that you ended up forcing on to them. To be honest with yourself, you’re just unsure on where to start. Do you begin with your suspicions over the three who entered your room last night? Or do you want to give some exposition to your actions, meaning threat, during the day? Or, as a final option, just keep quiet until everyone just goes back to bed? You mentally shake your head and cross that off the list; you’re getting answers out of them, like it or not. You’d like to think this unsolicited attack on you would warrant a few of them anyway.

“So,” Geno begins, holding hope that this would finally spur the talk that you haven’t initiated. You take a sip of your tea and revel in the feeling of healing magic course through your skin, letting the prompt linger in the air as long as socially acceptable. Actually, I guess this could serve as a way as
payback. Rope them in to a talk and slowly drag answers out of them instead of just going for the throat. Not something I’d usually do, but sounds fitting for a sunrise talk like this one.

“So,” you respond simply.

“…you mind tellin’ us what was goin’ on in your bedroom?”

Geno’s voice, as well as everyone else’s that actually had sleep were deep and scratchy still. For something as insignificant as morning voice, you couldn’t help that spike of jealousy that they got some sleep, even when you’re the one that probably needs it the most. Is that a selfish thing to say? Probably. But dealing with customers is both physically and emotionally draining, and you’re already tapped out on both scales because of yesterday. As a form of comfort for the impending doom the sunrise will undoubtedly bring, you take another long sip of the tea and nestle in to the arm of the couch.

On the other side of you, Sans has taken perch and hasn’t strayed from you since the rude awakening. While the protective gesture isn’t lost on you, there’s doubt that he’d be able to do much against Error. What you felt from him is like the experiences you’ve had Sans using magic on you when he’s having a nightmare times ten. Instead of describing one of the worst feelings of your life to them, you let the explanation fall to the others.

“You should be asking them that.”

You gesture to the three sitting on the floor across the tea table from you. With the way their colorful pupils constrict with their sockets widening marginally, you enjoy, yet again, the feeling of catching them off guard. The expectant pause stretches further than you would expect, with the first skeleton to recover being Ink. And he does not hesitate to throw people under the bus.

“Error was trying to take out Y/N’s soul while everyone else was asleep.”

You have to hold in a snort of amusement at the look Error sends Ink for his backstab. If looks could kill, Ink would have disintegrated on the spot. The already present tension spikes at this admission, and you can feel Sans inch closer to you so that your shoulders are touching. You were going to point out the convenient omission in Ink’s confession, but Error beats you to it.

“Don’t try to act like you’re guiltless.”

Ink just tilts his head to the side with a raised brow ridge.

“Huh?”

Error’s frequent scowl is replaced, unbelievably, with something even angrier at the other’s response.

“You offered a deal where you’d let me continue pulling out their soul if you saw it too.”

The confusion on Ink’s skull schools to something sharper, more controlled at his retort. If you hadn’t watched the subtle shift in expression, you would still believe that he genuinely forgot what transpired a few moments ago.

“I did?”

Error’s now shaking in his position on the floor, physically having to restrain himself from doing who knows what to Ink, who’s sitting oh-so-conveniently on the opposite side of the table. Dream is watching on worriedly with an unbecoming frown on his features.
“Don’t pull that memory shit on me! I know you remember, you just don’t want to show it. Just ask your lackey, or even the human!”

He gives a pointed look to both you and Dream, threatening with his gaze that screams if you don’t back him up on this, you will regret it later. Regardless of his unspoken promise, you don’t see a real reason to lie. Why throw Error to the wolves when it was made evidently clear that Ink doesn’t seem to care about your wellbeing either?

“I-It’s true…” Dream mumbles, studiously observing the clashing zig-zagging carpet and avoiding the gazes directed at him.

“Yup,” you affirm while taking another sip of tea, rubbing idly at the chafe marks on your wrists with your free hand. Error gives Ink a victorious sneer at the confirmations while Ink’s face changes to something unreadable. What really matters here is how they’ve proven, yet again, that they do have some kind of relationship. Red lets out a short huff of irritation and moves to stand from the loveseat.

“who knew both of ya were such kinky freaks. if we’re done here, then ‘m goin’ back to sleep.”

Really? ‘Kinky freaks’ he says. And that’s coming from the guy whose mouth is a firehose of flirtatious comments. Error doesn’t miss a beat on that either.

“Can it, edgelord. You of all people don’t have the right to say that.”

Red pauses in his effort to stand to flash Error a razor-sharp snarl with a flickering iris for added effect.

“whadya mean by that, bluescreen? you been watchin’ me or somethin’?” Before Error has a chance to reply, Beast cuts in finally from where he’s curled up in the corner, gazing sleepily at the red skeleton.

“it’s pretty obvious. don’t hafta be near you for long to see that.” A distinct burgundy begins to creep up Red’s zygomatic arches, a stuttered rebuttal getting caught in his nonexistent throat. Sweat begins to dot around the crown of his skull, as his face contorts in to another knife thin smile.

“you better watch your fuckin’ mouth you overgrown-”

“And You Don’t Have To Be So Upfront About It! Have Some Tact!”

Blue also finally cuts in to strike the final blow to Red’s ego. If even Blue calls you out about your intimate habits in such a short amount of time, you know you’re being obvious. If only Papyrus wasn’t out on his morning run to fully seal the deal. The blush has fully settled on Red’s cheekbones as he averts his gaze while crossing his arms, grumbling too softly to hear. What is with these skeletons and their sass? I get it that I can be bad, but piling on to him like that was downright savage. Is it the early morning or are they just always like that? Ink snickers at Red’s defeat and pipes up again, attempting to steer the conversation back to the original point.

“Or maybe Error just has a thing for humans. So scandalous~.” This earns him yet another special glower that appears to be reserved for him especially.

“Guys, I really don’t think this is the time-“ Dream attempts to get a word in edgewise in the two’s conversation, but is immediately drowned out.

“Says the soulless abomination. You’ve probably done some weird shit to emulate actual feelings.”

...
Now there’s some new information. Forget interrogating these guys, they’re pretty much just offering the stuff up on a silver platter. Ink just shrugs off the accusation like water off a duck’s back. It appears that everyone else has given pause from what Error said, but none know how to fully address it. These skeletons just get weirder and weirder. What am I in for…

“…regardless, you should know how private a soul is. respect their boundaries like they did yours,” Sans says as he gives a meaningful look at Error from where he’s tensely slouching against you. Yeah, that’s not going to happen. I still haven’t even asked any questions yet. The glitchy skeleton scoffs as he adjusts his hood absently.

“Don’t act like any of you aren’t curious.”

The way he’s eyeing the others has your skin crawling and stomach rebelling, and you can feel deep in your chest the revulsion that came with your soul being nearly forced out of you outside a confrontation. The mood had lightened with all the bickering, but now it’s plummeted back down to levels of the Mariana Trench. And you’re not going to help in the tension whatsoever, but redirecting this conversation sounds better than having your hidden soul discussed. You take another sip of your nearly finished tea and steel your nerves as the healing magic helps bolster your resolve.

“Tell me, you three,” you say after a moment or two of deliberation. Your gaze is directed at the ones across from you, as they seem to pick up on the seriousness in your voice. The room’s focus shifts back to you instead of soul speculation. I’ve got them right where I want them now. No going back. I want answers, and dammit, I’m getting answers.

“Have you ever heard of the word subtly?”

There’s a pregnant pause as the skeletons regard with incredulity.

“…Yes?”

“where’re you goin’ with this, kid?” Geno says as he sweeps his visible eyelight over your face for any indication of what you’re about to say next. You give pause as you pick your words carefully once again.

“Because you guys aren’t that. At all.”

At those words, the guards are raised even higher than before, but their posture betrays the understanding of what you said. Or suspicions. They may not know completely what you’re talking about, but they certainly have a guess.

“What do you mean?” Ink asks carefully. You can picture the tightrope he thinks he’s suddenly walking, afraid that he’ll slip and give away information. But little did he know that he’s already fallen off and swept away by the raging river below him. At this you roll your eyes and lean over, elbows on your knees and a smirk playing across your visage. You give a pointed glance between Error and Ink before speaking.

“What I’m saying is: how long have you two been dating?”

…

…

“…really?”

Apparently, your joke fell flat.
Oh well, they can’t all be winners. You’re not supposed to be the comedian here anyway.

You cough in to your fist to mask your laughter at the deadpan expression everyone is wearing. 
*Great, now I’m going to have glitter over my hand.* What you would give to have your phone on you again to capture their faces exactly, but sadly you left it in your room to charge. Apparently, using your flashlight drains battery fairly quickly. Your suspicious coughing ceases as you plead your case.

“But think about it! Maybe they’re a good foil to each other’s personality? I mean, they bicker like an old married couple already.”

Sans nudges your side with his elbow to urge you to finally get to the point. You pout at the nonplussed people in the room and their uncooperativeness. You assume that the serious mood that suddenly suffocated the room earlier was what kept them from playing along, but now it’s just awkward. Or maybe it’s just that you’re probably the last person they expected to be making jokes right after what happened earlier. Regardless, with a put-upon sigh, you relent.

“So, you guys aren’t dating? Or even friends?”

“No,” Error asserts forcefully. He’s giving you a look like you just asked him what’s so odd about odd numbers or something else that’s absurdly profound out of the blue. Ink, on the other hand, has disappointment etched in to his skull.

“Aww, we’re not?”

Error only glares at him.

“I have to agree. Are you sure?” You say with your own displeasure. You were going to go all Undyne and Alphys on them, but that sounds a bit too extreme for right now anyway.

“he said they aren’t already. give it a rest kid.” Geno interjects tersely. You ignore him and finally set the hook.

“Because you guys sure act like you know each other.”

You raise a brow slowly as their expressions fall slack in shock and then surge through various emotions before falling to poorly veiled nervousness. *Again, not making their case any better, so it’s pretty to safe to say that I’m right.* The rest of the skeletons give you a puzzled look, unsure as to how you reached that conclusion with only their banter as evidence.

“What’re you-“ Ink begins to say, only to be silenced by you listing off the things that have tipped you off. Each one of the points are counted on your fingers as you go.

“Firstly, you guys seem to gravitate towards one another, even if you, as Error says, aren’t friends. Whether it was the sleeping arrangement or when you busted in to my room tonight, you guys seem to stick close. Ink, you also said something peculiar when Error went catatonic last evening. Specifically, you told me to wait for him to reboot because of the pun overload. While granted that yes, pun overload can certainly be a thing—I speak from experience—your wording was much too specific for a stranger.

“Dream and Ink’s reactions have been pretty similar yet still distinctly different from the others when exposed to new things about the surface. That means that you guys weren’t really focused on the scenery, but on the people that were focused on scenery instead. Error was different than both of you, but he still kept his view on the others instead of the surroundings.
“And two final things, and this was only recently. Ink, when you were chastising Error about not killing me in my room, you implied that you had previous knowledge about Error’s strings. I’ve been with you guys near constantly for the time you’ve been here, and I haven’t seen nor heard any comment or interaction from any of the others witnessing Error using them prior to this morning. And this one happened moments ago: when Ink outed Error for attacking me, Error called Dream Ink’s 'lackey.' Meaning that you’ve been near them for an extended period of time—more than a day, mind you—to form that opinion.”

You take a deep breath and regard the others as they slowly process the information you just dumped on them. Agonizingly slowly as the house descends to maddening silence yet again, thin tendrils of light peek their way out of the uppermost blinds. In that moment, in that brief, brief moment, you believe you could have closed your eyes, relished the warmth of a living, breathing body next to you and convince yourself that it was any other morning. Get up, go to work or class, come back to the house, enjoy conversations with your housemates about calm, mundane things, finish your school obligations, have some free time that would probably be sucked away by Papyrus’s puzzles or Sans’s games, go to bed and wait for the next day. While not always what you desired your days to be, there was a sense of rhythm and some expectation of what’s to come in the following morning.

But now, you’re not sure if you’ll ever have that sense of calm in the near future.

“now that i think ‘bout it, that would help explain what happened last night.”

You turn towards the huddled ball of clothes with a tail in the corner and gesture for him to continue the dogpile.

“see, ‘ve got pretty good hearin’, so i woke up to quiet laughter and the scratchin’ of paper last night. turns out, it was those exact three writin’ on a piece paper.” Blue perks from his rumination and adds his affirmation as well.

“Yes, I Woke To That Too. I Thought It Was Just A Dream At The Time.”

So, it’s not just me who’s had some suspicion towards them. At least that confirms that I’m not reading way too far in to it.

You nod understandingly and draw the blanket tighter and recline to the back of the couch once more. At your movement, Sans leans in to you more in an act of reassurance, nearly having his entire spine pressed between your arm and torso. Not that you’re complaining. He’s always been warm and willing to cuddle instead of doing anything productive when you both have the time. Despite being a skeleton, you swear up and down that there’s cushion between some points of contact that aren’t just clothes. That extra padding just makes him even more squeezable. Anyways, I’m getting off track.

After taking another drawn out swig of tea, you can feel the pressure in the air intensify, as suspicious looks are being thrown about like candy on Halloween. The accused have drawn themselves tighter against themselves defensively in subconscious answer to the acute hostile intent. Even so, they haven’t tried to disprove or outright deny any of the incidents. With that much evidence stacked against someone, it’s understandable that they’d have difficulty mounting a counterargument against it. Leading the charge, you go for the root of the matter after dancing about it for so long.

“At this point, I don’t think the question is do you know each other. It’s more along the lines of how.”

You set the mug down on the tea table and rest a fist underneath your chin as you level an intense, scrutinizing sweep between their eyes.
“So… care to tell us how you know each other if you’re from different universes?”

Any moment of deliberation between them is stolen away as Error heaves the most condescending, world-weariest sigh.

“Way to go, Ink. You blew it.”

Ink makes an indignant noise as he swings toward Error.

“Me?! I’m not the one who decided to bind a person to their bed and pull out their soul because they were curious!”

“Though you’re the one that almost went along with it because you were curious as well.” Dream points out, disapproving. Ink’s mouth curves downward in to a frown.

“But.”

“Statistically, you were the one that tipped me off the most. Out of all you, I guess you could say that you blew it the greatest amount.”

Instead of contesting for longer, Ink just crosses his arms and pouts, not admitting defeat but not arguing any further on that matter. What he does concede to, is an explanation.

“I guess some form of an explanation is in order…”

“So, let me get this straight,” you say while rubbing your temples. There’s a headache starting to form with the overload of information, but that’s the least of your worries. You’ve been awake for far, far too long to fully comprehend what’s just been explained. Everyone else looks lost in their own minds, processing the information.

“You’re a travelling group of skeletons that can bend space to their will and move from alternate universe to alternate universe.”

The group nods.

“By means you’re not sure how you got or declined to answer about.”

A mini wave of heads bobbing up in down like apples in water.

“And with that, you’ve been travelling and fighting within universes that are on the brink of destruction because of Error or some other unknown force.”

“They’re not supposed to exist anyway.” You sigh and apply more pressure to your temples, to the point of almost painful. The pounding in your head increases a fraction.

“We can talk about morality and why you decided to take upon the job of destroying universes later. I think this is enough overbearing and thought-provoking information for one sunrise chat.”

No one can argue with that.

“And now that you’re here, your multiverse-travelling powers have been ripped away. You suspect
it had something to do with Skeletor pulling you all here.”

Another bobbing of heads.

_Chalk up one more point for Sans fucking things up._

Several of your questions about the origins of the peculiar group have been satisfied, but you most certainly know that they’re not telling you everything. You’re not expecting them to nor do you think they would willingly open up to near strangers. Maybe you’ll get to hear more about the multiverse and its strange jumpers once you get to know them a bit more. There is one question that’s been plaguing your mind since it was brought up in the first place though. You look up from the floor to Ink who meets your eyes with what looks like nonchalance. You can’t be too sure.

_For someone who tried to keep this a secret while still making it painfully obvious, he doesn’t really seem to care all that much._

“You said you’ve been called The Creator, right?”

“Yes, why?”

“But you said you only _defend_ the universes.”

“That’s right.”

“So, you don’t _make_ them.”

“No, I don’t have the power to do that. Makes my job harder, that’s for sure.” Error just rolls his pupils but doesn’t comment.

“Then why are you called The Creator if you don’t make the universes themselves?”

…

The pieces click in to place at the same time for everyone as a confused daze washes over the room. Even Ink appears to be befuddled by your question.

“I… don’t know, really.” This only serves to pique your interest even further about how Ink came to his self-appointed job in the first place. But even Ink doesn’t seem to have the answers, spotty memory notwithstanding.

“Who even gave you that name in the first place?”

Ink doesn’t answer, only scratching his skull while staring at the gaudy carpet with an unconcentrated grimace. Doesn’t look you’re going to be getting an answer to that any time soon. Instead of letting the conversation die, you decide to switch gears.

“And how does Dream fit in to this equation?”

At the opportunity to answer for himself, Dream breaks from his fugue, and gives you a small smile that doesn’t fail to assuage your headache a minute amount.

“I’ve been helping Ink out for some time now. But I can’t really say for how long because…” He trails off, uncertain how to finish that sentence. You’re fairly sure how that sentence was going to end, but Sans fills in the blanks anyway.

“because time is relative to the universe you’re currently in.” Dream nods in confirmation.
“Yeah, there’s universes where the humans are still stuck with making metal tools by hand, some where alcohol is prohibited and organized crime is running rampant. I think I remember one of the people saying it was the 1920’s? I’m not super sure. What year is it now?” Ink pipes up with a grin turned unsure frown as he continued speaking.

“201X.”

“See? Time is… complicated. Especially with Frisks or their alternates running around.”

There’s a collective pause as the metaphorical can of worms that is Frisk slash whoever is like them has suddenly and unintentionally been ripped open. You have to stop yourself from openly groaning at the probable repercussions of throwing reset knowledge in to a room full of ravenous, answer-seeking Sanses.

_Things can only go even further downhill from here._

Chapter End Notes

It will be about two weeks plus another few days for the next update. I have so much work to do both before and after American Thanksgiving and then finals are just around the corner. I'll probably procrastinate in studying during finals week, so I'll probably update around first or second week of December.

Don't forget to let me know how you guys like the chapter! Your comments, kudos, and critiques about this fic help fuel my drive to write, so I appreciate anything you give me.
Charred

Chapter Summary

Some are burned to a crisp from the fire set under them.

Chapter Notes

Bother me on Tumblr!

Finals!! *shakes fist angrily* I'll be finishing the semester on the 14th, and I cannot be any more excited to get this busy semester out of the way.

You’re tempted to get up and get yourself some water to soothe your parched throat and clear your head, but that runs the risk of adding the final straw in breaking the camel’s back. The avalanche of questions hanging in the air are begging to be unleashed upon the multiverse skeletons, but there’s a nervousness that’s wedged itself in you that maybe everyone would be better off not knowing for the time being. There’s only so much jarring information one can take in at a time until they become numb and not fully register what’s being said. You’re teetering on the precipice of this state, and you’re aching to just go to bed. The plush linen’s siren song can be heard echoing in to the living room, and it’s taking all of your willpower not to just nod off, despite the situation. You yawn in to your mouth and pick your feet up and pull them towards you to warm your toes. It seems that subtle shifting was enough to finally break the anticipation as the rest of the skeletons start speaking all at once.

“WHO?”

“so you’re sayin’ you know-“

“sonuffa bitch…”

“you can see them re-“

“so all this time…”

You snap your fingers repeatedly to get everyone’s attention again, trying to keep this interrogation session orderly without too much damage. You’re not stupid. You have an inkling where this conversation is going to go, and it’s not going to be pretty. Not in the slightest. Thank the deities above that Papyrus is still out. I don’t want him caught in angry skeleton crossfire. Not to say that he can’t hold his own; training and running nearly everyday has its physical benefits.

“One at a time, people. I know you’re all dying to get some information out of them, but at least be a little bit patient. They’re not going anywhere.” You can see in their eyes and how quickly they snap to you and back to the others, that they desperately want to keep their own line of interrogation going, but think better of it. With all tongues bitten and mandibles squarely shut, you decide to give the floor to Sans with a nudge of your shoulder. Taking the hint, Sans sits up a little bit to be able to
fully inspect all of the traveler’s skulls and draws in a deep breath that he doesn’t need.

“with what you’re sayin’, you’re all aware of the timelines.”

Dream and Error both seem to catch on to what’s about to conspire immediately, as they look away, guilty and dismissive respectively. Ink doesn’t look up from where he’s now twirling one of his apparently vast collection of paintbrushes with one hand and cradling his skull in another, seemingly bored. With that, he also takes on the role of spokesperson, much to your evident confusion. Dream would feel like the best fit, in your opinion, to break bad information as he already clearly seems to understand what Sans is implying behind those words. Someone who’s already going to empathize with what’s about to be brought to light.

“That’s right,” Ink says with a twirl of the handle.

He still hasn’t looked up.

“to what degree?”

You feel a small twinge of pride that Sans is giving them the benefit of the doubt. He’s come far from how jaded he was back when you first met him. But even you know that this, unfortunately, isn’t the case.

“If I wanted to, I could watch an entire timeline and whatever happens in it. But with so many of them and only so many of me, I almost never have the time.” There’s a small relaxation in the shoulders of the resident Sanses in the hopes that maybe he doesn’t really know what goes down specifically.

“That’s only partially true.”

And that hope comes crashing down immediately in the form of Error.

“You fully observe timelines that tickle your fancy all the time. You throw yourself headfirst in to anything new and almost always completely disregard whatever you were watching before.”

He points his disproportionate eyes directly to Sans as he continues.

“What he really means when he says that is that he’s become so disenchanted with this universe that he hardly ever looks at it anymore. It’s predictable, and by his terms, boring.”

Ink stops his brush twirling to wave it at Error matter-of-factly.

“Can’t go wrong with a Classic now and again though, am I right?”

Error doesn’t deign that with a response.

You can feel rage boil in your gut at Ink’s insouciance and complete absence of a rebuttal. He called this universe, and by extension everyone in it, boring. Everyone that’s died and sacrificed themselves for a purpose that they truly believe would change the world for the better. Everything that shaped you, Sans, Papyrus, Undyne, Asgore, and everyone else in to who they are today. All the memories and moments that fill you with tenderness and affection or hatred and heart-wrenching grief.

Boring.

Something to discard when you’re done playing with it.

“Though there is something that sets you apart from the rest of the Classic timelines.”
“Classic? What does he mean by repeatedly saying that?” You say through gritted teeth.

The magic that you feel rushing against you from where Sans is still against you is evidence enough that he’s feeling something akin to your own emotions. Something in you draws your attention away from drilling holes in to Ink’s sockets and towards Dream. His browbones are pushed down and a small frown worked his way on to his face. It’s still entirely unbecoming for him to look so downtrodden, but what really speaks to you is his eyes. They somehow, despite only being small points of magic, hold deep pools of compassion and understanding. It helps soothe your heart a little knowing that at least one of them understands the kind of insult that was just directed at you.

“This is one of the longest Classic timelines I’ve seen since monsters made it to the surface. Do you have any idea why?”

Sorry buddy, I’m not inclined to answer any of your questions. The answer is probably too boring for you to like anyway. Internalizing your snark so that the conversation doesn’t break out in to an argument proves to be a great challenge.

“It should stay that way until the inevitable heat death of the universe, I believe. We’ll talk about why at a later point. It’s complicated and I only got most of the information secondhand anyway.” Ink has the audacity to look disappointed at your avoidance.

“back to the topic at hand,” Sans says while taking the conversation reigns once more. “so, if you apparently know the basics of this timeline for this universe like the back of your hand…”

“Yup, Classic universes are almost always the building blocks for any other alternate universe. Blue and Red are the most common variety.”

You want to scream and rip your hair out with the amount of information Ink’s casually battering you with, but just settle for running your hands through your strands instead. What does that even mean?!

“then you know what happened in the other timelines too.” Ink just shrugs and hums an affirmative, with maybe some condescending undertones.

“then why aren’t ya doin’ anything to fuckin’ stop it?” Red snaps as he finally loses his patience. Ink, much to Red, and probably everyone else’s, infuriation, just cocks his head to the side in silent question.

“if you claim to know all of the timelines, then why aren’t you stoppin’ this batshit crazy child running amok killin’ people for sport like it’s some kind of sick game?! sure my universe may be chock full of murder, but that don’t mean we just kill for the fuckin’ hell of it! we kill to get stronger, to survive. then this child that somehow has godlike powers just fuckin’ waltzes in to the underground like they own the place and just starts killin’ snowdrakes, icecaps, the canine unit, knight knights, papyrus, everyone!!”

Red’s gotten off the loveseat by now as his volume continues to rise as the control over his temper loosens even more.

“and when the kid thinks that enough is enough once they take the final blow against me and just rewinds it all like nothing ever happened in the first place? how it feels to slowly disintegrate in to dust while losing all hope that nothing can change your fate only to wake up in your bed with your recently deceased brother banging down your door hollering about sentry duty? can you imagine the
amount of trauma to be the only one to remember because of a fuckin’ experiment gone wrong? what if feels like to immediately know how this timeline is going to play out when that hellspawn makes its way out of the ruins? and how it feels to know that nothing, no matter what you fuckin’ do or prepare beforehand, changes the outcome? how it feels when not a goddamn thing changes and nothing matters because your life is nothing but a plaything to be discarded once it’s played with?

how can you just sit outside of it all and just let it happen?! how can you just decide what lives are more boring than others if you don’t fuckin’ see and live their lives like they do? what they go through on a day to day basis? how they grew up? what makes you think you have the right to decide who lives and who dies!?”

Red is violently rattling as he stands there, panting for breath, hands balled in to fists. Geno, Beast, and Sans all have their eyes closed, grin tight and forced, begrudgingly recalling those same thoughts. Your heart goes out to all of those who had to fully experience what happened Underground. You could never fully imagine the suffering that they’ve gone through, but knowing that so many of these skeletons are so hurt makes your resolve harden. This universe is done with the timeline bullshit, so now is the perfect time for starting the process of healing. Maybe having them here isn’t all that bad for them if they’re away from such a vitriolic environment… You take the time to wrap your blanket around Sans to help anchor him in reality instead of losing himself adrift in his mind. Blue hasn’t moved an inch from his spot, giving his full attention to the recovering skeleton. Error and Dream are both still looking away, allowing for Ink to take the brunt of explaining. Speaking of, Ink paused his brush twirling to give his attention to the fuming monster. All mirth or boredom has left his skull as he silently regards the one that shouted down at him with muted blue and red irises.

“don’t just fuckin’ sit there,” Red pants as he tries to pull himself together.

But Ink doesn’t respond.

“answer me!!” A sigh escapes Ink as he moves to stand.

“Fine. I don’t.”

There’s a stunned pause when everyone directs attention back to Ink, who has gained a hardness to his face. His features were like they were etched in to stone, there was no movement bar his mouth to speak. Any movement now would feel like a gunshot next to your ear with how disruptive it feels.

“I don’t have the power to interfere with universes like that. I’ve tried, just to see what would happen. Timelines are usually set upon three paths: pacifist, neutral, or genocide. You can all guess what one correlates to which. See, universes don’t particularly like when outside forces interfere with what’s considered one of the most important parts of its defining history. They are all set to end a handful of ways, so any alteration in that isn’t taken lightly.

Entire universes can be corrupted because of unanticipated errors that they can’t fix. Things break down, glitch out. Places are distorted to near unrecognizable. Inhabitants become amalgamates of messed up lines of code. Inevitably, a fatal error occurs, and the universe collapses in on itself if it can’t fix the interference because it’s not prepared for the outcomes.”

Ink takes the time to look each and everyone in the face before continuing.

“That’s why I can’t interfere largely with what’s happening or happened to you. It’s part of the universe’s set outcomes, and if I alter that in any large sense, there’s more death than just what a single child can do.”
One of your hands flies up to your mouth as you start to do mental backflips, jumping to conclusions left and right with the information. With the silence and memories weighing heavily on the rest, you take the time to speak.

“So… so you’re saying that ours and everyone else’s universes are in danger because of this?” You broadly gesture with your free hand, referencing the situation you’re currently in. Ink taps the handle of the brush against his mandible while the non-jumpers’ skulls flash in panic.

“Thankfully, no. You’re well past the point of Frisk’s time spent in the Underground. As far as I know, there isn’t any largescale turning point after that. And since, as you and Sans claim, no more resets are going to happen, then we should be safe. Resets with unprecedented figures also have some ugly effects, so that’s something I have to avoid too.”

“What About Our Universes? Are They Okay When We’re Not There?” Blue asks uncharacteristically quietly, distraught clear on his face. His hands have found their way up to his bandanna and have been clenching and unclenching in time with tension.

“They should be. I’ve seen connections established between universes that are completely stable even when their timelines shift. It helps balance each other out if there is any interference because of the link. Especially when it’s a Classic universe that they connect to. It helps provide a frame of reference.”

Both you and Blue nod, questions adequately explained. With that, Ink turns to Red, expression still stony and analytical.

“Does that answer your questions?”

The vaguely crimson bags under Red’s eyes look like they’ve doubled in weight since you last inspected his face. The distant look in his eyes and the way he’s slumped back in the loveseat bring the point home of how broken he looks. Seeing him like that makes your heart hurt as well as starts to dredge up completely unwanted memories that you furiously stamp down. Now is not the time to reminisce.

Eventually, Red places the palms of his hands up to his now closed sockets and leaves them there, nodding mutely. Ink takes that as his cue to sit back down and resume playing with the brush in his hand, bored look slapped back on to his face.

You decide that that’s enough. You asked your questions, and you got your answers. They asked their questions, and they got their unnerving answers. You’ll give a respectful minute or two for the others to collect themselves and their brooding thoughts before calling an end to this grilling. Despite all of your existential worries, work is a constant, much to your chagrin. You throw an arm around Sans and give a squeeze, sending silent reassurance with when your eyes meet his dim ones. Once you do, you unwrap the blanket from around you and give it entirely to Sans as you start to stand, grab your mug from the table, and aim to get changed and ready for work.

“Okay guys, you’re free to go about your day, or go back to sleep like any sane person would do if there isn’t any more questions.” There’s a moment of consideration before a voice speaks up.

“I Have One That’s Been Bothering Me For A While…” He’s been keeping his voice quieter this whole time, but it still feels incredibly unnatural. The others seem to have pulled themselves out of their daze to give their attention to Blue who’s been a silent spectator for the majority of the conversation.

“What Child Are You Talking About?”
Your heart skips a beat painfully at the genuine confusion laced in his actions. *He… doesn’t remember resets?*

“you… you don’t remember,” Geno says, though quiet enough to be considered talking to himself.

“*Ink, You Said That All Of The Universes Go Through Different Timelines, Correct?*” Ink gives a nod, not looking away with his toying of his bristles.

“So, *This Has Happened To My Universe Before And I Just Don’t Remember It?*” Another pain inducing heart skip at how lost he sounds, trying to look for evidence to confirm or deny his stance. There’s an unspoken conversation going on between Beast, Geno, Red, and Sans who all have shaken their heads minutely before looking at Blue once more. Skeletor parts his jaw slightly to speak, and you can already assume what’s going to come out of his mouth, much to your extreme irritation. *Like hell you’re shutting him out just because he doesn’t remember. I’m not putting him through knowing that there’s a huge secret they’re flaunting in front of him but never actually tell him. He deserves to know the truth.*

“Sans, if the next words coming out of your mouth are ‘don’t worry about it, kid,’ then I will personally come back over there and shove my mug so far in to your eyesocket, you’re going to have bits of ceramic clinking around in your skull for the rest of your life.” That causes him to shut his trap and burrow in to the blanket a little more for safety, as well as earning glares from Red, Geno and Beast. You don’t care in the slightest if they’re upset that they’re being complete and utter ignoramuses. Part of you gets some spiteful pleasure out of stopping that idiotic cycle of trying to carry all the burden by themselves.

You begrudgingly respect Sans’s wishes regarding reset knowledge to Papyrus because it isn’t your huge secret to tell someone’s own brother. He should hear it from Sans, but irrational fear always holds him back because he eventually twists it that Papyrus won’t take it well. How he might view Sans afterwards, or how it might negatively affect his worldview. Which is another point of contention because he needs to be treated like the damn adult he is, but you digress. Those are both old arguments that you won’t gain much ground in, so no use dragging that out now. Blue is not Papyrus, so he deserves to know the truth as much as the rest of them. With that small amount of pleasure out of the way, you turn back to Blue.

“Same goes for me, Blue. I don’t experience them either, but they have happened. I got intense déjà vu before Monsters were released to the surface, so that may have been my subconscious trying to remember it, but who knows. Do you think you have something like that?” The confusion etched on to his skull only is carved deeper along with a struggle to fully understand what’s being asked.

“I… Don’t Know?” There’s a sudden flash of understanding in his cerulean eyes. “Well, Maybe…” You gesture for him to continue with a soft smile. He does so with a small amount of hesitation. “*I Sometimes Get These Awful Nightmares About Dust. Dust In The Snow, In The Howling Wind, So Much That I Could Choke On It. So much dust…”*

Huh.

If the ‘genocide timelines,’ as Ink put it, have happened in Blue’s universe, then that could be actual memory retention. Though certainly not as strong of a recollection as the others, it’s something. Would you want to have those kinds of dreams, or any kind of constant recollection, for most likely the rest of your life about what was going on in your life five years ago repeatedly?

Hell no.
You don’t envy any of them in the slightest.

Chapter End Notes

I Hate Typing Like This. It Feels So Unnatural And I Have No Idea How People Type Like This Efficiently. Plus It Just Looks Weird In My Opinion. So Dammit Blue, Stop Being Quiet.

I'll be leaving on Christmas vacation on the 20th or 21st I believe, so if I don't have a chapter up by then, I hope you all have a merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or whatever else you celebrate!

Let me know how you guys like the chapter as always! Comments, critiques, questions, or anything of the sort.
Death Incarnate: A Sleepless Barista

Chapter Summary

Being at work with no sleep sucks.

Chapter Notes

I wanted to surprise you guys with this before the New Years, but hey, shit happens. This is the longest chapter I've written so far, and it's filled to the brim with information, so keep your lovely eyes peeled.

Enjoy~

Bother me on Tumblr [here!](https://example.com) I take asks, submissions, anything of the sort. I don't bite! ...much.

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

“Gooooood morning Y- oh.”

Your boss is the first one to earn your signature sleepless death glare since your departure from your house. She’s a cheery girl with olive skin and silky black hair with just a hint of an accent to a place you label around the Mediterranean. You’ve seen her happily bounce from customer to customer, keeping that same saccharine smile on her face. From what you’ve pieced together from her rants while working, she’s a senior undergraduate who’s double majoring in the STEM fields. How she manages to find time for this managing job, balance her studying, and be so bubbly is beyond your self-discipline by lightyears. The bags under her eyes she doesn’t bother to cover truly belies how she gets by, however. You can respect her deep dedication to her work and study, even when it costs her in other ways. Oh well. Sleep is only for the weak and business majors anyways.

Despite being someone you can’t particularly tolerate in the morning on top of having no sleep, there’s mutual respect and an amicable working relationship between you two. She understands that she can be overbearing at times while you can come off as abrasive and insensitive towards her and other coworkers when you’re not doing the greatest.

She gives a wry grimace full to the brim with understanding while she ties her maroon apron behind her.

“Rough night, huh?”

You snort as you maneuver around the corner of the counter and fish in one of the storage rooms for your apron and hat. At that movement, the back of your eyes throb and ache for you to rub at them. But you know that will be a self-destructive habit. Rubbing at them will only serve to irritate them further and compound your headache in the process, so you ignore the sensation as much as you can with your diminished willpower.

“Words cannot begin to describe the weekend I’ve had,” you call back to the counter. A hiss escapes
your boss as she wipes down between the registers with a wet rag.

“Oooh, I don’t like the sound of that. Was it really that bad?”

“Yes,” you state bluntly. Another hiss.

“Want to talk about it while we open up shop?”

You want to praise her for her willingness to lend an ear to someone else’s problems. *Whoever snatches her up will be one lucky guy. Or girl. Pretty sure she’s bi.* When you first described her to Sans, you placed a bet with him about her soul traits. You were adamant that she at least had some Kindness in her with her resolute will of constantly being that stereotypically peppy girl on kids shows. Additionally, with how well she handles your grouchiness on top of rude customers like some kind of saint, Patience would undoubtedly be her second trait. You wagered your pride as well as a hundred bucks. Sans haughtily agreed, going off of the logic of the odds of you being right being one in twenty-eight.

Sans ended up treating you to Grillby’s for three weeks.

“Thanks, but most of it is pretty personal. Haven’t fully gotten my own head around it, honestly.”

Your boss may be someone you can work with, but you don’t consider her a friend enough that you can spill earth-shattering, perspective-changing, nihilism-inducing secrets to her like juicy gossip. Most likely she would just look at you like you’ve finally gone off the deep end and treat you like you were suddenly made of glass. She just nods, restocking the cups in their appropriate sizes, unaware of the information weighing you down in body and mind.

“I get it. Not something really to be shared in the workplace.” She finishes her stacking as you inspect and clean up the coffee machines. “Thanks for coming in despite it by the way! Jamie called out because he was stupid and got a hangover from a frat party.” You look up from your duty and arch a brow at her.

“He actually admitted that to you?”

“Hey, we may both agree that Jamie is as thick-headed and common senseless as a sack of bricks, but he knows not to really say that as the excuse to call in right to your boss’s face.” *Fair point.*

“So you called him out on it?”

“Oh of course I did! He’s done this five times in the past two months. All oh-so conveniently either today or Monday, usually mornings. He really needs to re-evaluate his decision to join Gamma Delta Delta if he’s going to be missing work this much.” You screw your eyes shut and smack your head on to the recently washed counter and mentally groan at what your boss is implying.

“You let him take the day anyway…”

“Yes!” She pops her ‘p’ without a supposed care in the world.

You curse and smack your head against the stone again and immediately regret that decision as your skull throbs painfully in response. Her Kindness will be your downfall in to insanity.

“Oh, don’t be such a Debbie Downer. We can handle it!”

“While your enthusiasm would be appreciated in any other circumstance, there’s no way just two baristas are going to be able to handle the morning rush on a university campus full of sleep-deprived
students and professors alike.”

“But it’s a Sunday.” She waggles her finger at you as she moves to organize the different ingredients in the fridge. “No students except runners and all-nighters come in at such an early time.”

“But that also means Sunday drivers and old people out for their casual stroll at the ass crack of dawn. The demographic may change, but the traffic is going to be constant,” you rebut while rubbing your aching head and finish prep work.

“Don’t make me remind you in front of customers about your harsh language,” your boss chirps. Despite her intonations, you can tell she’s not kidding. You don’t care.

“Fuck it, there’s no one here in this hell hole of a store. And I could not give two ever-loving shits if they hear me mutter under my breath about how much I bastardize myself for choosing this shitty dead-end job that I’m only sticking with because it helps with the fuckton that I’m paying for tuition.” Your boss gives an approving hum while switching the sign to ‘open.’ Luckily enough, there are no potential customers in sight. When she turns around, to your complete surprise, she jumps on your bitching bandwagon.

“I could not fucking agree more. I’d rather be at home sleeping rather than dealing with shit-for-brains customers and employees alike. Not you, of course. You’re reasonable and we work well together. The only reason I put up with all of the burning rings of hellfire the higher ups send me through is to just get by and make money to live off of. Why do I have to keep up with this ditzy, false positivity just to keep a paycheck when all customers want is their damn coffee so they can move on to more important things? News Flash! I have many more important things to do too and most don’t understand that I’m human and would want to be any-fucking-where else than here dealing with snot-nosed entitled brats in a bigger body!”

You dropped your rag in shock halfway through her rant, as she’s now standing there panting, bags more prominent than ever before yet eyes blazing with life. This is one of the few, if not the first, times she’s cursed in front of you. Without thinking, you join your hands together repeatedly in a one-man standing ovation for the woman you call your boss. By now, it’s clear that she has to work tooth and nail for all of her money and she’ll be damned if she always puts up with people without a reprieve. But damn, if she’s not good at, let you be struck down now.

After your clapping ceases and she catches her breath, the pleasant, rich scent of dark coffee wafts from the makers, signaling the production of the bitter nectar. You pick up your rag and address what you believe was a goddess in action.

“Want to talk about it?” you parrot. She huffs a laugh as she smooths her perfect locks back in to place on her scalp and rubs a hand over her face.

“Nah, that one’s been a long time coming and I just needed to get it off my chest. Today’s going to be hell after all,” she admits. You beam at her and adjust your hat, now justly motivated with the catharsis of your venting.

“Ready to get shit done but still get bitched at the entire time?”

This gets a full laugh out of her as she checks the registers. The ring of a supposed sale echoes throughout the nook of the store, signaling the beginning of a long day ahead.

“Let’s.”
“Welcome to Mountain o’ Beans, how can I help you,” you drone, mind elsewhere but smile tacked to either side of your face. Your headache has only served to amplify to an agonizing throb and the pain behind your eyes has now settled to a constant reminder that you are running on fumes and desperately need some form of caffeine or sleep. Both in which you are distinctly lacking.

“Hey, Y/N, I wanted to- oh.”

That voice snaps you back to reality causing you to perk up and cringe away at the same time. Your brain finally registers who’s facing you while your smile falls on one side to a grimace. Dammit, not him. Not now. I’m not in the right mental state to interact with him.

“Hi, Noah. How can I help you,” you say a little too quickly.

A chiseled jawline and recently tanned flawless skin give a strong first impression for onlookers that are then only hooked deeper by his almost unnaturally emerald eyes and lush brown hair. Lips so full that models around the world would be jealous of. Despite the Adonis features, he has a swimmer’s build and a litheness to him makes him incredibly scrawny and elongated to near disproportionate and awkward. His collared shirt and overall put together-ness at such an early time indicates, much to your disdain, that he is indeed a morning person. If anyone saw Noah Everett and classified him by a single quote, it would be, ‘You can’t hit me, my dad’s a lawyer.’

Replace lawyer with incredibly influential politician, and you would think you would hit right on the money.

But you know better.

Noah has been your old friend since you were kids. He’s always been the butt of jokes and target for bullies that you would have to chase off eventually. When you first defended him from other kids, he clung to you like a lifeline for years on end that formed in to easy camaraderie. He had your back no matter what, even when what you were doing was questionable at times. Another thing that hasn’t changed is his ease in making connections when he’s able to break out of his timid shell. It’s almost like he’s a whole other person when really gets going in a conversation. With those connections though, come enemies and those that would want to use Noah to their favor. With a politician as a father, you would have to assume that you had to learn how to pick your words carefully and be allowed to work with any people. Knowing that you’d have to dance around everyone for the rest of life gives a sickening feeling in your gut that you’d have difficulty shaking. Noah’s life isn’t one that you’d want to assume in almost any circumstance. You were once thick as thieves while you were growing up and you could genuinely say that he was one of your closest friends, but recent… events have made your interactions with him strained and awkward at best.


“Both look and feel like one big pile of it. But tell me what else is new,” you say dully. He just hums his agreement and looks away, eyes flitting everywhere but you. There’s a larger amount of tenseness in his shoulders than usual when interacting with you, you notice belatedly. *What’s got him so worked up?* After a moment’s pause with neither of you two speaking and the line behind him growing ever longer, you sigh.

“Can I help you,” you repeat for the final time. Noah startles as if you spooked him as he slants his eyes back to you before looking upwards towards the menu.

“Oh, uh, r-right. Can I get a, uh, medium vanilla mocha with an extra espresso shot?” He hands you
a debit card without you even telling him the price of the drink. You write his name on a cup and swipe the card before handing it back.

“Sure, it’ll be out in about ten minutes. We’re understaffed today.” Noah just nods while still studying the menu with intense scrutiny. *What a meaningful conversation!* The moment drags on for what feels like entirely too long before you snap again.

“Anything else?” You’re desperately trying to keep your terseness from going overboard, but with him pussyfooting around whatever he’s trying to say isn’t aiding any. *I’m not prepared to deal with any of his new nonsensical shit today…* Noah jolts again as if your words physically stung him. Normally, you would feel kind of bad for being so standoffish with him, but you have other customers to begrudgingly deal with and he’s holding up the line.

“N-no! Nothing!” He quickly hops out of queue to wait before you start passive-aggressively calling him out on his bullshit at the worst possible time. *Being so far deep in sleepy-time apathy land truly does strange things to the human psyche…*

Noah’s drink comes out a little bit later than you predicted, even with you and your boss working in high gear for the entirety of your shift. You end up calling his name for him to receive his drink and move to start working on the next batch of orders while your boss mans the register with panache that suits her entirely. Before you can get to though, Noah calls your name and beckons you closer, seemingly finally mustered up the courage to say what he was going to earlier before you snarked him out of the line.

“Listen, can I talk to you after your shift?”

“Why?” You say, not missing a beat.

“It’s important, and I think it will benefit us both.”

You narrow your eyes at him and weigh your options. On one hand, he’s been your friend for years, and when he says it’s important, he usually means business. This isn’t just some stupid apology or justification for his actions, this goes further beyond that. On the other hand, there’s sleep. The scale was already swayed towards sleep, and his words have done little to rock what Lady Justice has decreed. Noah seems to have caught something in your sour expression that says that as his brows turn up in desperation.

“This is something that we need to both address. Please?”

You groan and accept your fate.

“Fine. I’m getting done in like an hour, so have yourself a seat outside or something.” He flashes you a relieved smile with thanks that gives a brief flashback of how he looked when you first properly met him. Scraped knee, tears in his eyes, yet a radiant, thankful smile when you first hauled him up off the ground. It’s not something you’d ever regret. He finally breaks away from where you were standing over the counter to one of the unoccupied tables outside that you can see through one of the windows.

You sigh defeatedly while rubbing at your eyes, only to wince and regret all of your life choices.
Salvation finally arrived in the form of reinforcements who didn’t call out today about fifteen minutes before your shift ended. You had no hesitation in your movements as you tossed your apron at them and shoved your way past them and customers alike to the outdoors, bemoaning the delay to finally just shut your eyes. Before you could get two feet out the door, a blue blur comes racing at you from the corner of your vision. With your delayed motor movements, you aren’t able to move out of the way in time, and it careens in to your chest and sticks, eliciting an oomph from you while pinwheeling your arms in desperation to keep yourself balanced.

“MWEH HEH HEH! CAUGHT YOU, HUMAN!”

Surprise dawns in you sluggishly, as you somehow keep yourself busting your butt on the concrete even with the added weight on your front.

“Blue? How did you find out where I work?”

He grins up at you, with a sly glint in his lights.

“A GREAT HUMAN CAPTOR NEVER REVEALS THEIR SECRETS!”

You refrain from rolling your eyes at him, knowing he’ll probably take more offense to that than you mean. Instead you just narrow your eyes at Blue and huff at him. Blue snickers at your reaction, muffling his laughter in to your chest and reverberating through you. He comes up to about a little under your collar, further accentuating the odd, yet pleasant, feeling of his voice echoing in to your being.

“You smell like coffee,” a baritone voice observes directly to your right. You turn and reflexively crane your head up to find the lights of Beast grinning down at you, a flash of amusement flickering in his eyes. You shrug while taking off your work hat and ruffling your hair.

“I wonder why? Could there possibly be any reason why I would smell like coffee when, if you can read the sign right behind you, I work at a coffee shop,” you say, patience waning slowly. Neither have a response to your snippy remark, but you can tell by the spiked smile Beast has he’s taking it in stride. You’ll have to apologize later for being a salty tired asshole, but that thought is quickly pushed to the back of your mind, forced to be addressed when you’ve acquired some sleep. You rub your face with your hands and groan after neither provide a response.

“Stars, I bet I look like death.”

“I think that’s s’posed to be our lines,” he drawls with a smirk. You have no inhibitions to roll your eyes at him whatsoever.

“Oh haha Mr. Tail, that’s the funniest thing I’ve heard all day. Please, tell me more of your hilarious jokes,” you grouse. Beast immediately cringes at your nickname of choice which gives you your own smirk of satisfaction.

“I thought we agreed that you wouldn’t call me that.”

“I made no promises to, not that I wouldn’t ever.” Beast rolls his own eyes as a new teasing smile appears on his face as he dangles a coffee cup of his own in front of you. You could’ve sworn that the entirety of your vision went green with envy.

“Tell you what then, you don’t call me that ever again, and I’ll be inclined to give you the tea sans made for you then. sound good?”
Your body is already moving without thought to snatch the tantalizing cup away and hopefully keep yourself from falling asleep standing up, but your spitefulness makes you stop halfway and think it through. That stupid nickname is something that I can hold over him for the entire time he’s here. That opportunity is too good to pass up. But… tea. It even was for me, the asshole. So, you know what, no. We’ll see who has the last laugh.

You withdraw your hand and rest it on the crest of Blue’s skull, much to Beast’s confusion, smile and arm holding the coffee cup out to you slackening. You rest your chin on top of your hand and give Beast an exhausted yet determined leer.

“I’m gonna bank on the fact that Blue will carry me back if I fall asleep. So you get to keep the stupid tea, and I get to keep the stupid nickname. Sound good, Mr. Tail?” A cringe once more and a sigh of defeat as his giant frame slumps beneath his baggy hoodie.

“why ya gotta be so stubborn over something so menial?” You slap your other hand over your mouth—without regard to the hat that plops to the ground—to keep yourself from grinning like an idiot at your victory. The mighty beast, vanquished at the hand of the valiant human knight! Is that the last time we see this conflict against rivals, or will our brave hero have to rise once more to defend their homeland? Find out next time, on Dragon Ba-

You cut that train wreck of a thought short as the rest of your conscious catches up to your rampant imagination. Your thoughts are getting more and more wild and off the wall the further the days go on while your emotions are getting harder and harder to reel in. Halfway through your shift, you felt like you were going to die with how hard you were laughing at spilled milk. Yes, quite literally, spilled milk. Your boss ended up spilling some ice-cold milk on to your apron while rushing past, and you ended up losing it at her just because she spilled some milk. In retrospect, you’re completely unaware why exactly, but wow was it hilarious to you at the time. Maybe it has something to do with crying over spilled milk? Or something about it being half full? Who the fuck knows. Your psyche is running away from you again as you sit here pondering the inner meaning of your sleep deprived comedy, and you’re forced to take some time to just stop and collect your thoughts and deliberately not fall asleep at the inactivity. It’s like trying to catch a lubed up streaker running on ice with a howling headwind with bare hands: nigh on impossible.

A prodding at the center of your back cuts off your wildly derailing thoughts again as you are physically forced back to wakefulness. Oh right, you’re still ‘captured’ by Blue, and he’s apparently taken to poking at your back while still using your torso as a pillow. From your perspective, he has a look of pure concentration, with a translucent blue tongue peeking out on the corner of his teeth. You’re tempted to touch it—read: pull on it—to have him unwind himself from you.

“Uh, Blue?”

He doesn’t respond as he continues poking and pushing at your back with sheer determination.

“Blue, I need you to let go of me.”

He’s still delicately probing your spine with his gloved fingers, still not budging an inch.

“They’re asking for you to let go, shortstack.” Beast tries at your increasingly impatient shifting from under him. That tongue is making an ever more tempting target to yank on.

Blue finally pauses with a new look of awe blooming across his face. His baby-blue lights have dilated, yet not forming stars, in his sockets. A grunt escapes you as he squeezes himself ever closer, ribs digging in to each other, gaze at middle distance.
“WHAT’S THAT SOUND?”

“That’s us trying to pry you off of me, that’s what it is,” you mutter.

“NO, NO, NOT THAT. YOU’RE MAKING A SOUND.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about.” He huffs at your early dismissal but tries again to describe this mystery sound.

“IT’S COMING FROM YOUR CHEST, AND I CAN ONLY HEAR IT WHEN YOU’RE RIGHT NEXT TO ME LIKE THIS.” You mean when you’re right next to me like this.

“i can’t hear anythin’ from where i’m standing. you sure that’s them makin’ it?” Beast shuffles closer to inspect you as well as your immediate area. Blue seems to have piqued Beast’s curiosity as he too is starting to invade your personal space. You may be a touchy-feely person, but even you have your limits in the contact department at one time.

“YES, IT’S THEM MAKING THIS SOUND, I’M SURE OF IT!”

“Guys, can this wait when I’m-“

Nope, Beast has taken residence around your backside and has crouched down so that his skull is level to where Blue is the opposite of you. A sight to see, truly, the rare skeleton-human sandwich. In front of a busy coffee shop no less where random passersby are sure to take a picture of the elusive phenomenon! Two skeletons, one hum- OKAY NO. Drawing the line, right there. What the fuck, brain.

“oh, now i hear it,” Beast says after a moment of silence between the two while you’re rodeoing with your own thoughts… again.

“SEE? I TOLD YOU THAT THEY’RE MAKING A SOUND!”

“what is that?” Beast pulls away, then presses right back again, utterly fascinated with the apparent constant noise. A childlike glee has taken over his features, a row of sharp teeth becoming increasingly visible as his grin slowly grows in size. Meanwhile, you’re awkwardly standing there, hat abandoned on the ground, grumbling to yourself about how unfair your situation is. Couldn’t anyone else be stuck with skeletons from another universe that have no idea what personal space is? Why does this one universe decide to be so cruel to me and me alone? And what even are they so fascinated about? I don’t usually make any sounds besides breathing, shifting, and-

Realization hits you as you suddenly become aware as to what has them both so enraptured. Mentally, you’re aww-ing at both of them being so intrigued by basic human function, but a pass will have to be given to them. This is really one of their first human interactions, after all.

“I think I know what you guys are talking about,” you say while Blue immediately snaps his head up to look at you, cerulean stars now forming while Beast cranes himself over you to look you in the face, upside-down.

“ya do, do ya?”

“WELL, WHAT IS IT?”

A weak laugh escapes you at their eagerness to learn whatever they can. They’ve reverted to bony children, first learning about what would mind-blowing facts at the time. Not wanting to keep them in suspense any longer, you prepare yourself for the waterfall of question you know will come after.
A purposeful throat is cleared directly behind you, cutting off your explanation. Noah, is standing there, arm propped on a popped-out hip, fake smile cutting across his face. He’s one of the easiest faces to read when you’ve been around him for a little while, but it doesn’t take an expert to know that he is not pleased with what he’s seeing.

Oh, right.

He probably saw all of that while trying to approach you, didn’t he? Whoops.

Any fleeting fine feelings that you had gotten because of the skeletons has been cut to pieces by the knife smile he’s wearing. You debate just blowing him off and going back to your house giving an actual human anatomy lesson to Blue and Beast, but you toss that aside in a moment of clarity, despite your tangential thoughts. You did promise him this talk, whatever it is. He is still your friend, and he deserves to at least be heard out.

A sigh escapes as you wriggle uncomfortably in Blue’s hold, hoping he’d get the message. Luckily enough, Blue and Beast seem to take the hint that they’re not going to get their question answered while whoever this guy is standing here. Beast stops pressing himself against your back and pulls away, while Blue unwraps his arms around you, giving yourself some space.

I suppose some form of introduction is in order…

“Guys, this is Noah, an old friend of mine. Noah, this is Blue and Beast, they’ll be in town for a while.”

Noah gives the skeletons a once over, then gives a pearly white smile that doesn’t quite meet the eyes. Before he speaks, you catch a brief spark of something unsavory in those emerald seas.

“Charmed to meet both of you.” Beast catches on quickly to either your worsened mood or the plethora of closed off body language coming from Noah that whoever this human is, isn’t here for a particularly good reason. He’s squared his shoulders, tail stiffly down, drawing himself to just about his full height while slouching. Beast deliberately takes a beat to look down his nasal ridge at the new human before speaking.

“’sup?”

Blue, on the other end of the spectrum, takes a vastly different approach and gives the same treatment to Noah as he did to you when you first met him. That is, he closes the gap between him and the human at lightning speed and clasps his hands in one of Noah’s and shakes as if his life depended on it.

“A PLEASURE TO MEET A NEW HUMAN FRIEND! A FRIEND OF Y/N’S IS A FRIEND OF MINE!”

After his arm was thoroughly mangled by Blue in a surprise attack, Noah doesn’t say anything else but maintain his smile and make eye contact with both of them before giving a meaningful look to you. Well, those interactions didn’t last as long as you hoped. Doesn’t look like Blue’s charm got through to him much either. You relent before things get any more awkward and just decide to rip off the bandage now and deal with the pain to come.

“I’ve gotta talk to Noah real quick, then we can head back to the house, alright?”

“OKAY,” Blue says, unmoving from his spot near Noah. Shit, of course he’s not taking this hint.
“...in private, if you please,” Noah adds, coming to your rescue. Blue confusedly looks at you for confirmation, and you regretfully nod, before he deflates slightly before forcefully perking back up again.

“AH, I SEE. IF THAT’S THE CASE, I WILL BE... RIGHT OVER HERE! GOOD TO MEET YOU, HUMAN NOAH!”

Blue jaunts off with a wave a good distance away and sits himself at one of the free benches, purposefully keeping himself busy. *What a guy for being so understanding.* The bulkier of the two skeletons takes a longer time to part ways, purposefully giving Noah another once over before staring at you, unasked questions flying a million miles a minute under his snowy lights. You have to give him a rueful smile and assure him that it will be quick before he shuffles away towards Blue, without a word.

Silence reigns between the two of you while strangers flit to and fro around you, oblivious to the new, palpable tension in the air. Your headache resurges at the new stress, pounding behind your eyes so badly, you have to stifle a wince. Before you can slink towards a table to break the funk that’s settled, Noah points to the ground by you.

“You dropped your hat.”

“Huh?” You follow his finger with bewilderment to find, lo and behold, your work hat laying there like its been abandoned by someone who just wasn’t ready for the responsibility. You crouch down, swaying slightly from the sudden difference in altitude, and swipe up the psychologically damaged hat and reposition it on you before moving to an empty table far from other people. You two seat opposite from each other before you slouch in the metal chair and address the elephant in the room… or on the table in this case. But Noah isn’t far behind you.

“So, what did you-“

“There’s more of them?” Noah blurts, bug eyed. You arch a brow to have him flick his suddenly overwhelmed eyes towards where the Blue and Beast were sitting, waiting on you. You snort unabashedly at his frightened—no, not frightened, he can’t be that anymore—stare at your new housemates.

“Surprise! There’s even more ‘Death Incarnates’ that I’m living with.” Noah’s features shift rapidly from overwhelmed to apprehensive with a puckering of his brows and a downturn of his faultless lips.

“You’re living with them too,” he queries, laced with exasperation.

“Yup, they’re Sans’s cousins,” you say smoothly. You don’t think Noah needs to hear about how they’re actually from a different universe right now; he’d probably run for the hills if he did. That or run to his precious ‘mansion’ as you’d like to tease him about. Instead, you’re going to have to think up of things on the fly, which is, from past experience, not your strong suit. “They had an emergency with their prior living conditions, so they’re crashing with us until they can go back.” Not entirely a lie, but not entirely a truth either. *Way to go me, getting better at believable bullshitting.* Noah doesn’t seem to be pleased at that notion either.

“They’re going to be living there for how long exactly?”

“We’re... not entirely sure. Probably at few months, at the least.”

“A few months? How could five of you live in such a dinky house?” You straighten, immediately
“First of all, it’s cozy, not dinky. Second of all, I work hard to earn money and rent, but at least it’s something that I can call my own, at least for a little while. Not like you would have any idea what that means,” you needlessly jab.

“T-that’s not the point. What I’m saying is, isn’t it cramped?” Noah tries to redirect your ire, and you reluctantly let him, fire doused for the time being. Though despite him trying to move on with the conversation, you can’t help but have a pit of apprehension wrench at your gut. Something else is going to come from this line of questioning and you have an inkling as to what. Well, let him then. I’d like to see him try to sway me. Recklessly steaming ahead, you throw in some more details that would be sure to get a rise out of him.

“Yes, it is. There’s ten of us living in a three-bed house. Sans has a few more that’re-“

“What?!” Noah exclaims, jaw dropping to nearly hit the metal lattice of the table. “You’re living with nine other monsters?”

There it is. That intonation of fear that you were waiting for.

“Is there a problem with that,” you challenge. Noah misses your frigidness as he rushes forward in the conversation.

“You bet there is!”

You can only glare at him as your anger is slowly building, simmering, waiting to be unleashed.

“How can you even focus in a house like that? What if your grades slip because you can’t study? I know how much your grades and how well you do in college mean to you, and an environment like that is not conducive in the slightest!” He chides while giving you a reprimanding look. It takes you a second to recover from reeling at the fact that Noah, of all people, is scolding you, or indirectly Sans, for shortsightedness.

“Noah,” you say, trying to get him to stop ranting.

“Remember what you always said? That being able to make a decent living and getting around in the world is to give yourself a proper education? How are you supposed to go around doing that when you’re surrounded by distractions all the time? I get that you, Sans, and Papyrus are just trying to kind and charitable to their extended family, but did they stop and consider how this might affect you in the long run?”

“Noah,”

“Oh! I have an idea!” he claps his hands together while his eyes are sparkling with excitement. “You should come live with me and my family! That way you can work, continue a degree, and even have breathing-“

“Noah,” you half yell to get him to just stop talking already. He freezes, seemingly realizing that he got caught up in the moment.

“That is one of the worst ideas I’ve ever heard. And that’s including Sans’s hotdog sales pitches.”

Noah has the mind to look sheepish at his ridiculous suggestion. He rubs the back of his neck and trying to will away the embarrassed flush to his cheeks.
“There’s a such thing as a library, Noah. I don’t have to do a lot of studying at home. Plus, I’m not uprooting myself because I can’t handle the living situation, especially if I’d have to move in to your ‘mansion.’ Your dad would force me to pay an exorbitant amount of rent that I won’t be able to make.” Just saying the word ‘mansion’ out loud leaves a bad taste in your mouth while Noah pouts at your word choice.

“It’s not a mansion—"

“And besides, I enjoy having them around. Most of them are pretty sweet.” *i.e. Blue and Dream. The rest… well, the jury’s still out on them.* “I can handle distraction and still be able to get an education or keep working, too. You should know that.”

Noah gives you a look. You huff in embarrassment at what he’s probably thinking.

“Today is an extenuating circumstance. A lot of things piled on top of each other and I got overwhelmed. Won’t happen again.” You pause, and then amend. “Actually, no promises on that. But I can handle it.”

You can tell by the look he’s giving you he doesn’t really buy it, but he lets it slide.

“Okay, fine. But, if the situation was different, would you at least consider it,” Noah pleads.

“This isn’t what you wanted to talk to me about. Could you get to the point, I have a bed that’s calling to me,” you grit out, losing patience.

You’re done playing this ‘what if’ scenario that won’t happen. You refuse to ever let it come to that. Noah again allows the conversation to end as he draws in his thin shoulders, insecure about whatever topic he’s about to bring up. He sighs and fishes in to his pocket, produces a pristine blank white card, and holds it out for you to take.

You’re hesitant in doing so, for some odd reason. Just holding the manicured, lightly pressed, professional, overall perfect card would make you feel like you’re suddenly holding a jeweled crown or baby. Completely out of your comfort zone and something you should not ever be holding in the first place. That apprehension from before has come back full force, stalling your hand for a little longer, in irrational fear that the card will just reach out and cut your offending fingers right in half.

“Noah, I swear, if this is something about your mother’s various companies and you’re trying to get me to invest…” He rolls is eyes and waves the card at you again before he loses his nerve. He seems just as nervous as you are, but probably for a more legitimate reason.

“Just take it and look.”

Mustering up the courage, you pluck the card out of his bronzed fingers and examine the laminated paper. It’s heavier than you imagined, seemingly weighing down your movements. The back is just a plain, stark white while flipping it reveals…

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You feel yourself go cold, mind and body screeching to an absolute halt, disbelief plain on your face as you peek up at Noah again. There’s something pricking at the back of your mind about this name, but you could not name it for the life of you for right now.
“Why would you give me this?”

Noah looks at you with something oddly unreadable in his gaze, something that shouldn’t be there in the first place.

“Because I want you to see him.”

The world itself as fallen away around you, leaving only void, you, the table and chair you’re using, and Noah. There’s nothing but a screaming, eternal silence that over-sensitizes and blows out your ear drums at the same time. Oddly enough, a breeze passes by in the nothingness, carding through yours and Noah’s hair and tickling your skin.

“…why?” you say, afraid, terrified, revulsed at what he might say next. Noah continues with a calm, soothing voice that should have helped keep you grounded. It doesn’t.

“What happened for the beginning years of your life needs to be addressed. The things you had to go through, what caused you to suffer for so long, it needs to come out.”

You can only shake your head, the movement as if you’re drowning in molasses. The hand holding that damning card feels like lead, trembling from the nonexistent weight this card in front of you holds.

“I-I…”

Noah calls your name, and you manage to tear yourself from reading the name over and over again, scrutinizing it for every mark, every blot of ink pressed in to it. The world snaps back in to place immediately, sending you mentally reeling from the whiplash as the sun suddenly glares harshly in to your face.

“Getting it out now will help you heal later.”

You force yourself to make deep breaths, letting your mind settle with the large intake of oxygen and level out your blood flow. Noah gives you time to settle yourself before answering him.

_Is this really right for me? Dump out all of my insecurities to a complete stranger and have them make decisions for me about how I should handle myself? No, I don’t think that’s how therapists work. I’ve never read up on what they do, but even to me, that sounds counterproductive._

“Fine.”

He brightens immediately at your submission, yet his smile thin and unconvincing.

Something’s up.

“On one condition.”

His smile falls in to a forced neutral expression, tightness around his eyes and sudden rigid posture belies the calm inquisitiveness he’s showing.

“I do my own research on a therapist, I make my own decision on who I go to.”

“Why not this one?”

“Because I haven’t looked in to how he conducts things and see if that’s something that I would want. If I’m tearing out my bleeding heart and offering it to a complete stranger, then it needs to be someone I pick.”
Noah nods, and looks away, contemplating something. He’s reached out to you to get you help, the least you could do is consider what he’s offered you already.

“I can start with researching this guy right now, in fact.”

His emerald eyes immediately blow wide, and gulps, sudden fear bobbing his adam’s apple up and down. A brow climbs higher at his peculiar response as you pull out your phone and type in the therapist’s name. You were unprepared for the headlines that pop up.

“Lone Doctor Offers Conversion Therapy to Monster Supporters and Homosexuals” reads one of the extreme, almost cult-like, online papers.

You scroll through the results.

“Psychologist’s Study Shows that Monsters are Intellectually and Socially Inferior to Humans” reads another.

Your eyes land on the most recent article, published a few months ago.

“Local Therapist Loses Medical License due to Falsified Data”

The sting of betrayal hits hard and it hits fast, leaving your logical mind down for the count as your emotions take the reins with a vengeance. White-hot fury burns through your veins as you glare the man across from you down. Your voice is low, tempered to absolute zero, chilling the air around you. Noah gulps once more, sweat undoubtedly pouring down his neck while his sins are crawling on his back.

“Noah, what am I looking at.”

“I can explain, please.”

“Like hell you can!” you shout, rocketing from you chair, tipping it over. Your outburst stops the flow of traffic in and out of the coffee shop, stilled by natural curiosity and surprise. Noah slowly stands from his chair as well, holding his arms out in a placating gesture.

“My father… suggested this therapist to me, even knowing he lost his license and his credibility. He knew that what we went through was hard, and wanted to help.” At those words, you chuff out a harsh, mocking laugh.

“My father this, my father that. If he told you to falsely incriminate me and throw me in prison for a crime you know I didn't commit, would you? He has you completely wrapped around his stubby, meaty fingers, doesn’t he? You actually believe that what would help me get through my past is to go to conversion therapy? Or is that what father wants you to think?”

You don’t give him time to reply as you jab a finger in his direction.

“Think for yourself for a goddamn change! You do not have to become this perfect golden child your father wants you to be just because he has an image to keep! Tough fucking beans for him that his child isn’t some manicured puppet on strings!”

“But what he’s saying has some truth in it!”

“What truth?!”

“That actual therapy might be a good way to get over what happened! You can’t deny that.”

Noah reels back as if struck, deep hurt clear on his face.

“That’s different and you know it.”

“How is it different then? You’ve got your own scars, how come your own father isn’t offering you therapy from a discredited doctor too?”

“He said something about me going too, I promise!”

“Why should I believe someone when they used my trust in them to do what their precious father wanted them to do?”

“Keys, you need to listen instead of shouting at me!”

Noah stops, realizing his grievous error. You stiffen to ramrod straight, face dawning a crumbling façade of neutrality. The anger that was once free-flowing switches off instantaneously at the nickname you once held dear. The space that was once filled by anger is now left with excruciating emptiness that not even the void could rival. Clenching your fists so that your nails dig in to your closed palm, you duck down beneath the brim of your hat.

“Don’t call me that,” you whisper. Anything but that.

“I’m gonna call you Keys, cuz you’re so good at piano!” They say before collapsing in to giggles.

All you could do is laugh along.

Noah approaches slowly, seizing the opportunity to end this agonizing argument that only served to dredge up old wounds.

“This is what I’m talking about. We’re dancing around what happened to us, and pretending like nothing ever happened.”

But you don’t respond.

“We can get through this. Just like we did before.” Noah inches closer to you, hands open out towards you in a soothing manner.

But you don’t respond.

“You may be out of there now, but just because you’re gone, doesn’t mean that it can’t follow. So please listen.”

But you don’t respond.

Noah takes his time slowly wrapping his arms around you as he pulls you against him. At the warmth of his embrace, you shudder and your shoulders heave once in a sob. Only once. You pull away before you lose yourself.

You can’t cry.
Not anymore.

“Fine,” you choke out. Noah finally gives a genuine smile, relieved to finally get through to you. You inhale largely, and give one large exhale before looking at him and jabbing him in the chest with a finger, but not harshly.

“But it’s not just me, mister. You have some serious problems you need to sort out too.”

Noah just sighs and nods. You give a rueful kind of smile and pull away fully. It’s a struggle to keep yourself from swaying from exhaustion now that emotions aren’t influencing your actions.

“And you need to go to bed, mister. You look dead on your feet.”

“Hah! I look dead? Bitch, I’ve been dead for a long time now.”

You both chuckle before lapsing into silence again. This time, the silence is comfortable and familiar. Just like old times.

An unspoken agreement passes when you lock eyes again. Turning to part ways, you fiddle in to your pocket for headphones and begin to make the long walk back to your house. You make a mental note to rip that godforsaken business card you have stuffed ungracefully in your pocket to shreds. Maybe that’ll help soothe your borderline migraine a fraction?

“Did You Hear What They Were Talking About,” Blue stage whispers to the goliath walking next to him. Beast just shrugs and trudges along, a few steps behind you. They fell in step after you once you gave no indication with meeting up with them again before heading back to yours and Sans’s house. Not they could particularly complain about it much. They didn’t want to bother you when you had such an emotionally charged argument with a friend.

“bits ‘n pieces. them and noah seem t’ go back pretty far.” Blue just nods, contemplating what he witnessed.

Not that he and Beast were spying or anything! They just so happened to be the subject of sudden intense investigation. No more, no less! The Magnificent Blue would never stoop to such heinous acts!

From what he could tell, you and the other human were conversing back and forth until you snapped at him for something and were given a card in return. The look you had on your face while looking at whatever that card was hard to describe in the moment, but he Blue found the right words after thinking on it.

Pure terror.

The other human had calmed you down enough to get you to start talking normally again, only for you to start typing out on your phone while the other was watching on nervously and shrinking in his seat.

Your face morphed from confusion, eyes flicking back on forth whatever you were looking at, quickly to abject horror, replaced by the most wrathful anger he’s ever laid witness to. Beast himself commented on it as well, saying it’s something he’s only seen once or twice in bad runs. Blue chose
not to fully dive in to what he said instead of focusing back on you as you leapt from your seat with a shout, allowing for the two to hear your argument clear as day.

And what a show-stopping force to be reckoned with you were.

Until Noah called you by something that had you freeze your tirade in a second.

Blue and Beast share another questioning glance together before staring at the back of your head, a single prominent question lingering over all of the others.

*Keys...?*

Chapter End Notes

You've got yourself a nickname! But you hate it. I wonder why?
(I'll be calling Reader this from now on in Tumblr posts, notes, and comments just to help distinguish them a little more.)

It promises fluff in the tags and I swear I'm getting there. Most of my planned out scenes took way longer than I thought they would and ran away with it.
Please give me any critique or comment you might have! It helps me grow as a writer, and I think this fic has really helped me develop my own sense of style.

Also, holy shit this has 60k words already. What am I doing.

Also, if you missed it, my Tumblr is [here](#) for any that are interested in asking more questions regarding ESOM or just in general. I'm always good to have a chat.

P.S. This chapter is especially chock full of references, see if you can spot some!
Psychoanalyze Red Day

Chapter Summary

Pros of having skeletons as roommates: they give amazing scalp massages.
Cons of having skeletons as roommates: well...

Chapter Notes

I hereby declare that January 29th shall be known as Psychoanalyze Red Day. Pass it on!

School has begun and I'm bracing for inevitable impact. Have some promised fluff!

You were strapped down in a seated position, the ropes chafing the sides of your arms as it wound itself behind the back of the chair. For some reason, you were fine with that notion, your attention somewhere else. A dimly lit room greeted your sweeping eyes that you couldn’t fully focus on or make out specific details about. The true features of the room would blur quickly and elude your senses if observed for a short amount of time, forcing you to refocus your gaze often. You were alone, with nothing but the creaking floorboards keeping you company when you shifted slightly in the chair. You can hear movement through all the walls, yet muffled and indistinguishable as if cotton was shoved in your ears. In a fog you couldn’t quite shake, you kept listlessly looking about, searching for a reason or why you were here in the first place. Time was supposed to always flow like a steady river, magic excluded, yet this room felt like it defied all laws of nature with a single scrape of its floorboards. Seconds felt like centuries. Hours felt like minutes. A millennium passes yet not a single speck of dust moves in this purgatory. How long are you going to sit here?

A door at the other end of the room opens after an indeterminable amount of time. The blurry door soundlessly reveals a person in a trench coat and trilby straight out of the 1940’s entering the room, floor groaning in protest at the sudden extra weight pressing down on them. For some reason, you can’t see past them and out the door, as your eyes are forced to linger on the new presence. Just as silently as they opened it, the door closed by itself as the person closes the gap between you two with slow, measured strides before bending down to your dazed form. Your eyes slowly searched the mystery person, luckily able to concentrate on a single feature for longer than a few seconds.

Whoever this person was, they’re unnaturally pallid to the point of unhealthy. A near ghost-white extends to the brim of the hat and all the way down their neck and past your line of sight from your sitting position. The pearly skin was completely flawless; no blemishes or discoloration of any sort could be found anywhere on their face. The only break in the expanse of snow of skin is the largely contrasting splotch of grey, bordering black in some places, on the right side of their jawline. A bruise of some sort? Or birthmark? You’ll go with birthmark; bruises typically shade purplish-red, not grey. There’s a strange prick at the back of your brain when you see the birthmark, but you do not address it in favor of scrolling over their features again.
There’s no hair whatsoever peeking through the edges of the hat and next to no eyebrows give you little to work with in identifying this person at a later point. Their nose almost blends in with the rest of their face with how perfectly camouflaged it is in the dim lighting.

Their eyes.
Green.
Brown.
Blue.
Purple.
Yellow.

A slow exhalation of moist breath from their lungs brushes past your face and ceases your observations, forcing you to take a breath yourself. You catch a scent of old books and something sharp, like a chemical in the air. An attempt to speak catches in your throat, unable to force its way out, for reasons unknown.

The person’s flat expression shifts as their eyebrows scrunch together in mild curiosity or befuddlement… you couldn’t be sure. A hand suddenly appears before your eyes, the same stark white as the rest of them. It’s reaching out to you, tentatively. It stalls there, attempting to bridge the small space between your two faces for time unknown.

Apparently thinking better of their first plan, the person’s hand shifts upwards towards the top of your skull. You try and lean away from their touch, but your muscles don’t listen to your urges.

Move…

Their movements are slow, deliberate, and precise. Much like how they entered the room in the first place. They take a few strands of your hair between their fingers and delicately rubs them together, like they’re afraid that they’d break. There’s a studious look on his face, as if trying to figure out the worlds hardest puzzle with just a few strands of hair. Yet they do not move to take any more hair, or harm you like you previously thought. But still, this situation isn’t what you want to be in.

Move.

A hand twitches at your side, but remains still and bound under the ropes.

They continue to play with your hair but soon direct their multi-faceted gaze to something just under your eyes. You try to follow their gaze, but are unable to locate what has their attention now. Letting go of the few strands left in their hand, one of their digits slowly trails down from where the hair was. It scrapes across your forehead sluggishly yet consistently, as if studying the texture. There’s something behind their skin, something pulsing, something alive but unlike your own lifeblood.

Move!

An arm and shoulder spasms, yet is locked in place.

The finger continues to drag along, pushing past the bridge of your nose and dipping to your philtrum and finally comes to a rest upon your upper lip. This time, they drag across instead of downward, pulling your lip along with its direction before righting itself. The finger pauses at the action, fascinated. You can only guess that they’re intrigued as they repeat the process once, twice,
three times. After the third, the person’s finger strays from its repeated movement and begins to move downward, catching your bottom lip yet continuing downward. At this rate, they could potentially coax your lips apart. Dazed as you are, the thought of a stranger’s unwashed and unwanted finger entering your mouth repulses you.

*Move!!*

The bindings around your arms give way with a sudden heave, rocketing you upwards in an attempted standing position. Before you can even take in their reaction, something rushes down to meet your head, colliding with a heavy *thunk* and forces you back to your previous position. And with that force, it knocks loose the lump in your throat, allowing for you to speak freely.

“Ow! Holy shit, that hurt…”

You hiss, eyes swimming with stars—even when you screw your eyes shut, they’re still dancing without a care in the world—as you struggle to clutch your head around the blanket that’s enfolding you. You barely had the chance to stand before something hit- wait, blanket?

“told ya you’d wake them up if you did that.”

“We Also Said To *Not* Bother Them! They’ve Had A Rough Morning And Deserve Rest!”

With the details of whatever you were dreaming about already quickly fading, you hesitantly open your eyes to reveal those same eyes staring back at you. Except there weren’t any trench coats and hats, but a complicated mess of clothing that you’re not going to bother sorting out in your head at the moment. The artist in question looks rather sheepish from his stooped position, avoiding your eyes. You blink owlishly at Ink, comprehending yet uncaring, only to turn around and get yourself more situated as to where you are and how you got there in the first place.

You’re closer to the ground than you thought, with the garish carpet design immediately catching your eyes. Looking upwards, an expansive ebony wood surface meets you. You only have to sit up slightly straighter for your nose to make contact with the grain. *This must be the underside of my piano, and also what I hit my head on…* Your head throns where it made contact for good measure. You expected it to only exacerbate the borderline migraine you were sporting earlier in the day. Luckily enough, your headache seems to have faded to only a dull throb once in a while. For once, napping had beneficial effects and did not leave you completely disoriented and dying of thirst. Now adequately informed of where you decided to crash after getting back, you move to address the skeleton frozen beside you.

“So Ink, remember the conversation about respecting boundaries we had earlier today?”

You don’t give him time to respond, but he hurriedly shuffles off the floor to stand to get away from your gaze. You lean after him and poke your head out from under the piano with a smirk.

“All you had to do was ask, dude. I don’t really care if you’re curious and want to poke at me, but do it while I’m awake and aware, please.”

Though Ink doesn’t look less awkward, but he still noticeably perks up at your leniency. Beast pokes his head over the arm of the couch to grin toothily down at you and keep you from teasing the skeleton caught with their hand in the cookie jar too much.

“g’afternoon, kid. sleep well?”

The realization suddenly hits now that you’re more aware and distinctly less tired that you just up and left Blue and Beast at work while you stormed off like some immature child. You dip your head
down out of embarrassment while Beast’s smile remains.

“I left you guys back there, didn’t I?”

“THAT’S RIGHT,” Blue says, standing near one of the walls that’s filled with pictures of bones and the brothers’ close friends. Your grimace at his admission, apology ready for being an idiot but Blue waves you off before you can say anything.

“DO NOT WORRY, HUMAN! IT WAS A RATHER… STRESSFUL DAY FOR YOU, SO DO NOT THINK ANYTHING OF IT.” He took his time choosing his words and you can’t help the second grimace in knowing what they witnessed while they just came to walk you home. Whether it was per Sans’s request or of their own volition, you’re still unsure. Regardless, you’d rather not talk about what happened with Noah at the moment, so you just smile at Blue and maneuver to stand out from under the piano, being careful not to hit your back or head. You fold the blanket you were using and place it on to the back of the couch. While doing so, you have to give props to Blue and Beast for their thoughtfulness and willingness to keep your argument on the down low.

“So give me a recap because I don’t remember anything a little bit after getting off of work and waking up now,” you say, only lying slightly.

“by the time we opened the door back in to the house, you were already curled up underneath the piano,” Beast says.

“SO I GAVE YOU THE BLANKET AND LEFT YOU TO SLEEP FOR A WHILE.”

“How long have I been out?”

“couple of hours, nothin’ too big. blue would’ve probably woken you up ‘bout bein’ lazy for much longer,” Beast teases, putting his hands behind his head. Despite that, Blue only nods along.

“OF COURSE! THE DAY IS TO BE SPENT DOING VARIOUS ACTIVITIES, LIKE PUZZLES! NOT NAPPING THE DAY AWAY LIKE OTHERS I KNOW!” Blue narrows his sockets off towards a random direction, thoughts travelling elsewhere.

“Well, I’m not usually like this, Blue. This weekend has been a little…” you trail off, unable to find the right word for the situation you’ve been placed in to.


“All of the above, really.”

You’re able to get a laugh out of all of them for that.

Stretching lightly and being careful to not pop any joints in the process, you notice that there’s significantly less skeletons in the house than the usual the past couple of days. Blue’s gone back to observing the photos near him, Ink’s settled down on the loveseat, taking out a sketchbook from who knows where, and Beast has nestled back in to the couch, closing his sockets. Other than that, the house was quiet, bar outside noises and the occasional scratching on paper.

“Where is everyone?”

Ink shrugs while continuing whatever he’s doing on the paper.

“Error’s downstairs fiddling with the other TV, while the others I’m not sure. I only got back a
couple minutes ago.”

“i think i saw geno and dream outside when we got back, and your sans is back workin’ on the machine,” Beast adds. Well, that’s some of relief, knowing where most of them are. While I’m not their caretaker, I do feel some sense of responsibility for them. I hope wherever Red is, he’s not up to anything illegal… nah, he’s probably out hitting on people. He’s going to end up getting slapped if he keeps that up.

“So, no one knows where Red and Papyrus are?”

Blue, Ink, and Beast all exchange a glance before shaking their heads at you. You give an exasperated huff and grab one of the throw pillows off of the loveseat and laying down on the floor with it. Papyrus is easy enough locate; he’ll typically respond to text messages almost immediately unless he’s sleeping. As for Red, well… you hope that he’ll stay out of trouble while any of them don’t have a form of communication. Maybe I could get Alphys to make some phones for them. But then she’s probably going to ask why she needs to make seven phones… Well, it’s not like I’m going to lie to her about it, but she’ll definitely figure it out anyway if she sees any of them. I’ll probably force Sans to explain it to her in further detail anyway, but…

As if on cue, the front door opens gently, already ruling out one of the potential people. Walking in alone, Red enters looking slightly sweaty. You lift your head and wave at him languidly as he tensely strolls in.

“Hey Red, what’ve you been up to?” He gives you a quick once over, before giving you an unnaturally hostile leer.

“What’s it to ya?”

You arch a brow at his combative deflection of the question as Beast opens a single socket to regard Red while Blue frowns at him disapprovingly. Ink doesn’t pause in what he’s doing. You haven’t seen him so openly aggressive since your threat yesterday. What happened to him to have so much malice at such an innocuous question? You decide it’s probably for the best to back down and not try and press for answers. He’s here and not getting in to any more trouble at least.

“Woah there, buddy. Just a harmless question is all. No need to be so butthurt over it.”

He just makes a tch sound with his tongue, rolls his eyes, and takes up a slouching position on the loveseat, searching for the remote for the TV. You roll your eyes as well for his melodramatics, but turn your attention to the TV too. Before long, your thoughts begin to drift, though not as wildly and varied as they were before your impromptu nap. Thank the stars. You’re definitely still tired though, but at least you aren’t almost falling asleep every waking second.

With a stroke of ‘luck,’ Red’s aimless channel surfing landed on one that was holding Mettaton’s talk show, where he was gushing with an entirely fake-faced B-list celebrity about his upcoming concert. As soon as Mettaton’s flamboyance exited from the television’s speakers, you could hear two distinct groans come from behind you.

“you’ve got to be fuckin’ kidding me…” Red groused as he slumped further in to the cushion.

“so the overgrown toaster actually got himself a gig on the surface. what a thing to look forward to,” Beast mumbles. You and Ink snicker at their future misfortune.

“IS THAT NAPSTATON??” Blue all but squeals as he launches himself to the front of the screen, most likely having those adorable stars in his eyes again. After getting a good look at the pink
divabot posing on the screen, Blue’s shoulders droop in disappointment yet continues to watch with rapt attention. Curiosity getting the better of you, you indulge and speak up.

“Who did you want to see, Blue?”

“NAPSTATON! THE STAR OF THE UNDERGROUND OF COURSE! HOW COULD YOU NOT HAVE HEARD OF HIM??” Blue says over his shoulders. “HE LOOKS QUITE LIKE THIS ‘METTATON,’ BUT IS MUCH LESS PINK AND IS CERTAINLY NOT AS WANTONLY DRAMATIC!”

“Well, I’ve never heard of a Napstaton, but I know Mettaton has a cousin named Napstablook, if that’s any consolation.” Blue peels himself away from the screen to cock his head at you in question.

“Well, I do know that Napstaton did have a cousin as well, but I was never able to recall their name…”

Yourself and Blue lapse in to silence again, with the latter going back to watch the Napstaton imposter. As for you, you’re slowly tying the ends of invisible strings together and slowly piecing the parts of the universal puzzle. Blue said something about Undyne not having a passion for fighting, so if my current theory is correct, he’ll mention something about her...

“Hey, Blue?” He hums in question, lights not leaving the TV.

“What’s your universe’s Alphys like?” Blue turns again and beams at you, something admiring as he recounts Alphys’s tale of regalia.

“What isn’t she like? She’s loud, boisterous, and will face just about anything head on! She’s great with the children of Snowdin, even though she rarely visits because of her sensitivity to the cold. She wields axes and yellow magic as her weapons of choice and uses those with splendor to hold the title of the captain of the royal guard for Queen Toriel!”

He strikes a pose as you nod along with a smile, mind whirring to process all of the information.

“What’s more, she’s taken me in as her pupil for training to be in the royal guard!”

And with that comment, you can’t help but grimace at the implications. While good on him for having the dream to enter the Royal Guard, he just wouldn’t have it in him to do the things they were undoubtedly ordered to do. At least, I think so. He’s been so cheery and filled with enthusiasm, I don’t see him trying to murder a person. Alphys of his universe and Undyne of this one choose to lead him along in false hopes instead of just telling the truth. Yet again, you have to stamp down the annoyance at others treating people with misled kindness that only serves to shelter them, but you move on quickly. You have to deal with this with Sans much too often, and you don’t want to think about it when you can just lay down and relax for a little bit instead. And on top of that, you could learn more about your new housemates too.

“Hmm, if that’s the case, could you tell me a little bit about your brother? You said he makes horrible puns like the others, right?” Blue’s face lights up even more with the mention of his brother, even with the given subject matter.

“Regrettably, yes. He typically wears an orange hoodie and has an abhorrent affinity for honey. He enjoys lazing about when he
DOESN’T THINK I’M WATCHING, BUT HE STILL SOMEHOW GETS BY WITH HIS DUTIES.”

“sounds like your brother has a real funny bone,” Beast quips. You shake your head dismissively and lay it against the plush of the pillow underneath you.

“Geno made that pun yesterday for literally the same exact thing. Get some new material that isn’t just bone puns, that’s all I ask, please. Puns are usually good when they’re used creatively and unexpectedly, not when they’re just used as filler for a conversation.”

geez, don’t think he meant to rib you the wrong way there, sweetheart,” Red gibes with a smirk. Even with it being an obvious taunt, it’s apparently been hard-coded in to a Sans personality to laugh at or make stupid jokes. You’re forced to speak up and redirect the conversation before Blue rises to the bait to react negatively to the pun. You turn your head and address the skeleton that can confirm your deduction.

“Hey, Ink.” His eyes dart over to you before going back to whatever he was drawing. With that, he says he’s listening.

“So, I’ve got a theory from what information Blue’s given me, and I’d like some confirmation to see if I’ve got this right.”

With that, all attention has turned to you, their own curiosity overriding their desire to continue their previous actions. You sit up to be better able to gesture with your hands.

“Well, with what’s been said, I think Blue’s Papyrus acts more in accordance with the other Sanses. Given that he’s lazy, makes bad puns, and has a specific type of viscous food that they like too much.”

Ink nods and sits up a little straighter, setting their book to the side, though not giving indication whether you’re going is right or wrong.

“Also, Blue himself, even though a Sans by name, exhibits more personality traits towards this universe’s Papyrus more than anything. Along with that, Alphys and Undyne seem to have swapped personalities as well, with the reptile being more aggressive and the one to lead the Royal Guard and Undyne… well, let’s ask right now. Blue, does Undyne have the Royal Scientist position?”

Blue nods his head wordlessly, gazing between you and Ink with an unreadable expression.

“Okay, I’d like to say that pretty much confirms it, so I might as well just come out and say it.”

You take a breath and give yourself a moment or two to pick your words.

“Blue’s universe is similar to ours, but the personalities of those that are there are swapped with someone else. Typically, they change with someone else that’s significant to them. The only big difference is that Frisk or whoever hasn’t shown up yet in their timeline.”

Red and Beast are looking away slightly, lights unfocused, ruminating on your speculations to see if they can come up with any more conclusions. Blue is openly staring at you with an intensity you haven’t seen from him yet. It’s unnerving, with how fast emotions are passing through his face. A pang of guilt worms in to you at his shell-shocked state, forcing you to switch between wringing your hands together or in to your shirt.

It was probably out of line of me to give such a broad evaluation of his entire universe… shit. While my thought process was thought through, I didn’t think of the consequences of stating it like how Ink or Error might see it. Now it just kind of makes me feel like I’ve given less value to their life, making judgements about the people that live there and their
character without much context clues. The artist takes some time, searching your face for something you’re not quite sure of. After some time, he gives another one of his approving nods that you already have begun to dislike.

“You’re startlingly correct. I labeled Blue’s universe and their other similar counterparts the nickname of ‘Swap’ because of that exact reason.” He lifts both his browbones and stares at you again with a more calculating expression than before, further accentuating your need to fidget. “You’re a lot more observant than I thought…”

You narrow your eyes at his last comment and wonder why he had the need to top it all off with a backhanded compliment. And this is after I outed him, Error, and Dream for being suspicious. I have no idea as to what he’s thinking most of the time.

“Thank you…?”

A sudden cloud of awkwardness hangs in the air as the TV drones onward and begin you festering in your own sudden guilt and unable to look at Blue fully. I want to argue that I’m overthinking this, but I can’t just overlook the connotations my words had. From Blue’s perspective, his universe is what’s ‘normal,’ and then Ink and I come along and debased his entire core of thinking. Way to be insensitive, me…

“WHAT ABOUT THEM?”

“Huh?”

Blue doesn’t let you to sink in to your tumultuous thoughts by bringing up more questions.

“How about you guess what everyone’s universe to make it fair? Ink can confirm or deny your guess like a game!”

You glance at Blue, trying to gauge what he’s thinking in asking that, but he’s donned his sunny attitude again, attempting to mask his true feelings. If you hadn’t known Sans or Papyrus for so long, you’d have thought Blue truly wasn’t affected. Either way, you’re still unsure if you’re comfortable with intentionally being such a rude ass.

“Um, I’m not sure if-“

“i’m cool with it. knock yourself out,” Beast says.

“sure, whatever…” Red tacks on.

“I could just tell you what their universes are like, but this is more fun! Go ahead and guess.”

Red and Beast give Ink an unreadable look, but resort back to their melted positions in the furniture quickly. Your hands find new purchase around the throw pillow in your lap, kneading at the fiber to quell your tension. Blue’s intentions behind asking about the others is something you’re still having a hard time figuring out.

Regardless, you relent.

“If you guys are sure, then okay…”

You bow your head and stare at the pillow in your hands, trying to collect your thoughts on just what you’ve learned about all of them in the past few days.
“Let’s see, I’m working with a lot less information than I did with Blue because I haven’t asked you guys directly what your home is like. Um, I guess I’ll start with Red.”

At that, Red slants his eyes to you with a smirk playing across his filed teeth.

“He’s very vulgar and flirts with anything that moves—and gets rejected, but that’s beside the point,” There’s a few snickers from around you and one distinct growl that ushers you to move to your next reason. “But I don’t think that last part is something that’s inherent to everyone else. Additionally, all his wardrobe consists of are blacks, reds, and yellows, and I don’t think skeletons go through an extended emo phase, so this might be due to the kind of atmosphere the Underground has. He’s one of three to openly threaten or attack me, but I guess his retaliation was not unwarranted.”

“get to the point, sweetheart. this ain’t a case study about me, it’s about the underground.”

“It actually does have a lot to do with it, Red. See, there had to be a reason as to why you’re like this, and I’m going to be basing it off of your environment.”

“you say that like there’s somethin’ wrong with me,” Red says as he glares. You sigh and wince when your headache throbs to let you know it’s still there. This is why I shouldn’t have done this.

“That’s not what I meant. You said okay and I’m making a guess, simple as that. I’m only guessing the nature of your universe based on your actions and sense of style.”

“They don’t mean anything by it and is not an attack on your character, is what they’re saying,” Blue says, jumping in to defend you.

To your relief, Red backs off, but keeps his eyes directly at you, waiting for another slip-up.

“I guess that also helps further another point that you’re quick to be aggressive. And not to mention that earlier today, you mentioned that murder is commonplace and is used as a way to get stronger. I can only guess that the environment that you usually live in is a harsh and hostile place, and that you have to be constantly aware of your surroundings.”

You pause and rack you brain if there’s anything else that you can analyze, but come up blank.

“While it’s not as specific as my other guess, but I think that’s as close as I can get from what I’ve been given.”

“it’s ‘bout the same as my guess, too,” Beast adds as he nods.

“MAYBE HE FLIRTS SO MUCH BECAUSE OF THAT TOO? DETERRS OTHERS FROM GETTING CLOSE BECAUSE THEY GET CREEPED OUT?”

“hey, hey! y/n’s the one makin’ the guess here, not either of you. what is this, ‘psychoanalyze red day’?” Red snarls as little beads of crimson magic start to appear on his skull. Okay, okay, I think that’s enough. He’s clearly not comfortable with this anymore.

Ink laughs as he covers his mouth before adding to the dogpile.

“Pft, what happened to that constant state of awareness when Y/N smacked you with a newspaper yesterday?”

“wait, they did what?” Beast grins wide and snorts, almost not believing what they’re hearing. You have to giggle as you remember that because stars, was his face after you hit him over the head priceless. Though you’re forced to calm down enough to defuse the situation as Red looks like he’s
ready to do something he might regret.

“Okay, well, that was my guess. What verdict has the jury reached?” You direct your gaze towards Red and Ink, looking for confirmation. The former doesn’t look like he’s willing to contribute, so Ink steps in and gives you your answer.

“Pretty close, yeah. Red’s universe has high levels of aggression and are quick to act in violence. As I said last night, Red and Blue’s universes are the most common outside Classic, which is this one and some other universes have their own styles of Swap and Fell. Like Beast over there, for example.”

Beast perks at his name, prompting him to sit up cock his head to the side, questioning what he just heard.

“you’re sayin’ that ‘ve got my own version of red ‘n blue?”

“Yep!”

There’s a pause as the non-multiverse jumpers register what was just said. You reach up and rub at your temples, wishing that your headache doesn’t have a resurgence from wondering at the sheer enormity of possibilities that information opens up.

“Okay, well, I vote to not dwell on what Ink just said to not have another existential crisis, so I’m going to go ahead with my guess for Beast.”

You rub at your head and furiously avoid thinking about what Ink just nonchalantly revealed—you’re starting to notice a pattern there—and gather your information on the bulkiest skeleton.

“Well, I haven’t been able to gather a lot of unique information, other than that his universe has a very large height difference and is more… rough around the edges.” Beast chuckles at your observation, amused. “That and they have awesome skeleton tails that I really want to touch but have to reel the impulse in every time I think about it.”

You rub at your chin, grasping for anything else to say.

“Um… oh! This may not be right, but Beast has mentioned having good hearing and commented on me smelling like coffee from several feet away. So, he or other monsters have heightened senses or something of the like. And… I think that’s pretty much it. Beast’s been pretty quiet regarding his universe, so I don’t have much to work on.”

From how Beast’s sockets have widened marginally, it would be reasonable to say that part of what you guess was right. He speaks up while regarding you closely.

“that’s a pretty big assumption you made there, kid.”

That... doesn’t answer anything.

“But was it right?”

He shrugs while stuffing his claws in the pockets of his jacket.

“spot on, actually.”

You’re not sure how you feel on being correct about all of their universes. On one hand, you’re one step closer in getting to know them a bit better and learn their quirks and differences. On the other,
stating it all out in the open makes you feel like some sort of creep.

“WAY TO GO, Y/N! THREE FOR THREE!” Blue congratulates with a proud beam. The others give a nod or two in acknowledgement, but don’t say anything positive or negative. Their gazes make that uncomfortable feeling return, causing you to squeeze the throw pillow for comfort.

“Thanks, I guess…”

“WELL, WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS? SEE IF YOU CAN GET ALL OF THEM!”

That’s where you draw the line in the sand. It’s one thing to get permission, but to talk about all of them behind their back just doesn’t sit well with you. You voice your concern to the others.

“There’s that, and I don’t have anything to go off for them. I’m pretty sure Geno’s avoiding me and has barely spoken to me and the others are a special case due to their circumstances.”

Blue contemplates your words for a second before nodding. His smile turns devious as he regards you again.

“IF THAT’S THE CASE, HOW ABOUT WE LEARN MORE ABOUT YOU?”

The other three immediately agree as they grin down at you, catching on to the set up.

Ah, that’s was his plan. Caught in a verbal trap by The Magnificent Sans. I underestimated his planning skills.

You shrug as you lay back down again on the throw, facing upwards, letting the small amount of tension ease away.

“That’s fine with me, what do you want to know?”

“ARE YOU ACTUALLY A SKELETON?” Blue blurts immediately, startling an incredulous laugh out of you. He must be referring to my scandalous joint popping. I cut off everyone else from asking how I did it, so I guess this question would come up eventually.

“Yes and no.” That draws confused looks from the rest of them. You roll your eyes good naturedly and beckon Blue closer. He complies as he sits down beside you, gazing down at you curiously.

You grin as you show him your hand.

“Take off one of your gloves for a moment and look at this.” He complies, removing one of his baby blue gloves to reveal the ivory of semi-fused carpals, showing a distinct difference in human anatomy, yet still similar enough for this example. You bring up your hand next to his, and flex as far back as you can, revealing the tendons underneath your flesh.

This draws an excited gasp from Blue as he pokes at the raised skin with his free hand.

“So you are a skeleton then!”

“Not exactly. See, humans are made of different kinds of flesh around a skeleton, allowing for it to move with us and provide structure.” Blue’s brow bones draw together in puzzlement as he looks back and forth from your hand to his.

“But how did you get a skeleton? Do you have to eat it?” This time, you have to stop for a moment to laugh at the implications behind that.

“Thankfully, heh, no. As humans grow and develop, we make our own skeleton inside of us. Humans don’t have magic to hold ourselves together, so we have to make all of this other stuff to
function.”

Even with that explanation, Blue doesn’t seem convinced, so you have to resort to the drastic measures. You sit up and take Blue’s ungloved hand only to realize the others in the room have migrated over to get a better look at your previous demonstration. Hiking up your shirt to expose the lower half of your torso, you press Blue’s hand to your side, where he can easily feel your exposed ribs.

“Do you believe me now?” You chuckle as he nods, ribs contracting and expanding with the laughter. He appears mesmerized, slowly tracing the outline of where he can readily feel your ribs. The sensation of him methodically trailing across your skin with two of his phalanges causes you to hum lowly, pleased at the sensation. An involuntary shiver works through you, causing Blue to jerk back in surprise.

“OH NO, DID I HURT YOU?” He frets for a moment, shame clear on his face from the fear of harming you before you can calm him down. You explain its just a natural human reaction from a pleasing sensation.

“what happened to your arm then?” Beast asks, pointing to your appendage. You have to raise a brow and lean closer to spot what he’s indicating, until you find goosebumps raised across it.

“Oh, for humans, there’s not a whole lot of function for it. The reaction came from our animal ancestors but isn't much use to us now.”

“They came from your what?” Red queries, surprise clear on his face. You have to stop yourself from going on a side tangent on human evolution and how Monsters turned the anthropologists’ idea of evolution on its head because of another sapient species just coming out from a mountain one day and bringing along a concept only believed in fairy tales.

“We can talk about that later. That’s a whole other can of worms that you could potentially learn about on your own if you’re interested.”

The group just nods, seemingly still befuddled at your previous statement, but compliant enough to let the topic drop for now. You lay down again while the four inch closer to you, still seemingly fascinated. You have to admit to yourself that it’s kind of adorable that they’re so innocently curious about humans, even though some have less than stellar opinions of them.

“Any more human related questions? I’d like to say I’m pretty well versed, being one and all.”

“you never did say what that noise you were making from earlier was,” Beast points out, leaning over you to look you in the eye. You smile up at him, a corner of your mouth teasing in to a smirk.

“I’m still making that sound now, actually.”

“REALLY?” Blue makes a sudden motion towards you, but stops, seemingly stopping the impulse from slamming his skull down against your ribs to hear the noise again.

“It’s called my heartbeat, which, wouldn’t you know it, is made from the heart when it pumps blood.”

You realize that you need to be a little more specific, based on the looks that say that they have no idea what you’re talking about. You huff out a small laugh but go in to more detail, willing to sate their curiosity.

“The heart is one of those different kinds of flesh that I was talking about earlier that helps pump
blood so that I can live. Blood is what’s needed throughout my body to keep myself alive, since I can’t just sustain myself on magic. Blood in itself isn’t enough, which is why I need to breathe with my lungs—which are inside the ribcage, by the way—so that the blood is filled with oxygen and then pumped out to the rest of my body via the heart.”

They’re hanging on to your every word, ready to hear more. Ink’s resorted to jotting down notes in that sketchbook from earlier. *He’ll probably need it, with that selectively terrible memory of his.*

“So, it’s the equivalent, for humans anyway, when we feel the magic coursing through your bones, it’s like the blood pumping through our veins. You can actually feel our heartbeat from various places on our body, like here for example.” You place one hand’s fingers on to the wrist of your others to demonstrate. Red takes that as his opportunity to touch first, as he sets two of his phalanges down where you pulled away. Blue takes that as his cue to snatch up right beside Red, further down your wrist. You hold in laughter as you hold out your other wrist for Beast and Ink to try, which they greedily do so. *Damn these skeletons and their need to be adorable.* You hold still while the four of them experiment around different sections of your arm, searching for that telltale beat of your heart.

Out of the corner of your eye, you catch movement leading to the basement. You turn your head, the skeletons still attached to your arms still oblivious.

Error’s skull is peeking out, with a level of complete confusion that you’ve rarely seen. It’s asking a multitude of questions, each fighting to come out first to comprehend just *what the hell did he stumble in to.* You smile over to him, catching his gaze, pure confusion seemingly taking up permanent residence on his features. He opens his jaw slightly while raising a pointer finger, ready to ask, ‘just what the fuck is going on,’ before he realizes that he doesn’t want to know. He just spins around and heads back down to the basement without another word. You snort and fail to contain your laughter to a reasonable amount.

After several minutes of pulse searching, you decide to just flip over on to your stomach and put your head on the pillow, allowing the others to roam over you where you deem reasonable enough. Obviously, you’re going to have boundaries that you had to state beforehand, because you’re not sure if they’ll have enough common sense to do so. You have your shirt hiked up to where you’re comfortable, exposing the skin of your abdomen and lower spine.

All of them have been surprisingly gentle, just having a few phalanges graze lightly over your skin, seemingly afraid to hurt you. *While I’m not technically fragile, humans can be sensitive in some areas, I guess. Though I guess the looming threat of Sans finding out they injured the human and threatening to just not take them back in the first place is always there. Insurance?*

The sensation of several hands scratching at your skin is hypnotic and you can feel yourself getting more tired.

“Y/N, ARE YOU OKAY?”

You have to arch a brow at Blue’s question. You struggle to look at him from where’s he’s leaning over your lower back, hand still running along where he can feel your spine.

“Why wouldn’t I be? Literally nothing has changed since you guys are just poking at me.” Blue
seems relieved at your reassurance, and you have to question why he would ask that now of all times.

“YOU’RE AWFULLY WARM. IS THAT NORMAL?”

Oh, right. Skeletons.

“Humans need to maintain a higher body temperature than skeletons do to keep ourselves and all of our inner body mechanisms working correctly.”

“heh, damn sweetheart. didn’t know you had the hots for me already,” Red quips from his position near your feet, seemingly fixated on where your skin meets the edge of your socks. Red’s pun caught you off guard enough where you exhale slightly harder than normal. To his credit, it’s not a bone pun and it hasn’t been used recently.

“oh look, the ice queen can laugh at a joke after all. who knew you had such a good sense of humor,” Beast teases. He’s currently pressing down in to your upper back, poking at your shoulder blades and sometimes your clavicle. With his stature, he’s blocking out the sunlight through the window, casting his skull in to shadow from the light contrast.

“Oh, come ooooff itttt…” you groan as a sudden hand runs through your hair, scraping against your scalp. A shiver wracks your frame, waves of pleasure tensing and then relaxing your body.

“now that’s a new sound~” Red observes with a purr. You raise a hand and flip him the bird without looking as he cackles.

“Ink, do that again,” you demand. Ink seems surprised at your sudden change in demeanor as he runs his other hand through your hair. You openly sigh in contentment. If you could purr, you most definitely would right now.

“geez kid, why are you soft? you’re literally a walking heated pillow,” Beast comments as he presses in to the side of your abdomen with his other hand. You realize the opportunity to tease back and draw your arm closest to the giant in preparation.

“Says the one with the magic chub. You’re warm and you’re soft too.”

You accentuate your retort with a short jab to in to Beast’s lower abdomen. And sure enough, theirs is some give before you’re met with some form of resistance from accumulated magic before Beast can pull away in surprise. To your added benefit, he makes a squeaking sound that leaves you giggling in victory. After the initial shock has subsided, Beast smirks challengingly down at you.

“I have made a mistake…”

“wiseass, eh? what do you think about this?”

To your horror, Beast takes his entire hand and rakes down nearly the entirety of your scalp in swift movement. As he moves, warm tingles shoot through your body as you completely melt in to a human puddle. It must be sinful to feel this good. You do not hesitate to admit defeat.

“Oh, you win. Just don’t stop doing that, please.”

Beast looks over at Ink, who was taking up residence near your head. He just shrugs and moves away to poke at another place to satisfy his curiosity of the human body. Once he’s situated, he takes both of his clawed hands and rubs circles through your hair. You have to stifle a pleased moan in to the pillow as your body somehow relaxes even further than before. Seemingly pleased with the reaction, Beast chuckles as he continues his ministrations. You sigh once more, breathing evening
“THEIR BEATING IS GETTING SLOWER. ARE THEY OKAY? DID YOU BREAK THEM?” Blue fusses again.

“yeah, i can feel it in their ankles,” Red adds, with a narrowing of his eyesockets. When you don’t respond, Red continues. “sweetheart, talk to us here.”

“Guys, I think they’re asleep,” Ink says, feeling around your ribs.

Beast cranes his neck down in to your face, attempting to get a closer look. When he exhales against you, you scrunch up your face and bury it deeper in to the throw pillow, wanting to get away from the sensation. Beast chuckles lowly again, amused at how quickly he put the human to sleep.

“yep, they’re asleep.”

“I THINK… IT MIGHT BE BEST FOR US TO STOP. IT WOULD BE KIND OF AWKWARD TO EXPLAIN WHAT WE’RE DOING WHEN THEY’RE NOT AWAKE. THE OTHERS MIGHT NOT TAKE IT AS WELL AS Y/N DID WHEN INK DID IT TO THEM.”

“ink did what now.” Red inquires with a growing smirk. Ink just coughs and stands abruptly, voicing his agreement. In that moment, Beast looks up with genuine fear in his eyes, claws still deeply embedded in to your hair.

“guys, my hands are stuck.”

Chapter End Notes

Cons of having skeletons as roommates: their hands get stuck in your hair often.

I posted a sneak peek of this chapter on my Tumblr. I have officially redacted my lurkerness and am now active aside from chapter postings!

As always, let me know how you guys like this chapter! I had a bout of writers block for the beginning of this, but I brute forced my way through it.
“Settle down you little ingrate!” A voice harshly whispers, flecking spittle in to the shell of your ear. In complete desperation, you flail and yank against the arms holding you back.

“No! Please!”

A single, somber look is passed to you from the figure reluctantly climbing in to the vehicle, just down the path from where you’re being held.

“Don’t go!!”

You’re past the point of desperation now and openly groveling and outright begging to just be released and take them back.

“There’s nothing you can do about it! They’re leaving and never coming back, so it’s best you just get over it!” That same voice says again, venom lacing the wispy undertone that comes with age.

They’re right. There’s nothing you can do but watch as the door closes behind the person you’ve currently locked eyes with. But that doesn’t mean you can’t try. The vehicle roars to life as you give one final heave in childish, naive hope that maybe if you get free now, you can sprint down there and catch up. They could embrace you and say that they’re not leaving or going anywhere without you.

You can’t be alone anymore. You can’t lose your other half. You don’t want to lose someone important like Noah did! You’re just not supposed to! It’s not how it works!

But reality has to come and sucker punch you in the gut, effortlessly breaking your heart in two.

“Don’t leave me!!” You cry for the final time as the car holding half of you turns away and out of sight, past the trees in the distance. The pain you feel from the separation makes you fall limp to the ground when the pair of arms holding you back let go. The tears you’ve been furiously trying to hold
back surge forward, breaking the dam in one fell swoop. The world blurs in to indistinguishable colors, not unlike a fingerpainting made by a toddler. You couldn’t begin to determine what’s what anymore.

Everything hurts. From your arms and legs that hit the ground from your fall, to your heart and mind. Everything is screaming in agony from the parts irrevocably lost.

“Did you honestly think that they wouldn’t leave? They came here so that they eventually could do just that. Unlike you, they actually succeeded.” That same angry voice spits down at you.

You don’t respond. How could you?

It takes your silence as your answer, earning an irritated noise from them.

“I’ll teach you for being so disrespectful when I’m trying to help you ungrateful little shits!”

You can feel two hands reach down deep in to your hair near your scalp and take gratuitous fistfuls. Fearing the familiar pain, you instinctively grab both hands with your own with a hoarse cry of your own.

“No!”

“woah! easy!”

The familiar, yet not-so-familiar voice registers only after your preparation for the onslaught that was sure to follow. The taste of metallic taste of blood in your mouth. Dated perfume that’s so sweet, it could choke someone. A shrill yelling echoing in your head that just seems to compound louder and louder that just won’t stop.

You breathe.

In. And Out.

Opening your eyes slowly and taking in your surroundings, as well as the person who’s currently over you, hands still in your hair. Another large, shaky breath is drawn in, held for a few seconds, then exhaled slowly as you look the person hovering over you with more clarity. You’re in an awkward half-sitting, half-laying down position, still on the garish carpet in the living room with the throw pillow below you. Not back there. Not watching them being taken away. It’s done. It’s in the past. Don’t dwell on it.

“you okay?” Beast asks. His hands are still in your hair for some odd reason, and he’s taken to moving them around slightly. There’s also a small amount of sweat dotting his forehead, indicating that he’s probably more nervous for you than you are at the moment. There’s more concern in his voice than you would have thought to be for someone that’s an acquaintance at best. While you appreciate the gesture, you can’t help but be unnecessarily bitter that the nap directly after Noah wasn’t accompanied by a nightmare while this one was. Hell, you don’t even remember falling asleep. All you can recall is Beast being amazing with scalp scratches because of his claws and that you, more or less, forced him to be your head scratching slave.

“Yeah, I’m good for now. Thanks.” The pips in Beast’s sockets are small and intense and are taking their time in roaming over your face for any kind of facial cue. Whatever he sees there doesn’t seem to convince him of your assurances.

“Yeah, I’m good for now. Thanks.” The pips in Beast’s sockets are small and intense and are taking their time in roaming over your face for any kind of facial cue. Whatever he sees there doesn’t seem to convince him of your assurances.

“Really, I’m okay. It was some nightmare. Even though it’s only been,” you contort yourself around Beast’s arms to get a view of the wall clock above the TV. “Thirty minutes since I fell asleep.
Seriously, what the hell man. I was just having a nice nap while someone was playing with my hair and my brain decides to just go and ruin it.” You center your gaze back to Beast to give an apologetic look. “Sorry if I scared you.”

The flat line of his teeth eventually curve back out in to some form of default smile after he’s concluded that you are, in fact, okay for the time being. The smile looks tight yet still sympathetic.

“’s fine. you can’t really help that you get ‘em from time to time.” He annunciates that with a scratch or two to your head, most likely to just reassure you that he’s, yet again for the second or third time today, not going to hold it against you. Again, you appreciate the gesture, but the effect is kind of lost on when his hands feel like they’re rigid and unmoving in your hair.

You only nod along in agreement—sending his arms along with the movement—as the conversation peters out and a slightly awkward silence begins to form. With you looking him in the eyes and how his hands are placed near the back of your head, he’s had to lean over you to keep his hands in your hair. That has to be uncomfortable. He’s still not moving. I get that human functions and such would probably be fascinating to someone who decidedly isn’t human, but hair isn’t something that only humans have. So what gives? You narrow your eyes at him, which earns you an aversion of his own, but decide to just roll with it if he so wants to keep your hands in your hair. It’s not like he’s hurting you with it, so you’ll let him have his fun.

Something else sticks out to you that the house is again quiet, despite the TV still droning on in the background both in the basement and on the ground floor. You attempt to orient yourself better by sitting up and looking around, knowing that you are decidedly done with naps for the day. However, looking around is something that is ceased as soon as pain shoots through your scalp. You wince and try to pull back from Beast’s grasp, but his hands follow along, earning another fresh wave of ache across your head. Despite your immediate panic that the hair pulling is going to send you spiraling in to a panic attack, the pain helps ground you in the here and now. Thank the stars and anything that is holy for that at least.

“shit! don’t move so fast.”

“Did everyone leave again?” you say, trying for a start of another conversation to keep the awkwardness from rising again. You choose to ignore the obvious reason why he’s not moving his arms. Potential mischief is dawning on the horizon. Beast again looks away, something bordering displeased or annoyed settling in to the subtle shifts of bone across his skull.

“they left me here to fend for myself, the assholes.”

One of your brows arches, climbing steadily higher towards your hairline as he doesn’t elaborate.

“What is that supposed to mean?”

He appears to be deliberating something, probably deciding between just telling you outright or just avoiding the question altogether. In the end, the former wins out as he sighs defeatedly.

“they didn’t want to be here when your sans got back to see you like this. and i couldn’t just leave because, well…” he trails off, seemingly unsure how to finish.

“’Because, well’… what?” You’re fighting the grin that wants to make itself known as Beast deliberates giving you a straight answer.

Beast sighs again and attempts pulls his hands away—much more quickly than you imagined—from your scalp, but your hair forces you to follow along while you wince again from the sensation from
your hair trying to be forced out of their follicles.

“Ow! Okay, okay, I get it!”

*Note to self: Don’t try and prank someone right when you’re forced out of a nightmare. You’re just going to end up hurting yourself in the process. Could this really even be considered a prank with how quickly it crashed and burned?*

“What a fucking day I’m having…” you grumble as you sit up fully, while still keeping your head down to prevent the movement from aggravating your hair even more.

“Sorry.” Beast says, slightly muffled. You can’t tell what he’s seeing if he’s actually apologetic or not, all you can see are his shorts, the bottom part of his shirt, and the pearly bones of his legs and feet crossed in front of you. They’re much thicker than an actual skeleton, having only a diminished space between the two bones of the lower leg. You’re tempted to see if you can wedge your fingers between them for some reason, but that urge is suppressed before your hand can move on its own accord. Instead of that, your brain decides to move in the opposite direction of reasonable, eagerly reminding you of the compromising position you’re in. *Fuck, I’m pretty much staring straight at his crotch. Abort that train of thought immediately. Yup. Goodbye. Sayonara. Not going there. I’m just gonna… keep the conversation going so that he doesn’t pick up on my sudden realization.*

Even if he can’t see it, you make a questioning look out of habit.

“What are you apologizing for?”

“For getting stuck in your hair,” he shimmies back and forth a little bit in front of you, presumably just shifting uncomfortably. Your questioning look deepens before smoothing out to something more understanding. You start to shake your head to brush off his apology but abort it halfway through when you realize the consequences.

“Oh, that’s what you’re worried about? It’s fine, this has happened way too many times beforehand. You probably didn’t know any better and I pretty much forced you in to doing it. If there’s anyone who should apologize, it would be me.”

You don’t give him the chance to respond before continuing.

“I’m not gonna have to hack off all of my hair or anything to get your hands out, don’t worry. Stand up with me, and I’ll lead you to the bathroom so we can start detangling the mess we’ve gotten in to.” Beast pauses briefly before moving to stand up with you.

It turns out to be painfully uncanny how hard it can be to coordinate movements with someone that is much different in size.

Since both of you were sitting cross legged in front of each other and tried to stand at the same time, along with you having your head bowed forward, you get a face full of hard, unyielding skeleton ribs that leaves you dazed from the impact. Beast curses along with you, both prepared to apologize and jerk back from the embarrassing turn of events. However, instead of both of you taking the kneejerk reaction and stepping back, your hair moves along with Beast’s movements rather than following the rest of your body. Which earns another slew of curses spilling from your mouth.

A staticky chuckle joins the mix of both your and Beast’s cursing, which, again, causes you both to jump and pull your hair in another direction.

“Just what in the hell have you two been doing?”
Error still looks decidedly confused and borderline grossed out at what’s transpired on the floor above him previously, but now it looks like he’s certainly enjoying himself watching you and Beast struggling to coordinate.

You grasp the opportunity to stop any more embarrassing actions or compromising positions that Error presented by emerging from the basement once again and refuse to let go of it.

“Wallowing in our regret, obviously.”

You earn a surprised snort from Beast while Error looks on the verge of outright laughing at you.

“I can see that.” He shuffles closer towards where skeleton-human hair amalgamation to get a better view of more futile struggling. “You’re doing a fantastic job at it, by the way.”

You huff at him, conflicted. To you, this is certainly not as funny as Error’s making it out to be. But to anyone else’s perspective, this would be an absolute goldmine for teasing. You can already see Error holding this over yours and Beast’s heads by one of his strings while taunting you relentlessly.

“Instead of laughing at us, why don’t you make yourself useful and open the door to the bathroom so neither of us inevitably end up ramming our spines against it?”

You and Beast are finally standing, with your back facing the hallway where the single bathroom and the original residents’ bedrooms lie. It was probably better this way, having you be the one to walk backwards in to the bathroom. You’re the only one available that really knows the way around the house. To your, and most likely Beast’s, complete unsurprise, Error just snorts derisively with an all too smug grin.

“No, I think I’m content just watching this shitshow.”

“How about this: You help us out, and we’ll keep Ink from pester ing you for the rest of the day,” you bargain. Error seems to be intrigued by your offer, if his not immediate refusal is anything to go by.

“we?” Beast chimes in, seemingly unhappy that you just threw him in to the deal without his consent. Instead of responding, you just give him a look that sends the message of, ‘Do you want to be stuck like this for even longer?’ Both of you stare at each other, a silent battle of wills. A nonverbal weighing of options. Swallow your pride and negotiate with Error, or risk having the entire house watch as you embarrassingly fumble through the process of getting your hair untangled.

Beast deflates and growls out a ‘fine,’ as you sigh in relief.

“Make that for the rest of the week.”

You suppress a groan at the back of your throat. Of course.

“Error, c’mon, can’t you see that we’re desperate here?”

He scoffs, multicolored rings of light rolling in the red void of his sockets.

“Of course I can see that. I could ask for even more, but out of the goodness of my soul, I didn’t make it any longer than that.” You can hear an indeterminate grumble from beside you, but Beast doesn’t fully speak up. How generous of you, extorting us even when the deal is already in your favor.

“Half a week sounds more reasonable.”
Error just hums, looking thoughtful before a taunting smirk widens his yellowed teeth as he shakes his head.

“I already have means to get that abomination away from me, so I really don’t think you’re in a position to bargain.”

“just help us already you fuckin’-“ Beast snaps as you scramble to keep him from blowing your chances completely.

“Beast, chill. That’s not going to help.” He growls again, glaring at Error. The latter looks completely unfazed.

“The longer you take to accept the terms, the higher the chance someone’s gonna walk in,” Error throws in cheekily. *Fuck, he’s right. Shit, shit, shit.*

“Ugh, five days and I’ll throw in a personal favor you can redeem at any time.”

“you’ll what?”

“Deal.”

Beast looks at you like you’ve grown another head while Error is borderline giddy with how he’s smiling.

“On the condition that it does not involve my soul nor the harming of others,” you amend. Error immediately scowls at the stipulation but doesn’t try and argue.

“I figured as much. Wasn’t going to try that anyway. No way any of the others will allow that.” He mumbles something else that you can’t catch, but you can infer that it most likely has something to do with him just doing whatever he wants anyway. Not like much can stop him. Ink and Dream are the only one’s that you can particularly count on to keep him in check. Though Ink has already shown that he’s not going to do anything if Error tries to forcibly extract your soul again. You shudder at the thought.

Here you are, bargaining about blackmail with the person who tied you down to a bed and nearly ripped out the culmination of your entire being just because he can.

You’re either braindead or just not thinking straight.

…

You’ll go with both.

“Now that that’s settled, open the damn door already, will you?”

With extensive amounts of de-tangling conditioner that’s used exactly for this situation, you somehow free Beast from your hair’s grip with only minor casualties to your scalp. You had to watch on morosely as a large clump of hair spirals down the drain.

All too conveniently, the others reappear quickly after you emerge with drying hair and a rather
disgruntled large skeleton who is no longer physically attached to you. Beast does all the work in making them feel guilty that they left you two to fend for yourselves while Error holds himself back from cackling like mad as Dream and Geno look on confusedly. Blue looks adequately chastised for his flakiness. Red shrugs it off but you can tell by how he hunches in on himself that he does feel something for leaving him. Ink is completely nonplussed.

Shocker.

What does come as a surprise is both Papyrus and Sans returning to the house together not long after either (and not a moment too soon), looking overly optimistic and troubled respectively. Sans explains that his cool bro met him at work to walk him home. Though there’s a catch in what he’s saying; you’ve known him too long to not know when something’s bothering him. Reading the subtle shifts of the malleable bone of his skull was an essential skill in gauging his mood and seeing how he really feels, despite the mask he puts on usually. He must’ve already talked to Papyrus about whatever happened. He’s being extra lively to act as if nothing is wrong. A common, yet lucrative, tactic used by The Great Papyrus. Meaning that it’s not too bad, at least. Sans never tells Papyrus about something if it might affect him negatively. Regardless, I intend to find out what’s bothering him, if he’ll allow me to pry it out of him.

As it turns out, Papyrus, most likely, helps you out in volunteering to make some snacks for everyone before dinner while Sans slips out the front door again. Which incites help from Blue and Dream. Geno seems to have decided that he doesn’t really have anything else better to do, so he joins them in the kitchen with a pun already leaving his mouth. Ink is eyeing the kitchen while giving secondary glances across the room to Error, who is studying the TV intently and purposefully appearing to not notice Ink’s internal debate. Beast, the poor guy, gives you a withering look before planting himself on the couch in between the two.

You’re really going to have to make it up to him later.

However, now’s the time to check up on Sans now that Papyrus has given you the opportunity. You quietly slip through the front door to spy Sans sitting on the patio steps, gazing at the beginnings of the sunset. Gently, you lower yourself beside him, sides grazing at against each other. He doesn’t look away as he shifts closer, arms now touching, with a world-weary sigh.

It’s unspoken between you two at this point, that you can let out your problems to each other, if only to lighten the load one carries on themselves. Though as time stretches on, Sans doesn’t make any move to start the conversation, so you start to prompt him.

“How’re you doin-“

“that’s the thing, i have no idea what i’m doing,” Sans cuts in, letting his words spill out and in to the open air.

Wow. Okay. Guess he just needed a little push to get started.

“And what is that exactly?” Sans makes an exasperated sound as he gestures broadly.

“this.”

“This?” you echo.

“the situation that we’re in.”

“Ah. I mean, I don’t think anyone really knows-“
“no, that’s not what i mean. it means i have no idea how to get them back.”

Oh.

Oh.

You suddenly get the chills, like ice water was dumped over you.

“You said the machine was a foreign magic detector, right?”

“exactly.”

“Exactly?” you parrot again.

“the machine i used to get them here was a foreign magic detector and a foreign magic detector only.”

The pieces finally click together as your eyes widen in shock.

“Which means… it’s not a universe jumping tool. Ultimately making the goal of rebuilding the machine completely useless…”

“an’ also that i can’t replicate what happened in reverse because all my findings from it were destroyed too.”

You take a second to just breathe as the information settles.

“Well, fuck.” Sans huffs out a humorless laugh at your well thought out response.

“now you see my point. i don’t really know how to go from here. all this studying with alternate universes and proving they exist is one thing. But developing a portal to an access them? that’s a whole other level entirely. now i have no idea how long they’re going to be stuck here if they haven’t figured out that part themselves. i can certainly try to make it, but i have no idea when that’d be. they aren’t all that forthcoming with cooperatin’ either so it really is just only me blindly making theories and hoping it works.” Sans slumps in to himself and dips his head down to the ground, searching for answers in the concrete underneath his sneakers.

You bite your lip in thought. The multiverse skeletons are able to travel through them, but not in the scientific way that Sans needs. And since their powers have been stripped away, he can’t analyze how it affects reality and how they create their portals. The rest of them apparently aren’t helpful in the project either. By choice or just by not being knowledgeable on the subject, you’re unsure. Having Sans all alone working on this would be incredibly hard on him, and you know how he gets if he gets absorbed in his work. A walking trash fire that insists they’re fine. What outside people could he trust to not blow his previous blunder out of proportion and focus on the goal at hand?

“I assume you already ruled out the other people in the physics lab,” you speak up after your lapse in to silence.

“yeah, no. they’re good enough people, but they’d be more focused on publishing proof of multiverse theory rather than righting my mistake.”
That rules out all but one candidate.

“What about Alphys?”

“she has her own research that she’s doin’. plus, i can’t just put all that pressure on her,” Sans dismisses quickly.

“…you do know that she’s going to find out eventually, right?” Sans’s sockets snap straight open, before scrunching shut again. One of his hands comes up to wipe over his face.

“fuck… you’re right. you’re definitely right. i can’t just hole myself and everyone up in to secrecy ‘bout this. our entire friend group are bound to ask questions. i can’t run away from that fact.”

“And you know what she’s going to do, right?” you prompt him to the obvious conclusion. Sans sighs again in to his palm.

“…she’s going to insist on helping,” Sans admits to himself. “and if i refuse, i’m going to get a spear up my nonexistent ass.”

“Bingo, bonehead.”

He groans as he throws his head back to look up to the sky once more, the topic adequately addressed with a new direction in mind. You follow his gaze up to the clouds above. The clouds have gathered together again, blanketing the sky with its fuzzy grey bodies. Their emergence hints at no stars again tonight. Perhaps you’ll be getting some rain soon, it’s certainly been overcast enough recently. The others may enjoy that.

You smile to yourself at the picture of Blue jumping in puddles, elated at the sensation. Before you get too distracted, there was something you wanted to talk to him about as well.

“I talked to Noah today,” you say tentatively. Sans sniffs at the name.

“that douche canoe?” You have to chuckle at the name, but you feel obligated to continue to relay the conversation to him.

“that douche canoe?” You have to chuckle at the name, but you feel obligated to continue to relay the conversation to him.

Before you even finish telling how your morning went, Sans is already bristling with anger. You have to admit, that reaction is definitely warranted.

“what the fuck.”

“Yup.”

“how can he just bend over backwards for his father like that?” You shrug halfheartedly.

“I wish I knew,” you say.

“I don’t understand why you’re still friends with him,” Sans bites.

Despite it all, you have the sudden need to defend Noah against a claim like that.

“Dude. You do know that he’s got a fuck ton of his own problems to sort out.” Sans snorts at your defense.

“that doesn’t mean he can just try and manipulate you,” he retorts.

“He was never like this before his sibling was ‘taken away’ from him,” you counter. Sans looks
thoughtful at that remark. He later shakes his head.

“i still say fuck him. i’m here where i am now because of it.”

“Yeah, that’s true,” you concede that point. “But that also means that all of your problems come from that too.”

Sans now looks torn.

You don’t blame him.

There shouldn’t be a debate about my friendship with Noah. That wasn’t what I was trying to bring up.

“Anyway, that wasn’t the point.”

“oh? it gets better?” You roll your eyes and elbow his ribs to rein his snark in.

“Yeah, Skeletor. Turns out my friendship with Noah did actually have a positive outcome.” Sans just furrows his browbones together, waiting for you to continue.

“He wants me to actually go to therapy.” Sans doesn’t miss a beat in his response.

“i wholeheartedly agree.” You feel much more surprised at his quick admission than you thought you would be.

“Wow, that was fast.” Sans just shrugs and winks before hooking an arm around you.

“What can i say? i want the best for you. you’re my best friend and you should get the closure that you need.”

That’s…

That’s actually really touching coming from him. You can feel yourself smile automatically. Sans gives you a gentle smile in response.

“Says the one who didn’t go to therapy either,” you say, still with that grin. There’s no real force behind your words.

“They would’ve thrown me in a psyche ward immediately.”

“Yes, yes. Because me believing it wasn’t much proof to the contrary.” It’s Sans’s turn to elbow you now that he’s let go of your side. You laugh freely, letting the gentle breeze carry it in to the distance.

There’s an odd feeling that you can’t describe fully nestling inside of you. With the sudden enormity of Sans’s situation and how it could potentially impact the lives of everyone around the globe forever, it really puts your own problems and how you previously dealt with them in to perspective. Knowing that there’s billions of lightyears of distance in one universe alone, you being an insignificant dust mote in the grand scheme of things. Not long ago you called it overwhelming and daunting. It still is, if you’re being honest with yourself. But retaining all of this existential knowledge, it makes bearing with what’s in the past just a little bit easier.

It’s not long after that Papyrus calls you both back inside with a warm smile and a plate of appetizers.

Chapter End Notes
I posted a sneak peek of this chapter on my Tumblr about two weeks ago. So, if you all wanna get some insight as to where things are headed in the upcoming chapters, be sure to follow! Also, come chat me up! I love to hear from you all!

Don't forget to let me know what you thought of the chapter of course! You all make me bounce up and down in my seat whenever I get a comment.
A Dance for One

Chapter Summary

You put on a show.

Chapter Notes

IT’S 11:57. IT STILL COUNTS.

It's a one year anniversary, holy shit.

Click on the 'Let's do this' for the music being played! I recommend this version for this chapter, but if you wanna see the guy who made this play it, you should. It's insane.

I go back to edit and the full-page index says March 22nd and I am furious. I can attest that it says March 21st on my computer. Dammit AO3, let me have this moment.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’s relatively peaceful in the house after you and Sans return inside, save for the clattering of pans and the shouting coming from the nearby kitchen. From what you can interpret, they’re starting with a salad. You think? Something to do with vinaigrette, at the least. If it is, salad sounds like a good side platter to whatever’s going to be for dinner. Which you’re entirely thankful for. Despite eating in the morning and the appetizer a little while ago, you’re starving. Whether you’re ready to ingest completely unhealthy amounts of glitter for two dinners in a row is still up for debate, however.

Both you and Sans are lounging in some of the chairs brought over from the card table in the living room, his feet in your lap while you’re fiddling with your phone. Currently, you’re having an internal debate about contacting Alphys now about working on the phones, or just saving it all to talk about in person during the week.

On one hand, they’ll be able to have less of leash on them, so they can probably feel less lost and learn their surroundings a bit more. Adrift in a whole new world without any contacts sounds intimidating to say the least. Then again, surprising enough, there were several hours where neither you, Sans, nor Papyrus were around and keeping an eye on them today. You’re unsure whether that was a stroke of luck that they didn’t wind up getting in to trouble, or that it helps prove that they know to stay out of it.

On the other, it’s still definitely too early to let them just wander free. They’re either fresh from the Underground or stars-know-where out in the multiverse. They aren’t going to forget that part in a matter of days. Easing them in to it is probably the best option, and getting them a means of communication is a sure step forward in them getting acclimated to living here for the time being.

You shift in your seat, using one of your hands to idly trace the tarsal bones in your lap yet not letting them stray to the undersides of them. Despite Sans’s refusals, there’s mountains of evidence stacked against him showing that he’s laughably ticklish in some of the areas where humans are. Even after
just starting to drum your fingers over the tops, his toes have started to twitch in subconscious
response. You don’t notice when he gives you a side glance, lost in thought.

There’s also going to be an argument from Sans that there’s potentially going to be both humans and
monsters who might recognize them as the one originally from here. With that, it would probably be
for the best that they lay low while they’re here, limiting their movements and interactions, to not
raise anyone’s suspicions.

However, the only one who’s going to be for that plan would be Sans himself, just because he’s
always thinking what the worst could happen if word did get out to the wrong person that ‘hey,
alternate universes exist, and some dude made a portal to them.’ That sounds like a formal invitation
for the government and private agencies to just whisk them away and experiment on them like some
sort of test subject.

That’s the worst possible scenario, but it would potentially only come to that if there isn’t any
planning ahead involved. It’s already been thrown out there that the others are cousins of Sans and
Papyrus, but that may not work for those who may already know them personally. More specifically,
Grillby, Asgore, and Undyne would not be fooled in the slightest. Grillby and Undyne know Sans
and Papyrus too well, respectively. And obviously, Asgore was the ruling king that made his job to
know his subjects personally rather than just as a duty. Toriel and the children are the exceptions, but
most likely are going to be informed anyway. Didn’t Frisk and I talk a little bit ago? I think so,
leme check. You tap to your messages to their contact with a looming sense of dread.

Your eyes bulge as you scroll through a conversation that you had with Frisk you a week ago.

**Squints:**

“Hey, are you free in two weeks time? Mom and Dad are going to be out of town for the weekend
on a business trip to the Capitol and they need someone to watch us. I would go, but Mom’s forcing
me to stay because I have an exam in school that Monday. Alphys and Undyne are busy that
weekend too, so I’m kinda at the end of my rope.”

**You:**

“Wow, okay. We’re your last option? I see how it is. I’ll make sure to tell Sans and Paps that you
hate them.”

**Squints:**

“<3”

**You:**

“Anyway, I don’t have anything going on. Sans and Papyrus are cool with it when I asked them.”

You had sent a picture with all three of you on the couch, with Sans asleep on you and Papyrus
working out of a puzzle book. Looking at it now gives you a warm feeling that you can’t fully
describe. You all look so peaceful and content. Now, if you were to take a picture, you’d have to
somehow fit ten people that may show some animosity towards one another. *Yeah no, having them
all together in even closer proximity is prone to have bad side effects.*

Frisk had sent you an immediate reply, most likely waiting for your answer.

**Squints:**
“Hey, thanks. I appreciate it. I’ll let Mom and Dad know that I’ve got a ‘baby-sitter.’”

You:

“I mean, you technically are still a minor and a political figure. If you don’t show with Toriel and Asgore, your house is going to be the prime place for people to look. Not all of them with good intentions.”

Squints:

“But I’m 16! I can handle myself! Plus, I’m not alone, either!”

You remember rolling your eyes at that text but chose not to argue with them.

You:

“Yeah yeah. Whatever you say, Squints. But your parents aren’t going to be budging on this topic, so go easy on them at least.”

Squints:

“I’m glad you can see it my way.”

You had thought that that was the end of the conversation, but Frisk decided to switch gears on the conversation.

“So how are you and Sans?”

You:

“Pretty good, actually. Despite him being incredibly boney and his puns can drive me up the wall at worst, he’s fun to cuddle with and chill out around.”

Squints:

“Anything else?”

You:

“Well, I’ve got midterms coming up soon, so my stress is steadily climbing, and that’s definitely a good thing. If anything unexpected comes up between now and then, I’m going to blow a gasket.”

You need a moment to compose yourself at the irony.

Squints:

“That’s good, but don’t evade the question.”

You:

“I already answered it?”

Squints:

“You know.”
You:
“‘You know,’ what?”

Squints:
“(○_□○)”

You:
“Frisk, oh my god, you did not just use a Lenny face.”

Squints:
“(○_□○) answer the question (○_□○)”

You:
“I’m blocking you. Forget staying here that weekend. Don’t talk to me anymore.”

Squints:
“(○_□○) (○_□○) (○_□○)”

Dammit, they’ve always been a flirt as well as a matchmaker, but this is so blatantly obvious that you end up not responding knowing that’s just going to make it worse. Your banter back and forth helps in lightening the panic you suddenly found yourself in. It aids in providing a moment of clarity to help you think a little straighter. How in the world are you going to bring this up? It’s less than a week that they’re visiting, and suddenly you’ve got seven extra people in your house. Not to mention the situation in general. But I can’t just leave Frisk hanging like that…

Meaningfully, you tap Sans’s tibia, and hold your phone outstretched to him. Looking up from his phone, he takes yours without batting an eye and scans over the texts you left open.

“…the kid just used a Lenny face,” Sans astutely observes. You suppress the urge to roll your eyes. If he’s not going to mention the part of the conversation that led to the Lenny face, then you aren’t going to either.

“Scroll up, doofus.”

He does so, and not long after, his eyes shrink to pinpricks and his posture goes rigid.

“shit.”

“Took the words right out of my mouth.”

“and we can’t just pay to hole ‘em up in a hotel without supervision. tori’d kill us.”

“I mean, they can room with me if need be. I think them rooming with Papyrus is out of the question,” you glance backwards to the kitchen and then back towards Sans.

“n i can’t guarantee their safety if they room with me,” Sans mumbles, scratching at the back of his skull. The rest of that sentence goes unsaid, but you mentally fill in the blanks. Because of his nightmares. You sigh heavily and give a dry smile.

“Sounds like we’re getting some more temporary guests.”
“what?” A new voice cuts in to your conversation. You turn towards the voice to find the residents of the couch plus Red all staring at you with mixed expression. You can feel Sans dig his heels in to your thighs with how tense he became at the question. On top of that, he sends you a frantic look that you immediately return. Don’t look at me! How am I supposed to make this any better?

“uh, we sorta agreed to house someone over next weekend that we kinda forgot about until now…”

“That doesn’t sound so bad, what’re you freaking out over it for?” Ink inquires. You immediately send him a nonplussed look. Gee, I don’t know. Is it because the monsters here a little, teensy tiny bit violent or the fact that they most likely won’t go well with rooming with the person who gave them their trauma in the first place? You may be forgetful, Ink, but playing dumb doesn’t really do much for you.

“OH, ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THIS WEEKEND THAT WE HAD PLANNED WITH FRISK BEFORE THIS KERFUFFLE HAPPENED?” Papyrus asks from around the corner, peeking his skull in with an anticipatory smile. You and Sans wince in time with each other. “IT’LL BE LIKE A SLUMBER PARTY! ONLY BETTER NOW THAT THERE’S MORE PEOPLE! I’M SO EXCITED!” Papyrus, bless your soul, but stop talking please.

“you’re going to what?” Geno grits out from somewhere else in the kitchen. He certainly does not sound happy at this development.

In fact, no one else looks exactly thrilled at this notion, bar Ink. He seems ecstatic at the opportunity to be near the anomaly that causes so much of what he observes. Error, on the other hand, seems less like he’s going to murder the kid when they step through the door and more like he’s just not happy with more people being around him. With that notion, you can’t help but agree.

“FRISK? ISN’T THAT THE CHILD THAT SAID DID ALL THOSE BAD THINGS IN THE UNDERGROUND?” Blue asks from somewhere in the kitchen as well. Dream, however, is silent about this.

“The very same…”

“can’t you cancel it or have either us or them go somewhere else for the weekend?” Beast asks, more than a little agitated. If only it was that simple.

You and Sans inform them about the situation while everyone gathers in to the living room to prepare for dinner. Papyrus stays behind in the kitchen to make the final preparations.

Unbelievably, most of them look like they understand the situation that you’re in, so they begrudgingly go along with your proposed plans.

There’s a tense silence in the air that you can’t help but feel partly responsible for, which Sans seems to mirror with the expression he has. You catch his eye and give him a beseeching look. He looks back helplessly, lights dim and small, grin as fake as can be. Suddenly, though, there’s a spark of recognition in his eyes before giving you a real, slightly excited smile. He’s suddenly transformed in to a little kid with that look he’s wearing.

“hey, how ‘bout you give a pre-dinner show?”

You catch on to his meaning immediately, but devilishly decide to tease him about his word choice instead.

“You make it sound like I’m gonna give you a strip show or something.”
“not that some of us would mind-“ Red realizes the opportunity as you, in turn, realize the mistake of saying that in this company.

“I’m going to pretend I didn’t hear that and just ask what you’ve got in mind, Skeletor. Any special request? If not, I’m gonna ask Paps for his favorite.” He looks thoughtful for a moment before he gives a slight shrug.

“what ‘bout that one that you did a while ago… ‘ring of fire’ or something like that.” Your features flatten as Sans receives a blank look from you.

“You mean Fires of a Revolution?”

“close enough.”


Despite your complaints, you can feel an eager grin quickly work its way up your face. You haven’t played in a while, and you’re always eager to test yourself whenever it comes to a challenging piece.

“don’t know what you’re talkin’ bout, pal. just wanna see my friend enjoy themselves. and if it provides entertainment to me too, then that’s a win-win if i’ve ever heard one,” Sans says casually. Even so, your anticipation is starting to reflect on his own face as he sees that you didn’t argue about the piece he suggested. He and Papyrus both love it when you play, just for the sound it provides. Helps make the place you’re renting a little homelier and lived-in.

“You make a valid argument,” You say as Sans moves his feet out of your lap. “I’ll do a few stretches for my hands and see if I can get it going.”

With that, you stand, work your way over to the grand piano nestled in to the corner of the room, and settle yourself in to the accompanying stool in the middle of the expanse of keys. Before you can move to prop up the top board, you can feel several pairs of eyes bore in to you. You look up questioningly and find all of your new roommates staring at you in confusion. Blue and Beast look like they’ve had an epiphany of sorts.

“What?” you ask tentatively.

“you play the piano?” Geno says, both tone and expression inscrutable.

“Of course I do? Do you think we’d bother to haul an expensive, and not to mention, heavy grand piano in to this small house just for Undyne to use when she’s occasionally over?” You’re more than a little confused as to why this wasn’t obvious in the first place. So you feel obligated to defend your word choice further. ‘I mean, I don’t think Papyrus has ever shown an interest in piano, as far as I know. And Sans is too lazy to learn the intricacies and technique behind it.”

“got me pegged,” Sans quips with a lazy grin.

“SO YOU’RE GOING TO PLAY SOMETHING FOR US?” Blue phrases this more like a statement than question.

“Yup, give me a sec,” you confirm as you start a few basic stretches after fully propping up the top board so the hammers and strings are out and on display. Some of them might enjoy the mechanics of it as I play. Plus, I think I just look fancy when I do.

You’d be remiss to say that you haven’t felt firsthand the pain of not having proper ergonomics when playing this instrument. Debilitating pain that renders your fingers, wrists, and forearms useless.
Halting you from doing basic tasks like writing or typing comfortably. It’s agonizing and infuriating, like being stuck behind someone god-awfully slow in traffic. You know that the proper speed limit is forty-five and they’re going thirty and are completely unaware to the complete pile up they’ve caused behind them. With their slowness, you’re forced to slow to match them and fully throw your tight schedule for a loop. And all you can think about is *why can’t you just drive normally so that people reach keys at the proper time??* Your teeth grit subconsciously just thinking about it.

Pushing that thought firmly to the side, you raise the protecting piece of finished ebony wood covering the keys up and out of the way. Slowly, you reach out and touch the ivory of the musical instrument before you, relishing in the very slight give your touch brings to them. The black and white keys have all been well loved over the years that you’ve had it; you’ve learned to repair some of the basic parts of it yourself just out of necessity. There’s a few nicks in the wood here and there, just coming out of general use. Even if the piano itself isn’t pristine, it’s provided you with fathomless stability and a source to vent to in a tumultuous life. Even now, after all these years, you’re lost in the sheer possibilities and combinations of notes that an instrument like this can give.

You use the first few notes of the song to test the key and find your right starting point. At the rich, dulcet sound of the few strings being struck with its respective hammer, a distinctive, pleasantly surprised ‘NYEH?!’ comes from the kitchen. The excited smile on your face feels like its forced even higher when you spy Papyrus emerge from the kitchen, bouncing on his heels, patiently waiting for you to begin. His happiness about what you’re about to do spurs you on to finish your stretching and belt out the song for real.

You make eye contact with Sans right before you strike out the beginning chord. He’s just as excited about this as Papyrus is, but much better at hiding it.

*Let’s do this.*

You keep your gaze downward as you replay the song in your head, linking the notes you remember to the keys on the keyboard in front of you. You could’ve brought up the sheet music, but the muscle memory would probably be more reliable to you than reading it straight from the paper. Besides, you’re not sure if your reading speed would even match up with how fast this song goes at some points. So you’ve resorted to just keeping your pacing as you remember it and let the music guide your hands as they dance over the keys.

Looking over at your audience would surely distract in some of the more complicated—*the whole piece is complicated, don’t lie to yourself*—parts so you keep your eyes moving back and forth, watching your hands go along with the melody itself coming from the piano.

This piece holds so much passion and intensity at times that it truly does hold up to its name of being a source of a revolution. You can’t help but get in to it yourself, perhaps moving your upper body a little bit too much, giving it your own emotion and perspective. That’s also another reason why you’ve always been drawn to playing the piano. Pieces can all be played in different tunes and pitches as well as influenced by how hard or soft the musician strikes the keys. With it, each person can put their own personal twist to any song, no matter how popular or unknown the song is.

It gives you a sense of individuality that you desperately needed.

And you’ve clung to that lifeline and don’t plan on letting go any time soon.

You’re not all that surprised when a memory surfaces. And this time, you indulge in it and decide to just reminisce.
“How did you get so good so fast?” They wonder out loud as they swing their legs from the stand. They’re pouting a little bit, but still look overall fascinated at your ability to pick up pieces like it’s nothing.

“How do you play so well?” They ask, not quite sure how to answer. “I think it’s gotta do with me not having any formal training.”

They just tilt their head, prompting you to continue.

“Well, I’m able to practice and go at my own pace the entire time. I can do things the way I want to and not have another old crone nag at me about proper technique and all that garbage. I enjoy it. I really do. So I guess with that comes a passion that helps me retain what I listen to.” They still look unsatisfied with your answer but seem to understand your reasoning a little bit more.

“I wish I could play violin as well as how you play piano,” they grumble, still a little put-out at the total unfairness of the world around them.

“You’ve got the whole life ahead you,” you say with force, turning so that you can stare straight in to their eyes. “It takes time, and I’ll always be there for you every step of the way. I mean, do you know how far you’ve come already? You’ll be playing Ave Maria in no time!”

They roll their eyes playfully and huff before looking back at you with a expression you can’t place.

“You promise that you’ll always be there for me?” they ask, voice beseeching.

You throw your arm around them and hold them close, wishing to never let go. To never have that seed of dread in you be realized. You can say that, right now, your answer is as clear as the day is outside of the paneled window behind you.

“Of course. Forever and always. Whatever happens.”

“Pinky promise?” They hold out their opposite hand that’s not between you, littlest finger outstretched. You laugh as you reach out and lock your pinky with theirs, steadfast in your resolve.

“Pinky promise.”

You close your eyes and smile to yourself as you near the end, keeping the same strength in each of the notes, trusting your hands to keep it going.

To the others, they can now tell why Sans and Papyrus were so excited to see you play. You are so much more open when you lose yourself in the music, emotions freely passing through your face as the melody changes.

And with that, it helps give them a glimpse of the soul shining within you.
“So that’s where they are…

…

…

INTERESTING.”

Chapter End Notes

I'll just do a tl;dr for AO3 to keep the sappiness in a Tumblr post.

Thanks so much for sticking with me all this time! Your comments, kudos, and just reading this in general means so much to me!!

Come to my Tumblr to chat and view the sentimental post if you want to!

Music is 'Fires of a Revolution' by MusicalBasics
I do not own this song nor the rights to it, but it's damn good music nonetheless.
The Undying Plan

Chapter Summary

*Spear of Justice intensifies*

Chapter Notes

Finals are coming up... again.
I'll probably have another one for you before then as a form of procrastination, but we'll see how it goes.

“do we really have to do this?” Sans says for what felt like the hundredth time. You roll your eyes and give your response for the hundredth time.

“Yes, Sans. We do. If we’re playing host for even more people, they should be made aware of the situation so that we don’t put anyone else in danger.”

Not to mention how this might affect the others that are staying with us too.

“but so soon? tori n’ asgore are bound to be busy during weekdays. plus, they’ve got their business trip stuff to prepare for. undyne ‘n alphys both needed to rework their schedules so that they could come by,” Sans worries while stuffing his hands deeply in to his worn jacket. He’s slouching even more so in to the chair by the card table, seemingly dreading this meeting even more so than the ones who’ll be at the center of attention. Speaking of, all of the new faces are loitering about the house somewhere, having been forced to stick around for this meeting too.

The only one that’s missing is Papyrus, and that’s only because he has class at this time. You luckily have already finished your classes for the day, so you’ll be able to attend this emergency group meeting. Well, not like you’re going to be doing much explaining. You’ll only be acting as emotional support for Sans as he bears the brunt of the reaction. Well, and I guess I’m the only one that’s willing to stand up to Toriel if there’s a disagreement. Sans will just roll over immediately if she says something about her children not staying for the weekend. Papyrus will just be disappointed but not argue. They’ve got enough on their plate right now with the upcoming trip.

“It was incredibly kind of them to do that. And to be fair, this is a situation that they should’ve been immediately informed of anyway. So that means we’re not going to squander it by delaying and having you explaining this whole debacle more than once because it gives anyone a headache that isn’t a theoretical physicist.”

“you’re just butthurt ‘cus you haven’t gotten rid of yours yet,” Sans remarks with a grin. You cut a glare at him.

“I wonder why?”
He has the decency to look sheepish.

“…touché.”

Just then, movement out of the corner of your vision catches your attention, causing you to look towards the living room. Beast has sat up from the couch, looking around quickly, eyes snapping between places and people alike. He looks alert, with lights intense and small. Before you can inquire what’s got him worked up, he turns to you and Sans at the table.

“do you hear that?” he asks, voice wary.

You raise an eyebrow at his sudden question but strain your ears for some strange sound anyway. Other than the TV that Red has running, which you ask him to mute for a moment, you can’t make out anything out of the ordinary.

“…I don’t hear anything weird,” you say with a shake of your head. “What about you, Sans?”

“…nothing here either,” Sans remarks with a lazy shrug.

“should check yer ears,” Red says while pressing a button the remote in his grip, allowing the TV to drone on once more.

“Are you sure you’re just not hearing things? Error gets that sometimes,” Ink adds in from the loveseat with a thoughtful look. The face you make at that statement is mirrored by several of the others. Okay, first off: your first logical conclusion is to go to hearing voices? Secondly, who are you to divulge that information about him?

You can hear a distinct, staticky ‘I heard that!’ come from the basement.

Beast gives a grunt and shakes his skull, unsatisfied.

“figures you can’t hear it,” Beast mumbles. He goes on to try and describe it anyway, just in case. “it’s a constant noise, kind of mid-range in pitch, and sounds like it’s heading this way.”

“Sirens, maybe?” you muse, mind coming up with an obvious conclusion. “We’ve got these vehicles that are used in emergencies that blare horns so that people get out of the way.”

“or it could just be some punk blasting music from their car,” Sans says, shrugging again. He looks calmer now that the conversation topic is now back to something more mundane. Beast shakes his head again.

“it’s got no beat or rhythm to it,” Not like that matters in today’s music anymore, “but i guess it could be a siren. not like one ‘ve ever heard of though…”

So if it’s medium pitch, that means we can hear it eventually and it not being something out of our spectrum of hearing. Guess we’ll just have to wait and find out.

You’ve resorted to staring intensely in to the pattern of the table and listening, waiting for any kind of auditory cue of what’s coming. Sans gives you a weird look before dismissing it and going on to his phone to check the group chat again. The TV’s noise changes sporadically, switching from rap music to some overly emotional moment on some soap opera to something you else you can’t recognize. Red’s been doing a lot of channel surfing a lot lately, seemingly to finally realize the wonders of cable. Beast is apparently still focused on the noise, slowly tensing.

Just then, you hear it.
An incredibly faint noise can be heard out in the distance. If you haven’t been focusing and waiting for it, you wouldn’t have noticed. It’s gruff and what sounds like a voice. So definitely not a siren… who is that?

“-uuuuuuuuuuuuuuu-“

You blanch when your mind suddenly makes the connection while your phone buzzes with a new message. The opening of the message is an automatic response as the rest of your body prepares for drastic measures. You can already feel the sweat beginning to accumulate on the back of your neck.

**Anxious Pangolin to You:**

“T-30 ^_^;;”

Your head snaps up to Sans, which causes him to look up. After reading your panicked face, he comes to his own horrifying conclusion.

*Oh, fuck.*

At once, both you and Sans lurch from your chairs, with your own clattering to the floor in the process, startling the rest of the household.

“She gave us thirty seconds, that’s not enough time,” you fret, looking about desperately for a solution.

“thirty seconds?! what the fuck, alph.” To be fair, she’s done about that much before, but only when we’re prepared. But now’s not the time to rationalize this! You hastily check the time on your phone, fumbling with it a little. It reads about half an hour before the scheduled meeting time. Why’re they so early?!

“WHAT’S GOING ON?” Blue’s voice asks from the kitchen. You had honestly forgotten that Blue, Dream, and Geno were in there, doing who knows what. With their proximity to the door in the kitchen, the sudden opportunity to make this end well strikes you.

“No time to explain. Sans,” you say while pointing to him. “You need to teleport out back and get the trap ready. I hopefully have a plan.” Trusting your words, Sans vanishes without a sound. You whirl towards those that in the kitchen. “Blue, Dream, Geno, whichever, you need to be prepared to open the door that leads out back when I give the signal, okay?”

“But what’s-“

Dream cuts himself off as the sound from before becomes noticeable to everyone, even over the sound of the TV.

“-UUUUUUUUUUUUUUU-“

The same panic you’re feeling seeps in to the rest of their faces.

“There’s no time! One of you, hurry!” you command as you run to the front door, searching for the source of the noise out the window positioned next to the door. You cast a cursory glance back towards the back door, feeling your tension ease up as Blue is the one who’s taken up the position, ready and waiting for your next move. The rest of the house looks like they’re bracing for impact, even though they don’t know what they’re bracing for.

As soon as you turn back towards out front, you spot it. The telltale blue blur just visible over the
crest of the hill approaching this way. Immediately, you move back towards the door and grip the handle fully, mentally counting down from five.

_Five one thousand…_

Just then, Error decides to re-emerge from the basement, taking in everyone else’s serious expressions and rigid posture.

_Four one thousand…_

“What are you guys doing? …and what’s that sound?”

“-UUUUUUUUUUUUUN-“

_Three one thousand…_

“it’s coming,” Beast states, gaze middle distance, completely focused on the approaching entity. Error sounds aptly unnerved at the cryptic response.

_Two one thousand…_

“Could you get any more vague? What’s coming?”

_One one thousand…_

Steeling yourself, you cry out.

“Now!”

You throw yourself as well as the door out of the way as the sound reaches its loudest.

“-NNNNNNNNKKKKKKSSS!!”

The streak from before comes whizzing past you, sending a maelstrom of wind flying throughout the house. Any loose paper goes flying in to the air. The window panes rattle irritably. Even the entirety of the foundation creaks at the sudden tempest battering it. The wind whips past your clothes and hair, sending them every which way and undoubtedly leaving you looking like you just braved a hurricane.

Thankfully, Blue seems to have reacted in time, as there is no sound of wood being shattered to million pieces by an unstoppable force meeting a certainly moveable object.

Who knew you’d become acutely aware how that actually sounds?

Instead of that, there’s a loud _WHUMF!_ of impact somewhere out in the backyard and an identifiable muffled cackle.

There’s a stretch of nobody moving, only registering what just came bulldozing through the middle of the house as the papers land haphazardly on the floor.

“What… was that?” Red says slowly. _At least someone’s asking the real questions._

“surely you recognized the voice, pal,” Sans cuts in from directly behind you. _The little troll._ Conditioned to this, you don’t even react as you lean against the wall and thank the deities that you saved yourself from dealing with landlords and door repair.
“hate to break it to you, buddy, but we’re not as chummy with our undyne,” Red retorts with an eyeroll. *Stars, not already.* “that oversized tuna woulda been dusted for sure if she tried that.”

“S-sorry for the short notice,” the new, nasally voice says, drawing your attention to the newly arrived guest in the doorway.

“s’all good, alph. managed to make do, didn’t we?” Sans responds all too casually. *Procrastinating to the end, aren’t we, Sans?* You huff at him and give him a dull look before greeting Alphys yourself.

“Thanks for coming on such a short notice,” you say apologetically on Sans’s behalf. You close the door behind her as she starts to take off her shoes, still oblivious to the new company. “What made you come so early though?” you ask, to keep the conversation going.

“’Dyne got off a little earlier than expected, so we… just decided to come a little early? S-sorry! I knew I should’ve asked!” She squeaks out while curling up on herself. You’re quick to derail that line of thinking.

“Like Sans said Alphys, you’re fine. Just a little surprised was all.”

To your relief, she seems to have relaxed enough to finish removing her shoes and look up to undoubtedly ask what the emergency was. However, before she can do that though, she locks eyes with Red in the living room. Red visibly tenses at the scrutiny but doesn’t speak. Incredibly enough, all of the others had the decency to be quiet while you were letting Alphys in. Now though, that silence feels oppressive and constricting. Her eyes keep rapidly jumping back and forth between the skeletons, before homing in on Sans suspiciously.

Before she can start interrogating Sans, her girlfriend strolls in from the backyard, completely guiltless at the thought of causing hundreds of dollars in property damage and laughing uproariously.

“FUHUHU! Man, that was close! Thought you dorks weren’t going to make it in time! That snare trap with the impact foam modification still works GREAT! I love being able to do that whenever I’m here!”

Her single yellow eye finally opens and immediately zeroes in on the closest skeleton towards her. Which, unfortunately, is Geno.

“Holy shit!! Sans, what the hell happened to you?!” She steps even closer to Geno. And he, on the other hand, tries to take a step back, but is blocked by the countertop. He’s clutching the scarf around his neck with one hand and looking Undyne right in the eye wordlessly. Undyne takes that as unspoken permission to get even closer to inspect him.

“Woah, that cut looks terrible,” she hisses while looking him over. *That’s one of the first things I thought of too.* “And what’re those pixel-y things around your head? How did you even manage to do that?”

Undyne reaches forward with one of her webbed hands to touch the floating mass. Geno finally realizes that there’s more space to move and sidesteps her, not allowing her to touch him. Her expression subtly shifts to understanding that he doesn’t want to be touched but morphs back in to that shark-tooth smile that you associate with Red.

“Those are some WICKED scars, man! I wish my eyepatch would look like that!” she belts with faux envy. When Geno doesn’t respond, her expression finally turns serious.
“Come to think of it, how did you get them? Last I saw you, you and your lovely datemate,” Sans chokes on his breath next to you, “were all fine and honky dory about a week and a half ago. Is this what the emergency was about? Dude, you should’ve said something about this immediately when it happened! You could’ve just been a pile of dust in the wind!” Undyne doesn’t notice the heavy flinch from Geno at her wording. She’s getting more and more angry while she continues the one-sided conversation.

“Who do I gotta pound to get some payback? When I think of whoever did this to Papyrus’s brother I just- NGAAAAAH!” She emphasizes her shout with slamming a fist into the counter, which looks like it hasn’t taken any serious damage. The deities seem to be in my favor today. She turns her head around, fiery hair whipping behind her, searching for Alphys. “Alphy! Have you seen what happened to-“

She stops herself when she sees the Sans from this universe standing near Alphys, visibly uncomfortable and sweaty. Slowly, she turns her piercing sclera back towards Geno before suddenly realizing that there were even more skeletons in the kitchen other than the one she loomed over.

Instantly, Undyne closes herself off, gaze dripping with suspicion. She shifts in to a battle-ready stance as a spear suddenly materializes in her hand, immediately jabbing it towards the scarf of the one she verbally walked over.

“Who the hell are you?” she demands.

You take this opportunity to test the waters and hopefully keep anyone else from doing anything rash.

“They’re their cousins, didn’t you know?” you say in a mocking sing-song voice. Undyne just looks baffled at your tone. You ‘elaborate’ further, “Their cousins? You know, the ones that they talk all the time about and that are totally real? Those cousins? Don’t you remember?”

You can feel a jab at your side as a familiar bony elbow digs in to the sensitive flesh. You have to stifle a laugh at his childish way in trying to get you to shut up. Well, not like I’m being much better. At least this gets all of Sans’s attempts at lying his way out of this shut down.

Undyne shifts her gaze back to the other skeletons that she can see before narrowing her eyes back at you.

“Bullshit. Papyrus has never mentioned any family besides Sans.”

You hum innocently and sway back and forth, immensely enjoying the pressure being put upon Sans. Speaking of, he’s sending you some thousand-degree daggers, but you couldn’t possibly care less. His mistake, his responsibility.

“Then how is this possible then?”

The spear dematerializes out of Undyne’s hand as she brings it up to her chin, looking thoughtful.

“This is all an elaborate prank that Sans managed to pull with his stupid powers and way too much time on his hands?”

I gotta hand it to her, I’d believe it. Sans is somehow able to be in multiple places at once and will jump out when you least suspect it and say ‘gotcha!’ Sadly though, I have to rule it out.

“There’s a limit to how much bending of space and time that a skeleton can do,” Okay… lying through my teeth, but we can just brush past that detail for now. “On top of that, how many skeleton
monsters have you actually seen?”

Alphys reaches a conclusion before Undyne could, her claws flying towards her mouth in shock.

“S-sans, you didn’t!”

“it was an accident, alph! i swear!”

There’s a snort of laughter coming from the living room and to your unsurprise, Ink looks like he’s desperately trying to hold in laughter. Though what is surprising, the other skeletons look like they’re enjoying themselves too, in watching Sans flounder. I think I disregarded their unhappiness that someone tore them away from home a little…

“What’re you talking about?” Undyne wants to know. Sans addresses her as well.

“lemme preface this that it was a complete and total accident. i didn’t mean for this t’ happen.”

Undyne just looks unamused as she pulls up a chair from the card table, looking a little taken aback at the others in the living room that she couldn’t see, but re-centers herself quickly by glaring back at Sans.

“That doesn’t mean it didn’t happen in the first place.” That sentence alone makes you want to high-five her so hard. You’ll default to mentally cheering at her instead.

“So, start talking bonehead.”

At her demand, Sans just slumps defeatedly.

“so much for only explainin’ this twice…”

Tough shit, Skeletor.

Chapter End Notes

I seem to enjoy writing Sans in hot water. Ah well, I laugh to myself every time I do it, so I'm doing it anyway.

Let me know your guys' thoughts on the chapter as always! Comments that just say 'Kudos' if you've already added it, critiques, some random tidbit you liked, anything!

I post Sneak Peeks of the chapters before I post them on my Tumblr! Come follow me and have a chat!
Civilized, and totally not Crude, Discussion

Chapter Notes

Amidst finals week, I deliver you, a chapter!

It's up in the air when I'll update next, because I actually got a research position (!!!) in my major for the summer that requires me to move. I'll probably post an update to Tumblr about it.

Enjoy the chapter~

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The unsettling and weighted silence presses heavily in the house yet again. The only background noise added to it was the furious click-click-clicking of a set of claws against a touchscreen. Alphys has been staring at her screen since the previous explanation, making notes and formulating theories as Sans repeats the tale once more. Undyne looks lost and not entirely comprehending the breadth of Sans’s actions.

The two royals had shown up promptly at the given time and understandably questioned Sans about how such a complicated prank was labeled an emergency. Now after the needed explanation though, your new and much more punctual guests were sitting around the card table with thoughtful expressions across their muzzles.

“Allow me to try and summarize this,” Asgore says slowly, picking his words while running one his hands through his golden mane. He doesn’t sound entirely angry, just confused and that specific tone that you’ve picked up from him when he’s scolding someone younger that just doesn’t know better. Then again, even with his and Toriel’s age, you highly doubt that even their many, many years of experience would prepare them for a situation like this. Sans just impossibly slumps in to his seat further, exhausted and probably more than a little irritated to be chewed out again for his mistake.

“You went against the judgement of your peers and colleagues and attempted to directly interact with some foreign magical phenomena. Alone.”

“not exactly,” Sans says with a seesaw motion of his hands. “th’ machine was made only to get readings on the magic, not pull the sources closer. though the sources did just that ’n the end. i guess it was ’cause of my magical input that caused it t’ specify and locate these guys.” He adds jabs his thumb back towards where the others are hanging around, listening in to the conversation.

“Though in doing that,” Toriel steps in. “You ripped seven others from their homes in to an unknown place. In addition, the machine that started this whole mess is in need of repair.” The chill in her voice sends Sans shrinking in to his hoodie. Toriel sighs heavily before continuing. “Sans the skeleton, you are indeed one of the biggest boneheads I have ever met.”

“heheh, well, you know what they say, ‘m bad to the bone,” Sans quips half-heartedly. In spite of that, your eye and the edge of Toriel’s lips twitch in synch. Asgore just closes his eyes and forcefully stops any other outward reaction. Undyne huffs, unamused.

“Regardless, you can and will do everything in your power to bring them back to their native
homes,” Toriel replies in stead of another pun.

You and Sans share an apprehensive glance. Easier said than done, Toriel. How much should you say in regards to the others’ situation? At what point are you conveying the whole of the matter while not instilling unnecessary panic? A bad taste forms in your mouth, forcing you to swallow it back. It sounds hypocritical coming from you saying that some truth is best not spoken when you’ve been getting on Sans’s case time and time again about speaking the truth. This time you can see why glossing over the entirety of it would be more beneficial and you’re more than a little peeved with yourself about it.

Sans reaches a resolution faster than you when he looks back to Toriel.

“’s what i was plannin’ to do in the first place, tori. they’ve got no way back on their own, and i couldn’t just leave ‘em here, not after what i mistakenly did to ‘em.”

While she may not show it completely in her face, you can tell from Toriel’s eyes that she’s pleasantly surprised at Sans’s admission.

“Th-the machine is completely broken, right?” Alphys asks, seeming to completely ignore the pun.

“the thing blew up in to pieces right in front of me, so yeah,” Sans responds with a slow nod.

“talk about an explosive entrance,” someone says from behind you. You put your head in one of your hands while chuckles and groans erupt around you. Undyne catches your eye, expression grim. Silent words form from her lips spelling out ‘I’m sorry.’

I’m sorry too, Undyne… You sigh heavily with a shake of your head as more explosions puns are fired off.

I’m sorry too…

You watch on amusedly as the new argument is playing out exactly as you thought it would. Sans is completely avoiding your eyes while attempting to talk Alphys down. Hopefully your telepathic ‘I told you so’s’ were reaching him loud and clear so that he can give up his futile resistance.

“S-sans this isn’t s-something th-that can be done alone!” Alphys insists with an iron grip on her anime phone case.

“you’ve got your own research that you’re doin’, alph! ‘s not like they’re goin’ to be stuck here for the rest of their life or something.” Sans weakly counters. At this point, he probably knows he’s already lost, but is only arguing for the sake of putting his burden on others.

“Something like this isn’t finished in a couple months’ time! This dimension hopping theory is completely unprecedented because there just hasn’t been the technology for it. Only now were people looking in to doing readings about it! If you continue to s-stubbornly do this alone, you’re only delaying the ones you brought here from being sent back! This could take y-years or more!” Alphys finishes, stutter only reappearing slightly. With that, Sans winces and you suck in a breath through your teeth. Uh-oh.

Right on cue, someone speaks up from behind you.
“that’s a lot longer than the estimate you gave us earlier…” Geno observes lowly.

“well, uh, that was when i was just assessing the damages. i did say that it was going to take a couple months or even longer, but now i guess i can say that that estimate would be pretty far off…” Sans mumbles with a grimace. The heated looks from the other skeletons only intensify.

“Wh—which is why,” Alphys says, pressing her advantage with a glint of her glasses. You’ll have to ask her later if she did the glasses thing on purpose. “You should let me help you. I th—think we’d be able to make more headway if we worked together than you going alone.”

In some last ditch effort, Sans glances your way for support. He should know better by now that he’s not going to find any help that way. You can see his last hope die in his eyes as you give him an unyielding look.

“You know exactly what I’m going to say, Skeletor, so don’t bother.”

‘Stop trying to be some self-righteous galivanting knight that takes all of the burden by themselves and accept help for a change!’

Sans sighs and acquiesces his ‘duty’ of getting his other selves back home singlehandedly. The beam Undyne gives to Alphys is full of pride and admiration for how her wife handled herself so well that Undyne didn’t have to butt in and try to strongarm Sans in to just letting Alphys help. That look alone sends Alphys in to a blushing fit and forces her to move the conversation along before it just turns in to bedroom eyes.

“G—great! So, uhm, eheh, where do you th—think would be best for us to set up shop? I can s-set aside space in my personal lab to start gathering parts and…” Alphys starts to ramble faster as she engages her science mode again. She’s speaking much faster than you’re capable of keeping up with, but Sans seems to manage just fine as he chimes in now and again. Speaking of the lazy ass, he looks better now that that problem has resolved itself to some degree.

“It is good to see that this has hopefully alleviated some heavy duties off of Sans’s shoulders,” Asgore says with a small smile. Toriel nods in agreement but still seems to be lost in her own thoughts. Eventually she turns to Asgore and shares a look that carries a wordless conversation that you can only dream to understand. Countless years being married would do that to a person, you suppose, even if they’re no longer that amicable towards each other now. Eventually though, Toriel turns to you with those same worried creases on her face.

“It would seem that we will have to find another place for my children to stay for the weekend,” she says, disappointment lacing her words far more than you expected.

Alright, I planned for this too. Time to go full on stubborn mode.

“Actually Toriel, I’d still like for them to stay with us while you’re gone.”

This notion apparently surprises both Toriel and Asgore as their furry eyebrows raise a little.

“You are now living with nine other people in this house, are you not? Surely it would be much too cramped if even more were to stay, even if only for the weekend,” Asgore muses, expression doubtful.

“And we must consider the safety of the children,” Toriel says, dropping her voice lower so that it can’t be heard past Alphys’s science rant. “While I have the upmost trust in Sans, the appearances of some of his alternates leaves me questioning if having them stay will be the wisest decision…”
You shake your head and tack on a disarming, innocent-as-can-be smile.

“I can say for pretty much all of them that they are in no danger whatsoever if they do stay. I’ve lived with them for a couple days and their appearances don’t really say much for who they are. Most of them are pretty sweet, in fact.” Emphasis on most. I’m almost one hundred percent certain that Blue, Dream, or Beast won’t make a move against them. While Ink is mainly unpredictable, they don’t really lend themselves towards violence as far as I’ve seen. Red’s much more talk than walk and Geno is much better at passive aggressive digs than trying to hurt someone. Error is a wildcard, but he never really seemed all that interested in doing anything against Frisk in the first place. On top of that, he seems to know how fragile his position is while he’s here, so he, along with a lot of the others, will probably just keep their distance. The worst they’ll get is probably a one-way ticket to a guilt trip with all expenses paid. There were a few that were interested in meeting them, however…

An idea pops in to your head and you make a split-second decision to act on it.

“And some of them even wanted to meet them! Here, let me call one of them over.” You turn around before either of the goat monsters could stop you and call out to the one that would make the best pitch for your case.

“Blue!”

At the sound of your voice carrying his nickname, Blue perks up from his position of staring wistfully out the window and smiles confusedly at you. You beckon him forward and watch as he bounds towards you, reading your expression for any tell of what he’s been called over for.

“YES? WHAT DO YOU REQUIRE OF THE MAGNIFICENT BLUE, HUMAN?”

“We were just talking about still having Toriel’s kids over for the weekend and I remembered you saying something about wanting to meet them,” you explain with a side nod towards the goat monsters. A second or two passes before Blue fully comprehends what you were asking as he grins and slaps on his enthusiasm again to fully sell the pitch. I’m definitely going to owe him one.

“DEFINITELY! I’D LOVE TO MEET THE SAVIOR OF MONSTERKIND BEFORE THEY EVEN ARRIVE IN OUR UNDERGROUND! WHILE WE HAVE NOT BEEN FREED YET AND AS YOUR SANS HAS EXPLAINED IT, FRISK, OR WHOEVER OUR VERSION IS, SHOULD ARRIVE SOONER OR LATER!” There’s a calculating gleam to his eyes as he continues to address the monarchy. “AND! IF I BRING KNOWLEDGE OF OUR SALVATION TO THOSE BACK HOME, THIS COULD PROVIDE HOPE TO THE DENIZENS AND POTENTIALLY EVEN SAVE SOME MONSTERS FROM FALLING DOWN!” Blue finishes with a strained yet determined nod. Blue’s keeping himself rigidly upright, bringing himself up to his full height as his lights are flickering between the royals. He looks calm and sure of himself. Dignified, even. You can tell that he desperately wants to be taken seriously. You immediately decide you like this side of Blue as much as his usual cheeriness.

It’s an interesting pitch, now that you think about it. How Blue’s knowledge of how the timeline might proceed could affect their universe’s path through one of the supposed defining points of its history. It could mitigate the violent encounters that the fallen child must endure while in there if the knowledge of how the timeline could proceed is shared and expedite the child’s journey through the Underground. Or, since the cynical and morbid side of you is forcing the thought in to consideration, it could just make them even more easy pickings during a bad run…

“While that may indeed be the case,” Asgore says, startling you out of your thoughts of timeline shenanigans. It’s clear that neither of the two royals expected such a serious topic to be brought up in just a housing arrangement, but you can see that they’re taking what Blue said seriously. “You need
not meet them under such crowded conditions. We could always arrange a meeting time at a later date.”

At Asgore’s proposal, Blue’s eyes flick to you, a silent prompt for you to pick up the conversation again.

“Sure, you could that,” You admit with a nod. “Though you guys are way too busy with the trip to the capitol right now, right?”

The monarchs exchange a silent conversation in a glance again, weighing their options.

“Of course we are, but that does not mean we cannot search for another place for them to stay, my chil- my dear,” Toriel says hesitantly, correcting herself at the last minute, which you appreciate. With her age, you would no doubt be a child in their eyes, but the entire thought just throws you off kilter. Being called a child by a motherly figure is very low on the list of things you want in life.

“Then you don’t have to worry about it! We’d still like to help in easing your guys’ load, and if that means housing your kids on top of providing housing for the casualties of Skeletor’s incident, then so be it.”

“But still-“ Toriel begins.

“you guys talkin’ about havin’ their kid over?” Beast asks, sliding in to the conversation, looming over your chair. Apparently, the others have gotten bored enough so that they’re jumping in to the conversations. The strings of Beast’s hoodie are dangling just at the hairline of your forehead, tickling the edges of it. On top of that, you’re getting intense déjà vu from outside the coffee shop and you have to fight to not get up. A sneaking suspicion arises that he’s doing it on purpose has you narrowing your eyes up on him. He’s going to be using his size against me for several times to come, the gargantuan asshole. He returns your gaze challengingly with a smirk before looking back at Asgore and Toriel. “the more the merrier, so send ‘em by.”

“yeah, ‘d love to see the kid,” Geno throws in some distance away from you.

Did he just-

You contort yourself around Beast’s frame to eye Geno incredulously because of that flippant remark. By all accounts, he looks casual leaning on the wall by the kitchen. Though way he’s clutching the scarf around him like it’s the only tangible thing in existence says otherwise.

“It is not just-“ Asgore tries to continue.

“Oh, just let them stay over you big fuzzball! Nothing’s going to happen to ‘em with everyone here,” Undyne butts in with finality. Apparently, she’s had enough of the combined quantum theories of Alphys and Sans to last a lifetime, if her hopelessly confused and frustrated expression is anything to go by.

Yet again, the monarchs share a look for a moment and then look at you once before nodding.

“Very well,” Toriel acquiesces with a sigh. You do a mental fist pump in celebration. “They will arrive around Friday afternoon after school, so please be present and prepared when we drop them off. I will discuss with you when we arrive then about details regarding when they will be picked up.”

You give Toriel a thumbs up while nodding, relishing in your victory. Undyne takes this time to lean in conspiratorially.
“How’s it feel now that you’ve got seven new bone-friends to keep you company, punk? Anything you wanna say about that?” She says with a waggle of her brows, looking between you and the now increasingly uncomfortable skeletons around. Undyne even managed to get Beast to back off with a clearing of his throat.

You give her a deadpan look that sends her cackling.

Impossibly, Alphys overheard her wife’s teasing as she now joins in.

“I-it’s just like anime!” She squeals with unrestrained giddiness. “But it’s just like the new and popular reverse-harems that are popping up all around in the fanfiction and mangas and can you just imagine the romance behind this ‘Dyne?! The drama, the jealousy, the swooning! Ohmygosh I’m so excited that one of my friends actually gets to experience it!”

“Alphys, this time keep your fanfictions about your friends to yourself,” You warn with a resigned sigh. There’s no use in trying to stop her from writing it… Alphys has the decency to look a little sheepish yet still awed at the sheer shipping potential.

“I make no promises, punk! Fuhuhuhu!” Undyne just laughs as the skeletons all look away, backing up from you. “Oh man, I ship it so hard already!”

That sentence sends you over the edge, causing you to rise from your seat quickly to usher your guests out and away from the house so that they don’t make the situation any more awkward than it’s already becoming.

“Oooookay, that’s the end of our discussions, right? Good! Now I’m sure Sans has some things to do,” You cut your gaze to an equally startled and confused Sans, “so you all can carry about your day. Thank you again for coming on such short notice and being accommodating for it all. Bye!”

With that, you slam the door as the fish yet still wheezes with laughter while the monster monarchs give a good-natured chuckle. You can still hear Alphys muttering, whether it’s about ships or theories, you can’t be bothered to decipher it. You rest your head on the door and close your eyes for a moment, silently willing the awkwardness in the air away.

You can feel several weighted gazes fall on the back of your neck, scorching with their intensity.

Your mind scrambles to search for a way to casually segue in to a more comfortable and decidedly less romance-involving topics. Luckily, you seem to be getting better at thinking of things up on the fly. You reach your phone in your pocket and check the weather, praying to the stars that you’ll find what you’re looking for.

Sure enough, the forecast does indeed show clear skies for the rest of the night, drawing an excited and equally relieved smile out of you. You whirl from the door and begin making your way towards your room with a pep in your step.

“You alright there, sweetheart?” Red breaks the silence with a wink from where he’s taken position on the loveseat. You flash him a grin.

“You alright actually,” you deflect while opening the door to your room. You call out to them one more time before heading in to prepare for the night to come. “Pack your bags boys, we’re going stargazing tonight!”

You close your door and wait just behind it, ear to the wood. No words were spoken, but there’s a sudden flurry of activity in the living room. The house has come alive with energy yet again.
You smile.

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, Geno would totally LoVe to meet them.

As always, let me know your guys' thoughts and opinions about the chapter! Speculation? Criticism? I'm open to anything and enjoy reading it all, so let me know!

I give early Sneak Peeks of ESOM chapters when they're in development on my Tumblr! Come follow and have a chat!
Flickering Light Amongst the Shadows

Chapter Summary

Nights like these can invoke a lot of emotion. Some joyous and carefree. Others painful and bitter.

Chapter Notes

Okay, this gone done a LOT later than I liked. Moving and motivation killed production, but I got this done before the longest break of ESOM so I'd like to think I'm not too late on my update?

Anyways, enjoy~

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

You had forgotten how much of a mess your room had gotten since the whole debacle a couple nights ago. There’s still clothes strewn about everywhere on the floor and your comforter still sags sadly off your bed. A few weeks old homework packets are tossed about as if you’ve somehow gotten your own self-sustaining trash tornado.

Should you clean up a bit?

Probably.

Will you?

Eh, maybe later.

More importantly than being responsible, you should start preparing for the trip you promised tonight. You’ll definitely need a jacket and sweatpants for being outdoors the entire night. It’s going to be one of those rare nights at the tail-end of summer that divebombs in temperature out of the blue. If Sans’s interest in the stars is anything like the others, you’re undoubtedly going to be there for several hours. Should you pack a cooler for drinks and maybe a snack or two?

“hey.”

How many blankets should you bring? Do you even have enough of them? You fling open your closet and start shuffling through the bottom of it to find something that you wouldn’t care getting dirt and grass on for the night.

“uh, y/n?”

Maybe run quickly to work and pick up an astronomy book or two that they can use? Probably not a bad idea. Oooh, maybe I could even get Sans to let me borrow his good telescope.

A hand suddenly lands on your shoulder.
You take the quilt that you were holding in one hand and chuck it over your shoulder in a knee jerk reaction.

Miss.

Well, add one more thing on your overly messy floor.

When you see who’s startled you, you groan and turn back to your closet.

“Jesus, Sans, would it kill you to use the door like a regular person that doesn’t have any teleporting powers?”

“i came in through the door;” he retorts with a snort.

Doubtful, you little troll. You look towards the door in question. As Sans said, it’s ajar. You glare at it as if it personally offended you.

“When did you-“

“literally just a few seconds ago. called your name too.”

You make a face at Sans. Was I really that lost in thought?

“What’s wrong? your face looks pretty blank-et there.”

“That was a stretch.”

“got you to smile a little at least.”

“Did not.”

“did too.”

“Did not.”

“did too.”

Standing up from your closet and turning to face Sans fully, you’re ready to continue this silly argument before you spy something in his hand.

“Did t- is that a cookie?”

“yup,” he says, while pointedly finishing the rest of it in front of you. Asshole.

“Where did you get that? Last I saw, there weren’t any in the pantry.”

Sans chews for a moment before swallowing—you still fail to comprehend why or how but bypass that notion for now—and wiping the melted chocolate on his jacket.

“new neighbor. wanted to come by and say hello.”

“Please don’t tell me anyone scared them off,” you say with a slump of your shoulders. Sans shrugs.

“nah, i answered the door thinking undyne left somethin’ again, but it turned out to be the new neighbor with chocolate chip cookies.”

You scrunch your eyebrows and cock your head to the side. Wasn’t the common courtesy for the
already existing neighbors to greet the new one? Plus, you don’t remember seeing anyone moving in nearby.

Then again, you have been pretty preoccupied with other universes being tethered to your own, so there’s that too. But the real important question is:

“Are there any left?”

“there’s a whole big plate o’ them,” Sans says with a knowing smirk.

Packing can definitely wait.

You’re already three-fourths of the way to your door before Sans stops you again by grabbing your arm. You’re reminded of the first night with everyone with how Sans is looking at you right now.

“listen. about tonight.”

“What about it?” you ask.

“are you sure you wanna go through with it? where are you taking ‘em?”

You cross your arms at his worried comment but humor him with an answer anyway.

“Yes Sans, I want to go through with it. Kind of rude to say you’re going on a star viewing trip and then just take it away immediately afterward. I’ll probably take them to that clearing in the woods we found a while back, off one of the trails that pass by here. We shouldn’t get much light pollution out there.”

Sans shakes his head at your early dismissal.

“i don’t really get your need to make nice with ‘em, honestly. some of ‘em have been pretty rude to you or have, quite literally, let themselves in to your room in the middle night and strapped you down to your bed to forcibly extract your soul from your body,” he says, voice low and lights extinguished from their sockets. “and let’s not forget that another was willing to just let it happen.”

You open your mouth to counter his argument before realizing how stupid you would sound trying to defend that and promptly snap it back shut. Why are you making this much of an effort? You’re not entirely sure yourself, but would it necessarily be bad for you to try and make friends or at least good acquaintance with them while they’re here? Now that you’re thinking about this harder, why aren’t you more terrified of or angry at Error and Ink?

Is it just out of selfishness or curiosity to get to know them a little bit better? How something that wouldn’t cross my mind even during my most introspective of time works? They’re bound to be chock full of information about other universes. Also, based on the information that they’ve given us, I should expect their behavior to be... erratic at best. Neither sound like they have an easy or all that enjoyable of a job. Though again, I shouldn’t forget that they are beings that just do their job, but people with complex emotions and backgrounds. Just who are they really?

Yeah, it mainly sounds like you’re foregoing a lot of your fear for the opportunity of knowledge. You’re certainly not doing it because you’ve forgiven them for such blatant mistreatment, but something less pure-hearted. You’ll have to see how well that holds up if you’re alone with either of them in the near future though.

“Well, another one of them was going to try and stop them from doing that in the first place. So there’s that.”
Sans still doesn’t seem convinced. You rub at the back of your neck with your free arm and look away.

“Come with us then. I know you and Alphys were going to get some stuff done in her lab and get stuff cleared out, but if it helps ease your mind a bit…” you trail off, feeling strangely guilty that you’re already pulling away Sans from his work that he’s recently been saddled with.

“i was hoping you’d say that.”

You look back at him then, seeing him suddenly a lot less serious and more excited. Not that it’s definitively visible, but his smile has widened so much so that it’s crinkling the corner of his eyesockets. A real, genuine smile that you’re forced to mimic, if only slightly. *Always in the mood to go stargazing it seems.*

“But, what about Alphys?” you ask, but Sans waves you off.

“she’ll understand, don’t worry. it’s all just movin’ stuff around and i trust her judgement on clearing space. ‘sides, she could even get undyne to help her out instead. then she can just ogle her wife as she’s hauling things around and… you get where ‘m goin’ here, right?”

You guess that makes some amount of sense. You tell him so and he finally let’s go of your arm.

“Alright, since that’s settled, you won’t mind getting a few of your astronomy books out for them? I assume you’re gonna bring your own telescope too.”

“roger that,” he says with a mock salute, disappearing in to thin air instead of just walking the short distance to his room.

*Will it actually kill him to not be lazy?*

You mutter that thought out loud as you head to the kitchen to finally grab one of the cookies. You pass by Red as he’s exiting, two cookies in each hand. His teeth are already coated in chocolate, betraying his gluttony and evident sloppiness. Seeing you eye his cookies, he pulls them out of your sight and growls at you like a dog, daring you to come any closer to him. You hold your hands up as he stalks away, giving you one last glare. Shaking your head, you peer around the kitchen and only come up with a plate piled to the brim with despair and only a few chocolatey crumbs scattered in.

“Son of a bitch!!”

You take off after Red, ready to throw down.

Your weather app did indeed hold true in that there hasn’t been much cloud cover at all tonight. The jacket you’ve brought will undoubtedly be of good use tonight. The dense forest has fully engulfed your group by now, having the only light sources coming from your phone and a few extra flashlights. All that you can see in any direction are vague outlines of the different flora and the looming shadows cast by the lights on trees. The steady crunching of earth beneath your group’s feet keeps the droning insects company for the night as you slowly follow the trail deeper in to the woods. Now and again, conversation sparks between the Sanses, mostly about stars and their growing excitement.
Even so, it still feels quiet somehow…

“are we there yet?” Geno asks irritably. You have to hold in a snicker at how annoyed he sounds because you may or may not have forced them to keep their heads down and away from the sky until you made it to the clearing. It was fully dark by the time you left, and you didn’t want them to spoil the experience with the immediate light pollution from the neighborhood.

“Just a little further, don’t mind your pretty little skull,” you chirp, relishing in his less than amused huff in response. Immediately after that, you mentally berate yourself for being such an asshole. *This could literally be a form of torture, dangling something like this just out of their grasp. They’ve probably waited for this moment since they just started their interest in stars and here I am, teasing them for their excitement.*

Smile fading and looking to distract yourself, you pull out your phone and check your new messages that you hadn’t responded to. There’s one from Frisk, Toriel, and Alphys each. You open the one from Alphys first.

**Anxious Pangolin to You:**

“I’ll get straight to work on those cell phones you asked from me!! I’ll make sure they’re the best models out there! ^3^”

You shoot her a quick text thanking her for her time and tell her not to go too overboard on it. You check the text from Toriel next.

**Toriel to You:**

“I will bring my children over around 4 on Friday. Please be sure to be there as we have another important topic to discuss. :)*”

Vague and slightly ominous… but it still checks out. You send her an affirmative. Lastly is the flirt master themselves.

**Squints to You:**

“So I kind of heard what was going on from Mom and Dad and I’m not sure I really believe you? Did Sans really clone himself?”

**You to Squints:**

“More or less. Different universes are now permanently connected to ours thanks to our resident bonehead. No big deal.”

Frisk must have been waiting for your reply as his response was immediate after you sent yours.

**Squints:**

“Pics or it didn’t happen.”

Not one to back down from an easy challenge, you hold your phone up high in front of you to capture the skeletons behind you unaware in the impromptu selfie. *What’s even better for having a skeleton as a friend is that their eye lights provide wonderful lighting for dark settings.*

Sure enough, as most of the skeleton’s faces and features come out surprisingly clear for the low light, save for Error’s. *Curse him for having black bones! Now my photos are ruined!* You send
Frisk the photo anyway, waiting for their understandable freak out.

**Squints:**

“Holy shit.”

**You:**

“Don’t let your mom see you text that.”

**Squints:**

“Looks like you’ve got yourself some new bone-friends. (°ヮ°)“

You slap your palm to your face and groan in to your hand, earning a curious glance from Sans beside you.

**You:**

“That’s the first thing you have to say when you find out literal alternate universes exist? Really?”

**Squints:**

“You love me <3”

**You:**

“You’re lucky you were such a cute kid else I would totally come over there and kick your teenager ass.”

**Squints:**

“Aww I’m not cute now?”

**You:**

“As a kid, you had hair that covered almost all of your face. Now, we have to see so much more.”

**Squints:**

“So I’ll just grow my bangs out even more, then!”

**You:**

“Trust me, the ‘hair-covering nearly all of your face’ gig only works for child you. You would NOT be able to pull it off now.”

**Squints:**

“:( “

An elbow suddenly jabs in to your side, causing you jerk and nearly drop your phone in the grass below you. You shoot an annoyed leer at Sans but stop when you realize you’ve arrived in the clearing you’ve been walking towards. The clearing doesn’t hold much to it aside from a decent break in the tree cover, allowing you an unobstructed view of the sky above.
“now are we here?” Geno pipes up again, having already bumped in to Beast in front of him since he had stopped when you did.

“Looks like it,” you confirm, surveying the clearing and finding nothing of importance.

“fuckin’ finally. can we look up now?” Red grouses as he kicks at the dirt underneath his feet. You can tell by how fidgety some of them are getting that this might be physically hurting them.

“Just one second…”

You set down the mini-cooler and blankets you were carrying with one hand and turn off your flashlight, with the others following suit. There’s enough light cast by the moon that you can see moderately well now that your eyes are adjusted.

Not one to miss out on documenting a memorable occasion, you pull up the camera on your phone and start recording video as you turn around and aim at the skeletons behind you.

You give the go-ahead for them to look up. Without a moment’s hesitation, the skeletons that haven’t seen the stars before turn up towards the night sky, anticipation clear on their faces.

You watch their faces go slack with awe, eye lights dilating as they take in the majesty above you. Watch them go completely still, only having their eyes rapidly flicking all throughout the great canvas of twinkling gems above you. Watch as the sheer size of this singular universe and all it holds finally settles in their mind.

Watch that one wish that they’ve held on to no matter the hell they’ve endured come true right before your very eyes.

You love the stars just as much as the next person and you usually find yourself having profound conversations with whoever’s there with you during the night. A night out under the gas giant’s watchful gaze will, more often than not, lead to nights you won’t want to forget.

And yet, for you, this moment is even better than the stars above.

You’re certain that a few tears fell while they were standing there, but you’re kind enough to grant them the silence they need for this moment to last.

Switching the camera off, you lock eyes with Sans who has been standing beside you, watching as well. He seems almost… nostalgic when looking at them, as if he’s remembering his first time getting such a good look at the stars. He looks away towards you when you nudge him and give him a knowing look. You try and convey that this is the main reason you wanted to give them this view. How this is something they’ve wanted and looked forward to for their entire life. And, despite the convoluted means of getting here, you could actually provide them with it.

A warm, tingly feeling blooms in your chest as you stand there, gaze locked with his.

After moments of staring between you, he seems to understand what your meaning behind this trip is. His smile grows softer; hard ridges of bone smoothing out in to a smaller, yet much more affectionate smile. He nudges you forwards a little, holding out his telescope and motioning towards the blankets you set down.

You return his smile and start unfolding blankets as Sans begins his setup of his telescope.
You come to a stop as you’re flipping through one of the books Sans brought with him. You hold the flashlight you’ve turned on so that the rest of the book is visible.

“This one’s about 1P/Halley, or commonly known as Halley’s Comet. It’s apparently a short-period comet that’s seen around every three-fourths of a century.”

“Why does it usually show up around that time every time?”

“It says…” you trail off, only finding the answer shortly after. “The comet itself is orbiting around the sun due to its sheer amount of mass and gravity. And since the furthest distance away from the sun is not enough to escape its gravitational pull, Halley’s Comet will most likely orbit around the sun for the rest of recorded history.” You continue reading down the page. “Also, seems like the comet itself was one of the earliest successful tests of Newtonian physics and how it might come to explain things in the future. Because of that, they were able to determine the perihelion and aphelion and guess when the next appearance would occur.”

You receive a blank look and a sheepish laugh at your last explanation.

“Sorry, I’m not really in to all the science stuff that Sanses mostly are.”

You wave him off good naturedly and flip to a new page, looking for something interesting for someone with very limited knowledge of astronomy.

“You’re good, Dream. I’m not super in to it either, but I find it more entertaining to just watch them talk about it,” you say as you glance towards the cluster of skeletons huddled around the lone telescope. The ones that aren’t looking through the telescope now are talking excitedly with a book flipped to some indeterminant page that you can’t see from where you’re seated.

You recall a time where you managed to get Sans talking when you were both adequately buzzed. He had talked for over three hours, becoming increasingly drunk as the night went on, about the wonders of the stars and the theory behind black holes and wormhole transportation and everything you could possibly think of. He may have even talked after you passed out, not even realizing you had stopped listening to him well before that point. But one thing was for sure that night, he was incredibly cute to watch him go on about something he was passionate about.

Dream hums contentedly and shuffles around on the blanket you, him, and Blue have commandeered. Ink and Error are off doing their own things and, surprisingly, are not causing a scene. The former is sitting some distance away from you and facing towards the ones around the lone telescope. He looks like he’s sketching something but it’s too dark for you to tell. The latter’s taken perch on a tree at the edge of the clearing, look up at the glittering sky above. He’s a good tree climber, apparently.

“WILL WE BE ABLE TO SEE THAT COMET WHILE WE’RE HERE?” Blue asks from where he’s laying down, nasal ridge buried in another book.

“Hmm, I doubt it. Says here that the next appearance isn’t for several decades. I can guess with pretty good certainty that you guys will be gone by then.”

Blue doesn’t give any verbal recognition that he’s heard you at all as you arch a brow a bit at his lack of response. You glance at Dream and his own expression mirrors your own. What’s more, why hasn’t Blue even once joined the others to look through the telescope? Doesn’t he like the stars?

You call his name to catch his attention, but his eyes remain glued to the book he’s clutching. You
move over to tap at the book he’s holding before he jumps a good few inches off the ground before turning to face you.

“SORRY! WERE YOU SAYING SOMETHING?”

“I was only answering your question?”

“O-Oh! Right! That’s interesting!” Blue says a little bit too loudly. He flashes you an apologetic smile at your wince due to the change in volume before turning back to the book. *It doesn’t even look like he’s reading it…*

“Blue, are you okay?” Dream asks, hand reaching up to fiddle with the clasp of his cape. Took the words right out of my mouth.

“Of course I am! Why wouldn’t I be?”

“Then, if that’s the case, why don’t you go join the others over by the telescope? They’ll let you have a turn at it if you ask, I’m sure,” you say hesitantly, watching as Blue sits up while still face down in the book.

“No thank you. I am perfectly content in staying here and reading about Johannes Kepler’s laws of planetary motion,” he dismisses while he points out something he’s apparently reading. “Did you know that it consists of three laws that talk about orbits, areas, and periods? Talk about fascinating!”

You and Dream just sit there, watching as light blue translucent beads of sweat form on Blue’s skull. Should I humor him and go along with whatever he’s trying to pull? I really don’t like seeing him like this though…

Then again, are you really in any position to question him on behavior he doesn’t want to talk about? Sure, you may have lived with him for a small amount of time, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that he’ll unload his emotional burdens on you just like that.

With a sigh, you decide to turn back around and re-focus back on the book, Dream deciding to follow your lead for now. Another sigh escapes Blue behind you, as he shifts around to continue ‘reading.’

You sit up from the blanket and stretch your arms after what feels like an hour or so passes. Not bothering to check the time, you give a once over of everyone, making sure the headcount is still the same. All are accounted for as you begin to lay back down so you can resume your stargazing.

All of a sudden, Blue stands up from the position he hasn’t moved from the entire time.

“Well, this was fun! But I think I’m going to go back and go to bed.” He yawns theatrically and stretches before starting towards where you entered from.

“Oh, would you want me to walk back with you?” you call out to his retreating form. *So you don’t get lost like you did in the clothing warehouse?* Blue looks back at you and tries to smile reassuringly.

“Don’t worry, it’s just down this path and the house is only down the road from it!” Well, at least he remembers that much.
You frown at his back, worry bubbling in your chest, gnawing away at your conscience.

“I hope he’s okay…” Dream whispers from beside you. He looks about as conflicted you feel.

“Well, he said he’s fine, and I don’t think he’d appreciate it if we stuck our noses in his business,” You say, not quite believing your own words. “Still, I can’t help but worry.”

“I know the feeling,” Dream says while reluctantly laying back down. “He’d probably march us right back to the clearing if we went after him though…”

You let out a small chuckle at that, feeling your concern wane slowly. Blue can handle himself. That, you’re sure of.

Another half an hour to an hour passes in silence between you and Dream, each just enjoying the night. A gentle breeze picks up, carrying with it the smell of moisture in the air. The telltale sign for rain on the horizon. From your prone position, you can angle your head to the side and watch the wind make the individual blades of grass dance sluggishly. Its movements are slow and hypnotic, like a wave.

You’re comfortable enough that you could have nodded off right then and there.

“This is nice,” Dream says out of the blue. You hum in agreement before he continues. “I don’t know how long it’s been since I’ve just been able to sit down like this.”

“You must be busy all the time then, what with protecting alternate universes and all.”

“Well, I’m definitely not as powerful as say Ink or Error, but I like to lend a hand when I can,” Dream replies with a shrug.

“You don’t have to be modest about it, Dream. A job like that is no joke whatsoever. With how Ink and Error get along, I’m amazed at your patience.”

Dream lets out a little laugh, gaze still upward and a soft amber burning on his cheeks. You resist the urge to pinch them… but only barely. To help bolster your self-control, you continue.

“I’m serious, Dream. What you do is beyond commendable and amazing. There’s no limit to how many people you’ve helped without their knowledge.” Your roll over to catch his eye and look at him fully. “A thankless job that could very well put you in mortal danger is not something to be taken lightly.”

The color on his cheeks slowly spreads and burns brighter the longer you keep talking. Dream slowly tries to shy away, seemingly embarrassed by the praise you’re giving him.

“I-it’s not that big of a deal, really,” he tries to argue. But you’re not having any of that down playing.

“But it is!” You say, sitting up. “How can you be so humble about something like that? You’ve saved so many people, how can you not be proud of it?”

Dream turns away suddenly, back up to the sky. One of his hands slowly comes up to rest on the marble on his collar bone. A faraway look of guilt and remorse quickly replaces the embarrassment on his face.

“But…” he takes a deep breath before forcing out something barely audible. “because I couldn’t save who was important…”
What feels like a stone is dropped in to your gut at the sudden tone shift. *I've said the wrong thing. To him. Again. Fuck.*

Dream’s refusing to look at you, gaze now locked up to the sky, parallel to how Blue was acting earlier. He looks almost afraid. *But of what exactly?*

You stop gaping like a fish out of water and try and backpedal your way out of there. *This was supposed to be relaxing, dammit!*

“I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have pushed it so hard.”

Before you could say more, Dream surprises you by shaking his head and hesitantly meeting your eye for a brief moment. There’s a small, infinitely sad smile there that you wish you could remove.

“No, it’s okay. You didn’t know, after all.” He takes a breath again and elaborates. “It’s… something I have to live with. And I’m still having trouble coming to terms with it.”

You’ll sound like a hypocrite if you try and push for anything more out of him.

Looking at him now, you can see just how tired he looks. It’s not that he had profound eyebags like some of the others, but it comes from his eyes. Those small discs of light convey more emotion than you would have thought possible. It reminds you of a flickering light fighting to keep the shadows around it at bay.

“Okay,” you say, understanding that the topic is not up for discussion until he’s willing.

Instead of continuing a forced conversation, you lay back down beside him and stay silent. You feel around blindly for a moment, before finding Dream’s hand. You wrap your hand slowly around the warm bone, allowing him time to pull away if he so chooses.

He doesn’t.

When you fully lace your hand with his and give a little squeeze, he responds with one of his own. An emotion of gratitude conveyed in just a simple gesture.

You may not be the best at comforting people, but if it helps him enjoy his time here, then you’ll hold on to him for the rest of the night.

Chapter End Notes

I actually ended writing so much that I'm splitting this trip in to two (though this is a good three fourths of it).

Let me know how you guys like the chapter as always! Comments saying Kudos, Critiques, anything! I love reading it all!

Also, SERIOUS REQUEST: I'd love to hear to some suggestions or scenarios regarding the group if you have any! I'm always open to new ideas, so please chuck them at me if you have any that you'd want me to write about!

((Also, the cookie bit was from some Tumblr asks from wispersofthewriter and I thought it was too good to pass up! Come check out my Tumblr to send some asks or
something!!)
You rouse leisurely, blinking away the crusty sleep from your eyes bit by bit. For a second, you’re caught off guard at finding your vision filled with countless stars only to have your muscles relax slowly again.

You’re still out in the clearing but based on the moon’s new position in the sky, several hours must have passed since you were last awake. Pulling out your phone to check the time turns out to be a more difficult job than you imagined; one of your hands is still braced tightly in the snoozing skeleton’s own beside you.

A dopey grin easily works itself up on to your face seeing how much more relaxed Dream looks while he’s asleep. That doesn’t just work for him, either. While it sounds creepy, getting a good look at someone while they’re sleeping reveals such a more truthful face than the one that they wear while they’re awake.

The others are generally still in their same position as before, indicating that maybe it hasn’t been too terribly long since you passed out. With that in mind, you’re finally able to bring up your phone, the light dazzling you for a brief period before you can read the time on the home screen.

1:27 AM

Your hunch was proven to be correct, so you set your phone down on your chest and stretch as much as you can while not jostling your blanket-mate. You ponder getting up and leaving Dream be for the rest of the night, but decide against it, since you don’t feel all that up to walking around at the moment. Maybe I can just try and go back to sleep? …actually that sounds like a wonderful idea.

The sweatpants and jacket you brought along for this excursion have proven its worth in keeping you as snug as can be. It leaves you pleasantly warm and a little drowsy, like freshly dried clothes that you’d much rather just lie in than fold. Your eyes drift closed again, breathing deeply.

…
If only it were that easy.

The stupid light from your stupid phone has sufficiently woken up your brain once more, as it sputters in to gear despite you willing it not to. Groaning to yourself, you pull out your phone again to keep your brain occupied. Stars are nice and all, but you’d prefer something more stimulating so you don’t end up getting fidgety twenty minutes later. Idly flipping through your apps, your eyes land on your photo application. You immediately crack a smile again while remembering earlier this evening. *Watching their faces light up with joy it is!*

Since you haven’t taken any photos or videos since earlier today, it’s readily available (along with the selfie) right at your fingertips. You don’t hesitate in pressing play and watching the scene unfold again, smiling as you pass over each and every face looking upwards.

After watching the video once or twice more, you freeze when your eyes catch something out of the ordinary in the shot.

What’s…?

Dread mounts on top of you as the video replays again, confirming that you did not, in fact, make it up in your head. Hiding behind the frames of the others—hence why you didn’t catch it until now—lies a set of familiar baby blue eyelights.

And they’re looking down.

What’s he doing…?

Suddenly, the eerie quiet that accompanied you and your housemates for the walk to the clearing makes much more sense. You brushed it off as the anticipatory air making you more aware of surroundings. Along with how Blue’s acted since you’ve arrived could all correlate to something holding him back from enjoying himself to the fullest.

You clench your fist around your phone feeling emotions surge through you that all pass by too quickly before you can fully address them. The emotion that rises from the rest is the regret of not pushing harder in cheering him up if only a little. He would’ve no doubt tried to do that to you too. *Great. Way to be a shitty friend, me.*

As you continue to beat yourself up, movement out the corner of your eye catches your attention, forcing yourself to stop the pity party. There’s a rustle of clothes as you realize that you’ve woken up your blanket partner with just your negative aura alone. *Wonderful.*

You watch as Dream sluggishly sits up, sleepily rubbing one of his sockets with a part of his sun cape. He then proceeds to yawn openly, revealing to you a profile view of a fine set of canines and magically produced yellow tongue. You bite your lip to silence the affectionate gushing that would no doubt spew out your mouth. *He is, in every shape and form, adorable. No one can convince me otherwise.*

Neither of you have let go of each other yet.

Opening his eyes and finding you’re awake beside him, he calls your name.

“Are you okay?” is the first thing out of his mouth.

“Good morning to you too, sunshine,” you say half-jokingly. He frowns at your deflection but chooses not to comment on it.
“How long was I asleep?” Dream chooses to say instead.

“A few hours, not long,” you reply while your eyes roam towards your other companions. “Doesn’t look like they’re even remotely ready to go yet.”

“Oh.”

You check your phone to confirm the time with him but realize that your phone never locked itself. On the screen is the video still as it plays out one of the happiest memories for some of the skeletons. Any lift in your mood from talking with Dream immediately plummets back to where it was before.

Noticing your change in demeanor, Dream shifts closer to you to look at your phone, inferring that that’s what’s bothering you.

“Is that a video of before?”

“Yeah…” you say with a calm sigh. For some reason, you feel your chest get warmer at the proximity. *Sure, he’s got his own body heat, that doesn’t fully explain it. Not that I can complain; it feels… so nice.*

“Where’s Blue in the video? I don’t see him…” Dream asks, jolting you from whatever daydream you were having. You inwardly cringe in dismay at the accidental pun. You’ll have to ask him later as to how many times he’s heard it before. Turning your attention back to your phone, you answer Dream.

“I was too busy watching everyone else to notice that he wasn’t all that visible in the shot.” You point with one of your fingers that’s holding the phone towards the back of the video. “He’s actually hiding behind everyone right there.”

You rewind the video to the beginning for him and watch as Dream’s browbones furrow in confusion.

“He’s… not looking up?”

“Exactly.”

“Why?”

You shrug while feeling that worry worm its way to the forefront of your mind again. “Your guess is as good as mine. It’s probably why he didn’t want to go join the other Sanses at the telescope, though.”

Dream makes a noise of confusion as he goes quiet again, seemingly thinking hard.

“My first thought was agoraphobia, but Blue’s demeanor just doesn’t match with that at all.” You grip Dream’s hand a little tighter. “Plus, he wasn’t fazed when going out in the open either, so that just can’t be it.”

“Maybe…” Dream mumbles to himself, looking off in to middle distance. You both sit there, hands locked together, in contemplative silence. “Maybe you should go and talk to him about it?” he says after a few minutes. You have to grimace at the idea.

“We tried that already, didn’t we? He didn’t seem like he was ready to talk.”

Dream shakes his head, smiling with gentle encouragement.
“Maybe so. But why don’t you try talking to him one-on-one about it? He may be more receptive then.”

“Why me? Why couldn’t you go talk to him?” you say dubiously. It’s not like the idea is bad or anything, but you just can’t get over the fear of saying the wrong thing. You’ve done it so many times in your life and it’s led to disastrous situations more times than you can count.

Before your mind can come up with the worst possible scenario, Dream surprises you by taking his other hand and clasping it over your already joined ones. Your hand is bound to be gross and sweaty by this point, but he doesn’t seem to be paying that any mind. He raises his hands until they’re eye level between you. There’s an equally earnest and supportive beam spread across Dream’s face as he squeezes your hand.

“Because I believe you can.”

Those words alone throw you off kilter as he continues. “That’s all you can really hope for, right? Definites are few and far between, but belief in yourself and in others can make all the difference between a night you want to remember and a night you wish to forget.”

You and Dream just stare at each other, his face unwavering. You’re struck silent by his words, unable to get your voice to work. He sounds completely sincere and you swear you can even see the belief radiating off of him.

A surge of determination rushes through you at his words and you have to return his smile in some way. Dream’s shoulders sag slightly as he closes his eyes in relief while still being ultimately happy in your silent acceptance of his words.

Riding off that surge of bravery, you bring your other hand around to gently cup his cheek. His sockets immediately blow wide at the soft touch.

“Thank you, Dream.” You glide your thumb gently over the smooth bone surface. It’s like you’re brushing your hand against sun-warmed ceramic. You’re rewarded with that bright amber blush again. Containing yourself so that you don’t embarrass him, you continue. “That means a lot coming from someone I’ve only known for a few days.” You close your eyes and take a deep breath. “And I believe your belief, as stupid as that sounds. You’re too kind, really.”

“I-it’s what I do,” Dream exhales, lights still staring back at you.

Taking a few moments to compose yourself and decide on a plan, you finally break contact as you two fully separate.

“Well,” you say, hauling yourself and the mini-cooler that’s gone unused upwards and in to a standing position. “I’m going to head back though. I have classes tomorrow and I doubt Blue hasn’t made it back to the house and already sleeping. I’ll try and talk to him tomorrow.”

“That’s fine,” Dream replies. “You don’t have to rush yourself.”

You shake your head.

“I should do it as soon as I can. Even though you guys may be here for a while, this doesn’t feel like it should wait for long at all.”

Dream just smiles in recognition. You motion for him towards the path.

“Are you ready to go, too?” you ask. Dream contemplates for a second but doesn’t move from his
place on the blanket you rolled out.

“No, I should probably stay just in case something happens between Ink and Error,” he says with a lopsided smile. You arch a brow.

“While the attitude is commendable, it’s not your job to make sure they behave.” That’s actually kind of Beast and I’s job right now. And I’ve done next to nothing to uphold my end of the deal. I’m really, really gonna have to make it up to Beast later.

“Still,” Dream responds, “I don’t mind staying here for a little while longer to watch them.” He makes a see-saw motion with his now free hands. “I also kind of feel responsible for them. Plus, It doesn’t hurt to be too careful.”

He doesn’t seem to be budging in his stance, so you just sigh in defeat. He automatically assumed that hefty role even when he was here to relax. Where does your job end and your life begin, Dream?

The said skeleton looks surprised for some reason and cocks his head in slight confusion.

“What do you mean?” he says. It takes you a moment to realize you said that last bit out loud. Shit.

“S-something to think about, I guess,” you say hastily, trying to make it look like you intentionally said it aloud. Suave as always.

“Okay?”

“Anyway!” you say, turning towards the entrance of the clearing and starting to walk. “I’ll see you tomorrow and let you know how it goes.”

“Of course! Get some sleep!” Dream says cheerily.

“Don’t let them stay out too late! I expect them back by dawn at the latest!” you call back to him, like an overprotective dad. He just laughs as you exit the clearing.

Not before you cast a glance backwards, watching the genuine happiness ooze out of the smiles of everyone you can see in the clearing.

*All in all, this was a good idea.*

*All in all, this was a very, very bad idea.*

You really should’ve seen this coming.

Being in a relatively good mood. Walking in the woods. By yourself. In the middle of the fucking night.

Anyone could’ve told you that it was a recipe for a disaster. And it damn well might turn to that, depending on how these next couple of minutes go.

You’d just about made it to the end of the forest before you froze in your tracks at the sight in front of you. In the path leaning on a tree, sits a figure that has its back to you, muttering low enough that
you can’t make out what they’re saying.

Your heart had started hammering in your chest and ears at the first sight of the figure, drowning out the rest of the natural night-life ambiance with its terror-stricken beating. *This is a classic horror movie trope and I didn’t even think to realize what the hell I was walking in to! Stars, I can be thick-headed!*

Flashlight immediately switched off so that you don’t signal to the person that you’re there, you debate just backing up and booking it back to the clearing for backup. You very, very deliberately set down the mini-cooler as to not have it be dead weight that you have to carry while running for your life. *But if I’m going to die here, there’s no chance in hell that I’m not going down without a fight.* You clench your fists in anxiety-riddled anticipation as you begin to your first step backward to get yourself out of dodge, keeping your eyes locked on the figure for movement.

Just then, even through your hammering heart, you pick up on a snippet on what’s coming from the figure.

“-Are You Doing Right Now?” They pause, as if waiting for response that doesn’t come. You can feel your eyes widen as you recognize the voice. “I Hope You’re Not Slacking Off On Your Duties While I’m Away…”

Without a second thought, you whip out your phone’s flashlight again and shine it towards the figure while calling out.

“Blue? Is that you?”

As the light lands on the figure in question, he jumps a good foot in to the air and snaps towards you, lights extinguished and a bone suddenly materializing in one of his gloved hands. Upon realizing the figure behind the glaring light, he dismisses the bone and his lights turn back on.

“Y-Y/N! YOU SHOULD KNOW NOT TO STALK AROUND THE FORST LATE AT NIGHT!”

At the confirmation that you are not getting murdered tonight, your knees almost buckle as relief sweeps over you. Now, you can feel embarrassment creep up your cheeks at your immediate belief of the worst possible scenario.

“I should say the same to you, Blue. You were literally sitting in the forest path. Alone.” *And not to mention talking to yourself.* “I thought you went back hours ago?” Blue flinches at the question, eyes darting back and forth.

“Y-YES, I WAS. I WAS JUST… LOST! YES, LOST! I HAD FORGOTTEN A FLASHLIGHT AND LOST MY WAY!” You frown at his poor attempts to lie his way out this, but you learned from the last time. You’re not giving him a pass this time.

“LIE?! NEVER!” He makes an obvious to study the path from where your light is shining on it and following the trail past him towards the exit. “THOUGH NOW THAT I KNOW WHERE I SHOULD BE HEADING, I SHALL BE ABLE TO MAKE IT BACK WITHOUT ANY FURTHER INTERRUPTIONS.” He turns his back to you and starts to walk ahead without you. “THANK YOU AND GOOD NIGHT, Y/N!”
“Blue,” you call out to him. “please wait.”

He thankfully stops, and when he turns towards you, you can see his face has morphed in to a strained mess. He looks ready to burst in to tears, collapse in exhaustion, and yell at the top of his ‘lungs’ all at the same time.

“What is it?”

You take a deep breath to calm yourself as you look at him, a small frown playing at the edges of your lips.

“Can we talk for a little bit?”

“Can it wait until tomorrow? I’m very tired, as I said, and wandering around lost in the woods for hours does not help that,” he replies while not looking you in the eye.

“I was planning on talking to you about it tomorrow anyway-“

“Good, then it’s settled-“

“But, I don’t think this should wait. And we’re in a place where it’ll be just us, which is ideal.”

He hesitates for longer than needed and when you’re certain he’s going to decline, he deflates like all the air has left him.

“Alright. What did you want to talk about?”

You shake your head and pick up the cooler at your feet again.

“Let’s head towards the exit and talk so you don’t get ‘lost’ again.” You close the distance between you and him and stop before him to wait for his agreement. He just nods and allows you to take the lead.

“Sandwich?” you offer to Blue as you sit down, facing the woods upon Blue’s unspoken insistence. You had dug around in the cooler and found the few lunch meat sandwiches you packed just in case. Blue eyes the sandwich, inspecting it.

“While I don’t usually approve of late night eating, I will make this an exception due to us being out and about so late,” he says as he takes the food from you with a ‘Thank you.’ You dig around for another and take a bite once you do, nodding in approval that it had stayed cold for this long.

There’s an air of awkwardness clinging to the both of you, leaving an unwanted taste in your mouth that mars the taste of the meat. You buy yourself time by savoring the decent sandwich despite the feeling, thinking of the best way to get to the root of the problem while not being insensitive.

All too soon, your sandwich is gone.

Fumbling around, you reach in to the cooler for a water bottle and sip at it, desperately stalling for more time.
You cast a glance at Blue. He’s currently picking at the sandwich with one hand with the other resting on his bandana. He looks like he wants to be anywhere else but here.

Do you just cut to the chase and risk scaring him off? Or do you take your time and potentially dance around the subject for too long?

…

You sip at the water bottle.

…

Blue nibbles the sandwich.

…

 Fuck it.

“Look, I know you don’t want to be here, but I’d like to talk about tonight.”

Blue turns to look at you, expression carefully neutral.

“ALRIGHT, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT? I DID ENJOY THE NIGHT, IF THAT’S WHAT YOU’RE ASKING.”

“Now that’s a pretty big exaggeration.” Blue flinches but arches a browbone in question.

“IT’S TRUE! SPENDING TIME WITH YOU AND DREAM WAS ENJOYABLE! WHAT KIND OF FRIEND WOULD I BE IF I DIDN’T ENJOY YOUR COMPANY?”

“That’s not what I mean, and you know it.”

“THEN I’M AFRAID I DON’T KNOW WHAT YOU’RE TALKING ABOUT.”

It hurts to hear him hedge around the subject like this, so you bite the bullet and pull out your phone to show him the video you captured. You point out where he is as it begins playing.

“I don’t know how I didn’t notice before, but you’re all the way towards the back, barely in frame.”

Sweat is already accumulating around his skull, as he watches the video and silence. You continue as the video replays and finishes again.

“You haven’t seen the stars before, have you?” you want to know.

“N-NO. THE CRYSTALS IN WATERFALL ARE SAID ONLY TO BE A CRUDE
IMITATION OF THEM.”

“Then why haven’t you tried to look at them now that you’re here?”

“…” Blue remains silent, eyes darting away and in to the woods, looking for refuge from your gaze. The hand in his bandana clenches.

He doesn’t come up with an adequate explanation in time, and you’ve had it with his uncooperative responses.

“Blue, even in this crummy shot of you, you look so sad, lonely even. All that I’m asking you is why? Why are you stopping yourself from enjoying this to its fullest?”

“…”

You sigh in resignation; you really wish you didn’t have to pull this card on him. “We’re still friends, aren’t we Blue?”

He whirls towards you again, shocked at your question.

“If we are, all I’m asking of you is to tell me what’s bothering you. Please. I want to help.”

You half-expect Blue to just get up and walk back to the house. Or be upset with you for pushing harder for the second time.

Yet he still just sits there next to you, one hand with a death grip on his bandana and another crushing the life out of the corner of this sandwich.

Blue stares at the ground now, conflicted in whatever’s weighing on his mind. As the silence stretches on, you try and hold out hope.

“It’s…” he begins hesitantly. “It’s a lot more ridiculous now that I’m saying it out loud.”

You try and give your most encouraging smile.

“It’s alright, take your time.” You reach over and put your hand on Blue’s that’s still holding the sandwich. “I believe in you.”

A light dusting of a blush works its way on to Blue’s zygomatic arches. He offers you a sheepish smile and turns while taking a large breath. Before starting, he takes the time to roam over the columns of trees before him, organizing his thoughts.

“Papy and I visited the wishing room in waterfall for the first time when we were much younger. I remember that I still had to carry him all the way out there,” Blue says, already wistful. “I hadn’t been spending as much time with him lately because I had to get food for the both of us somehow.”

He pauses then, searching for the words and finishing off the rest of his now brutally manhandled sandwich.

“Did you have to raise Papyrus by yourself?” you have to ask. Blue snorts at the question like he expected it.

“For the most part, yes. Does it surprise you that I’m the older
BROTHER?” he says with a bitter undertone that he couldn’t have hidden even if he tried. You hold up your hands in an attempt to pacify, shaking your head.

“Not really, honestly. You naturally take charge and lead the group, taking the responsibility along with it. Also, you’re caring and very observant like any big brother is. Why should it surprise me?”

“BECAUSE IT APPARENTLY SURPRISES MANY PEOPLE BACK IN SNOWDIN. PLUS, IT’S EVIDENT IN HOW THE OTHER SANSES TREAT ME LIKE I’M THE ONE THAT NEEDS PROTECTING.” You’re inclined to agree with that logic. The reset talk you had a few nights ago goes along with his observations pretty well. They were going to try and shut him out of knowing if you hadn’t had vouched for him. Or slightly threaten. Same thing.

“You’ve had to deal with that a lot, haven’t you?” you say with a sympathetic grimace.

“MUCH TOO OFTEN, IF YOU ASK ME,” Blue says with an unamused huff.

The silence falls again as you patiently wait for him to continue after that tangent. Blue maintains a concentrated stare in to the woods, silent and almost overwhelmingly serious.

As you’ve come to know Blue, even for as little you have, his usually bubbly demeanor becomes harder and harder to decipher. It’s obvious now that that he’s been through his own rough patches and have had to grow up faster than what should have been demanded from him. He also has a surprisingly calculative side that shines through whenever he needs to either make a case or make snap decisions. Is that cheeriness all an act…?

…

You dismiss that thought quickly. He always looks so genuine whenever he expresses concern or enjoyment, you doubt that it could ever be fake. Additionally, while you’re not the face reading master—that title belongs to Sans—you’d like to think you’d be able to notice the forced emotions.

You can feel a thread of guilt work up your spine as you slowly figure out why his less than happy mood is throwing you so much. Subconsciously, you’ve started to just expect it from him. Expect him to be bright and chipper despite his own personal problems like he just doesn’t have them. That’s a terrible way to view anyone, what the hell, me?

“AS I WAS SAYING, I WAS AWESTRUCK AT THE SIGHT! I’D NEVER SEEN SO MANY OF THE SPARKLING CRYSTALS IN ONE PLACE! I DON’T KNOW HOW LONG WE BOTH SAT THERE, STARING UP TO THE CEILING,” Blue recounts with a nostalgic gleam in his lights.

“PAPY WAS ASLEEP THE WHOLE WAY THROUGH BUT WOKE UP RIGHT WHEN WE WERE ARRIVING AT THE WISHING ROOM. AND WHEN HE DID, STARS, IT WAS JUST AS FUN WATCHING HIS ENTIRE LITTLE SKULL LIGHT UP AT THE SIGHT OF THEM ALL! THAT LITTLE ORANGE BLUSH HE USED TO GET WHEN HE LOOKS AT SOMETHING HE LIKES IS ONE MY FAVORITE THINGS!”

“Oh my god, that sounds absolutely adorable,” you gush, cupping your own cheeks. Blue emphatically nods in agreement, little stars of his own forming in his sockets. Speaking of adorable: the older brother fawning over something their little bro did when they were so young. Both equally adorable in my books.

“IT WAS! I’M GLAD HE ENJOYED THAT ROOM AS MUCH AS I DID!” Blue relaxes and slumps a bit while continuing the story. “SEVERAL HOURS MUST HAVE PASSED BEFORE
PAPY HAD FALLEN ASLEEP AGAIN. I REMEMBER… I REMEMBER MAKING A SORT OF PROMISE TO HIM THEN.”

You nod along with his words, mind filling in the few blanks left. You stay silent to let him finish, however.

“I HAD SAID THAT WHENEVER THE BARRIER IS BROKEN AND WHEN WE SEE THE STARS FOR THE FIRST TIME, I WANTED IT TO BE WITH HIM. I HAD WANTED TO SEE THAT ORANGE BLUSH AGAIN AFTER SO LONG! AND NOW…”

Blue tilts his skull upwards at the tree canopy above him, guilt stricken.

“AND NOW, BEING HERE WITHOUT HIM, I CAN’T HELP BUT FEEL SO OVERWHELMINGLY GUILTY. WHILE YES, ME BEING HERE IS AN INCONVENIENCE OF SORTS, I STILL GET TO EXPERIENCE WHAT THE SURFACE IS LIKE FIRSTHAND. AND IT’S BEEN PHENOMENAL! I GOT TO SEE THE SUN AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS LIKE YOU! BUT… BUT PAPY IS STILL DOWN THERE… Alone.

A-AND HE’S SO UNBELIEVABLY LAZY THAT I CONSTANTLY HAVE TO WATCH OVER HIM TO MAKE SURE HE EATS PROPERLY OR GOES TO WORK ON TIME. AND NOW… HE JUST DOESN’T HAVE THAT. I CAN’T HELP BUT WORRY NOW THAT I’M GOING TO BE AWAY FOR SO LONG! SO, I THOUGHT THAT I COULD MAKE IT UP TO HIM IN SOME KIND OF WAY, AT LEAST. STILL, IT DOESN’T FEEL LIKE ITS ENOUGH,” he says while burying both of his hands in to his bandana around his neck. You take some time after he finishes to mull over what he said.

“That’s… really noble of you, Blue, for trying to stick to that promise even though he most likely doesn’t remember anything like that.”

Blue nods as he closes his eyes, emotions flying over his skull.

“But, I don’t think you’re going about it the right way.”

At that, Blue looks over at you, a question on his face.

“What I mean is, depriving yourself of some enjoyment while you’re here doesn’t do anything to fix or address the problem. It just creates more pain for you while you’re painfully reminded each time you step out at night that your brother isn’t here with you.”

“THEN WHAT SHOULD I DO THEN?”

“Maybe you should… you say, racking your brain,” maybe you should try taking photographs or collecting knick-knacks while you’re here so you can show it to him once you’re back? That way, you can have something physical to show him of the surface and you’re able to have mementos of your time here. He’d probably appreciate that more rather than you refusing to look at the stars in solidarity. Plus, it’s something from the surface that’s not from our garbage,” you offer lightly, hoping this is the right direction for the conversation to turn to.

“THAT JUST MAKES IT LOOK LIKE I COMPLETELY FORGOT HIM WHILE I WAS HERE,” Blue points out with a frown.

“I don’t think that’d be the case,” you counter with a thoughtful look. “You of all people would know that Papyrus would never think you forgot about him. He’d probably be overjoyed just at the fact that you had such a memorable time while you were here.”
Blue slumps again at your words after a moment of consideration.

“YOU’RE… PROBABLY RIGHT. PAPY WOULD NEVER WANT TO SEE ME MOPING ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE THIS. IN FACT, THIS SHOULDN’T EVEN FAZE THE MAGNIFICENT SANS!” Blue says with a half-hearted clap to his chest and a squaring of his shoulders. You can easily tell that there was no fire or passion in his proclamation. He looks down immediately after, voice quiet. “I Just… I Miss Him So Much Already.”

You reach out and place your hand on his clavicle, offering your physical support.

“I bet you do,” you say with a gentle squeeze.

“D-DO YOU HAVE SOMEONE LIKE THAT?” Blue says after a minute or two.

“Like what?”

“SOMEONE THAT NEVER FULLY LEAVES YOUR THOUGHTS, EVEN WHEN YOU’RE AWAY FROM EACH OTHER. SOMEONE THAT YOU’D WANT TO KEEP THOSE SILLY PROMISES FOR, JUST FOR THE SAKE OF THEM.”

Now it’s your turn to look up at the canopy, a pang of longing hitting you immediately.

“I...” you trail off and take a deep breath before exhaling again to steady your nerves. “I did.”

“Y-YOU... DI- OH. OH! OH MY STARS I’M SO SORRY FOR BRINGING IT UP!” Blue frets, backpedaling and apologizing profusely even though he had no idea that your answer would take that turn.

“No, no, it’s not that bad, Blue. They’re still alive… at least I hope they are,” you mutter quietly to yourself.

“T-THEN YOU HAVEN’T…?”

“I haven’t seen them in so many years. And I don’t have any way of contacting them at all. Before they left, I didn’t have a phone.” You offer Blue a sad smile. You turn back towards the trees. “I just hope that, wherever they are, they’re happy.”

Blue looks at you, sadness and sympathy lingering on his features.

“But I do have one thing that’s going for me,” you say with a determined strength to your voice. “Once I get out of here, I will look for them. If it’s the last thing I do.”

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, as it turns out, my headcanons for Blue makes him a lot more serious when he needs to be. (Plus I think he's still the big brother!) A lot more mature than what most portray him as. Let me know your thoughts on how I wrote him!

I was halfway through with this chapter weeks ago but the last conversation just blocked me at every turn! Ah well, at least it's out now. And, for those on Tumblr, the conversation with Blue was the 'big' planned point for this chapter! But then Dream decided to be a chapter hog and take up a whole chapter of his own too. Oh well, I can't
be mad at him for being such an adorable bean.

Let me know how you guys liked the chapter! Don't be afraid to point out mistakes or critiques, too. Any comments or kudos are greatly appreciated.

And don't forget, I'm always taking ideas for new chapters! Let me know either in a comment or on Tumblr if you have any ideas!

Speaking of Tumblr, click here to come to my page! I reblog a lot of Undertale art/memes as well as post sneak peeks of the coming chapter while they're in development. Hit me up for a chat or ask or something. I'm always willing to talk to people!
Rain, Rain, Come This Way (Part One)

Chapter Summary

Those overcast skies weren’t just for show. As the other skeletons are preoccupied with the world around you, maybe you can relax for a little bit?

Chapter Notes

Yes, I know it’s been a long while. No, I’m not losing motivation. I’ll give more of an explanation in the end notes, so enjoy the chapter! You guys were patiently waiting for so long, I had to get something to you guys before something else happens to me.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

With headphones in, you glance back up the sky again. Still grey and overcast as it’s been during the daytime as usual. Though this time there’s the intermittent gust of wind that carries just a bit too much moisture for only a humid day. Your fingers tighten around the handle of your little personal umbrella in a silent plea to let the onslaught wait until you’re safe under a snug blanket and some tea.

Usually, rainy days are your favorite kind of day. Where you can just slip on some boots and a rain jacket and listen to the droplets crash against the surfaces around you up close.

But now, you’re just tired. You were up until the dead of night stargazing and just talking to your new housemates when you’re supposed to be sleeping will do that to you. Classes end much later for you today and you had work immediately once you got out. Effectively adding the cherry on top to a shit-flavored cupcake. Though you can’t say you didn’t see this coming. Neither can I say that I regret it.

Last night replays in your mind and a grin erupts on your face even if you wanted to stop it. Hopefully that was a night for most of them that they won’t forget as long as they live. What’s more, Blue finally looked up at the night sky after some more verbal encouragement from you. And that’s how you ended up spending another hour just sitting there with him as he went on asking questions or enthusing about what he saw.

A brisk dot of moisture splashes on to your forehead, snapping your attention back to reality. Shit. I really, really don’t want to get soaked and be forced to change. You pick up the pace as you power walk down the sidewalk, eager to get inside. You remind yourself of a little kid that’s been scolded for running around a pool one too many times and still hasn’t learned their lesson.

Only a few fat, threatening drops fall as you round the final bend towards the house. What greets your eyes as you get a full view of the outside makes you forget a little of the anxiousness you had. Blue and some of the others have gathered around the front patio, buzzing with restless energy. Once you’ve made your way further towards the house, you can finally glean what they’re talking about.

“I’M TELLING YOU, I FELT IT!” Blue says with a huff of irritation.
“sure you did, baby blue,” Red dismisses, a phalange scratching at his nasal ridge.

“I HAVE SAID THIS BEFORE, BUT PLEASE DO NOT CALL ME THAT!”

Red just snorts and rolls his eyes at him.

“the sky’s been like this during the day a lot for as long as we’ve been here. you sure you felt it?” Geno asks, skepticism plain on his face, even from your distance.

“OF COURSE I’M SURE!” Blue says one too many times, frustration building up in his voice.

“though haven’t you guys smelled it? there’s a lot of moisture in the air,” Beast says, lifting his skull up to the sky. “smells like waterfall. ’t’s different than the past few days. kinda like how it was last night too… but with more clouds.”

You’ve almost made it to directly in front of the house before Beast turns in your direction abruptly, signaling your approach to the others.

“welcome back, kiddo. school kick your ass?” Beast says with a wink. The extended look you send him while you’re trudging up to the house has him chuckling.

“And work punched me in the face,” you say, taking out your headphones. “But what else is new.”

“you look like yer ready to keel over, sweetheart,” Red astutely observes, shoving his hands in to the pockets of his jacket and grinning at you. Somehow, his golden tooth manages to glint in to your eyes despite the cloudy weather. What’s more, you get the feeling he’s making fun of you, but you frankly couldn’t care less.

“Nah,” you stretch your back to the best of your ability while heaving a tired sigh. “I’ve still got a few hours left in me. Plus, ‘ve got a few things I need to get done.”

“PERHAPS YOU SHOULD REST BEFORE YOU START THOSE THINGS?” Blue says. While it was phrased like a question, his forceful tone turns it in to a sort of command.

“While that would be the ideal situation, I don’t have the luxury to go take a nap right now,” you say with a shake of your head. “Unlike some other skeleton freeloaders I know,” you add with a half smirk.

“s’not like we were asked to be put in the situation, y’know,” Geno interjects. He’s looking you square in the face, gaze unwavering, waiting your response. You can feel the hairs on the back of your neck rise while your skin starts to prickle. You blink at him, befuddled and lost for words. What the heck; hostility levels are off the charts here. It was obviously a joke and either you can’t take one, or you’re purposefully doing this to make me uncomfortable. Either way, I don’t need this right now. The others seem to have noticed the sudden spark between you two, as they wait for your response. The moment drifts on just long enough to be considered awkward. You could say a lot of things back to him that would only escalate that spark in to a fully-fledged forest fire, but you decide to just snuff it out before it gets anywhere.

“Well, neither was I, but that’s neither here nor there,” you say, hiking up your backpack a little and stuffing your umbrella in one of the outside pockets while shouldering your way past the skeletons. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’m going inside before it starts to rain.”

That incidental segue jumpstarts the conversation anew, mood going back to light, easy topics.

“AHA! SO IT IS GOING TO RAIN!” Blue pumps a fist in to the air in triumph.
Red grunts and looks away, mood souring like a grapefruit. “yeah, yeah, you don’t have to say ‘i told you so.'”

You can feel an involuntary tugging at your lips as you open the door to the house. Before you fully close the door behind, you remember something important and turn back around.

“If you’re going to be outside in the rain, for the love of god, get out a change of clothes and put it up the on first floor so you’re not walking around the house dripping wet. I am not mopping up the entrance because you squatters decided to be lazy,” you say while look Beast, Red, and Geno square in the eye, daring them to challenge you on it.

“DO NOT WORRY, HUMAN! I WILL MAKE SURE THEY GO IN AND NOT INCONVENIENCE OUR GENEROUS HOSTS WHO OPENED THE DOORS TO THEIR HOME IN THIS UNFORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCE,” Blue assures, placing his hands on his hips, ready to guilt trip the others in to cooperation.

You look at Blue again for a brief moment, surveying him. He looks like he’s ready to run a marathon; fresh and limber. There’s also just a general aura of energy there that wasn’t present last night. His thoughts about his brother that were plaguing him seem to be gone, at least for the time being. But now, he’s able to live in the moment and you’re more than glad that you were able to help.

With a nod and a smile of gratitude, you close the front door.

The timing of you heading indoors couldn’t have been done any better. Just when you set your bookbag down in your still messy bedroom, the pattering of rain began its song above you on the roof. Not long after that, you could hear shouting even over the cadence of the rain. Knowing who it was, you pull up the blinds—which is something you never do; the sun can go fuck itself and stay outside where it belongs—to get a view of the activity outside.

The rain itself was falling at a steady pace, blanketing the ground one drop at a time. You’ll have to check the forecast later about how many inches you’ll be getting; this was a downfall that’s been building for the past couple of days after all.

Blue’s running excitedly up and down the street, arms outstretched, laughing joyously as the rain falls on him. He streaks past the house again, splashing water on to him and the other two standing at the edge of the driveway. Red and Beast were silent, maybe even awestruck, watching the world transform around them under the haze of the rain. Geno’s off to the side, facing away from the rest, skull up to the sky. You could’ve sworn you saw his shoulders heave as if in a sob, but the rain may have just been playing tricks on your eyes.

You dismiss the prickly skeleton’s behavior with a slow breath, sitting down at your chair, ready to finish up some work. Hopefully the rain won’t distract you too much.

A few hours had passed by without a moment’s notice, and the rain had only picked up in pace. It was quickly morphing in to a full-on deluge, yet not a crack of lightning or reverberating thunder. The sky’s starting to get dark now and the skeletons outside have gotten quiet. Have they come in and I just didn’t notice? …no, I think I would notice if Blue was back or not.
You rise from your work space and stretch to get your blood flowing again before exiting your room and make your way out to the main area. Your original skeletons had already returned a while ago, with Sans snoozing away on the couch and Papyrus most likely in his room since the kitchen was quiet. Dream had taken a chair from the table and was sitting near the window, watching the rain go by from the safety of the indoors. Ink and Error were nowhere to be seen, which concerned you slightly. Dream had perked up at the sight of you emerging from your room and flashed you one of his heartwarming smiles.

You toss him a wave, and head towards the kitchen to grab yourself a snack to tide you over before dinner. You do a once over before heading towards the pantry. No other multiverse skeletons in sight. The concern that you had quickly changed to full worry. You shake your head vigorously to clear your thoughts before they consume you. They were skeletons with a ridiculous amount of power and they haven’t destroyed the house yet, then it’s probably fine. That and Dream doesn’t seem to be worried; I’ll just have to ask him. You open the pantry while trying to convince yourself that you were overthinking things.

A cookie would’ve been nice right about now… You grumble to yourself bitterly while rifling through the pantry, settling on stuffing your face with some pretzels before putting it back where you found it. You head back in to the living room while finishing off the rest of the ones you had on you and plop yourself in to the third of the couch not occupied by Sans.

“Hey Dream,” you say after swallowing the last bit of your salty snack. “where’re the troublemakers?”

“Um…” He tears his eyes away from outside and hums in thought for a moment, bringing his pointer finger up to his mouth. “I think Error’s in the basement watching something on the TV down there, but I’m not really sure where Ink is at the moment.”

You cock a brow at him.

“You aren’t sure?”

“Well, I thought it’d be alright if they just weren’t together. And besides, Ink can handle himself just fine,” Dream assures with a nod. You can’t exactly argue with that logic. Instead, you just hum in recognition and let the topic drop, mind now at ease. The only sound in the entire house was the assault of the rain on the house battering against the walls.

You finally feel some peace wash over you as you just sit there and melt in to the couch, not doing anything. This short-lasted peace almost tempts you in to getting up and playing a tune on the piano, but you’re too worn out from the rest of the day to both think up a song you’d want to play and stick with the tempo. It’ll end up a garbled mess that would leave you unsatisfied and on edge; the complete opposite of what you were hoping to achieve in the first place.

For now, you’re just content with sitting still and breathing deeply, letting the tension of the past few days flow out of you.
updated on ESOM, want to see more Undertale works/art/memes, or get an exclusive sneak peek of the next ESOM chapter, follow my page [here](#)

Let me know what you guys thought about the chapter, please. It's been a work of several weeks in the making and I can tell when I feel like I shift gears in the narrative.

And now, a rant. For those that don't care, don't bother reading anymore.

Okay, so, now the reason that I was MIA for the longest break between chapters yet. Or, multiple reasons. As I was beginning this chapter, I was in that awkward time of dealing with a new housing arrangement and school was looming around the corner. Okay, that wouldn't be too bad. Maybe a little bit longer of a wait, but not much to stress over. Of course, the universe decides that that's not enough. Within a single week, one of my grandparents passed away, one of my siblings got engaged, and one of my other siblings is now expecting a baby. That's not all either, but I won't go too deep in to personal matters. What's better, Hurricane Florence was ripping up the east US coast and I had to prepare for that too which knocked out my power for a few days and damaged my surrounding area. I had to make time to attend both the funeral and wedding all in this amount of time and still juggle school and work obligations on top of it. Even moreso, I'm in the process of getting a new job.

Needless to say, these past three months have been the craziest time of my life, hands down. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that I'm able to slow down and focus more on school and ESOM now that that's all finally out of the way.
Rain, Rain, Come This Way (Part Two)

Chapter Summary

Well, that peace was nice while it lasted.

Chapter Notes

Shorter chapter than usual, but I liked the natural break it provided for me.

Also, I wanted to get this done before finals consumed my life.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Popped like a bubble, the little peace you immersed yourself in is thrown away as the door is thrust open, causing you to jump.

“I TOLD YOU WE WERE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION!”

Indistinct grumbling could be heard from the doorway.

“hey, blue, don’t give red a hard time ‘bout it. at least he can navigate a store.” You can picture the cheeky grin Beast is wearing.

Blue sputters loud enough and long enough where you can count how many aborted sentences he tries before mustering up something as a retort.

“T-THAT DOESN’T COUNT! IT WAS OUR FIRST DAY OF BEING ALLOWED TO ROAM ON THE SURFACE AND CAN YOU BLAME ME FOR BEING SLIGHTLY DISORIENTED?”

“slightly? what about getting so lost that someone had to physically go and get you classifies as ‘slightly’ disoriented?” To your surprise, that voice was Geno’s. His voice sounds lighter, happier even, from whenever you’ve gotten words out of him. It’s a pleasant surprise to your groggy mind.

You have to blink a few times before being able to get yourself out of the doze you were in. While the peace was nice, it did nothing in trying to keep you awake. Channeling your new sleep-deprived apathy, you stand and trudge over to the front door ready and willing to nag the skeletons about staying on the entrance mat. You’re not going to be mopping or laying out towels any time soon, thank you.

Red’s the first one to step inside and he’s absolutely, positively soaked, as you expected. There’s rivulets of water still dripping off him as he steps through the doorway. His clothes and jacket are clinging to his bones, slimming him down by a fair amount. Even still, your guess about him being a little heavier than your Sans apparently rings true. Red looks like he’s about to turn around and continue on with the banter now that the pressure’s taken off him again. Though when he spies you
in front of him, hair most likely disheveled and a scathing glare to boot, he stills.

“yeesh sweetheart, you look like a mess.”

“You guys aren’t getting two feet in to this house sopping wet,” you say, ignoring his statement completely.

Red looks at you with confusion and perhaps a bit of amusement intermingling on his face.

“not to rain on your parade or anythin’, but we kinda need ta at least grab our clothes from th’ table. just goin’ out for a walk ain’t gonna change the fact that we need to step inside to actually get our clothes.”

You can feel your glare lessen until it morphs in to a stare off into the middle distance, a single line of self-deprecation popping in to the forefront of your mind.

I didn’t get them any towels.

Red must have noticed the change in your expression as he snickers. “what, did the weather cloud your judgement?”

You huff, pinching the bridge of your nose and trying to laugh off your ridiculous goof up. “Shut up, you. It’s been a long day of nothing but school and work.” You both share a chuckle for a moment before shaking your head and turning around. “I guess I’ll go get you guys towels now.”

“weather you do or not, sweetheart, ‘ll be here.”

Gods, all these new experiences for them must have their pun making skills going in to overdrive. I now dread this living situation even more than I already do.

Before making your way down the hallway towards the bedrooms, you make a pitstop at the couch to try and rouse Skeletor.

“Sans, get up. Help me give out towels to our now soaked guests.”

Instead of a reply, a very loud—and very purposeful—snore erupts from his sleeping form.

Not willing to deal with his bullshit right now, you start to threaten him with a slew of torturous actions. Tickling him, throwing him out in to the rain, carrying him and shoving him in to the linens closet after I take out the towels, the possibilities are endless. Dream, however, stands from his seat from the window interrupts before you can even get to the good stuff. He offers to help in lieu of Sans, which you end up begrudgingly agreeing to. All of the thoughts that you had require too much effort right now. Just get the towels and hopefully go to bed soon now that the skeletons are back.

When you’ve arrived at the linens closet and started to dig through it to find enough towels, Dream breaks the amicable silence.

“I had one or two conversations with Blue today. He seemed to be doing better.”

You have to smile at the cautiously optimistic tone to his voice.

“I’m glad to hear that.” You reach up, straining and stretching to the highest your stature can go to reach that one ratty blue towel that no one ever uses. “Blue hadn’t made it back to the house yet—impossible, I know—so I managed to catch him last night to talk about it.”

You relay the talk with Blue to Dream in general detail, leaving out the specific reason why Blue
wasn’t looking at the stars in the first place. While it was Dream’s idea for you to talk to him, you’d like to respect Blue's privacy on the matter.

“That’s great!” You can hear the genuine happiness in his voice and you honestly have to wonder how he manages to hold such a great capacity for caring about others. “At least now- it looks like there’s another one on the top shelf that you missed.” He interrupts himself to point out another towel on the top shelf that you neglected to see. You groan in dismay. “At least he won’t have any reservations about going outside at night now.”

You hum in agreement while standing on your tiptoes to reach the other elusive towel. As your hand finally finds purchase on the linen, you silently cheer and step out of the closet, handing Dream your prize.

“I think there’s still something else bothering him,” you continue, hefting the newly procured towels in one hand and closing the closet door with the other, “but I think that’s left for another day.”

You can feel Dream’s gaze more than you can see it, so you turn in question to look at him.

The smile he has is broad and thankful. So much so that you don’t feel like you deserve even a fraction of it.

With enough towels in possession between the two of you, you and Dream make your way back towards the entranceway. As you pass the couch, you take that ratty blue towel from the pile and chuck it Sans’s sleeping skull. Thanks for the help, lazy ass. As you look back towards the entrance and finally allowing the wet skeletons entry, a mass hits the side of your head and envelops your vision in darkness.

Oh gods no, not again-

You pause for a moment to set your bearings straight and just see what hit you. Realizing with relief that no, it isn’t strings that just hit you. And no, you’re not being restrained in any way.

It’s just the towel you threw at Sans.

You whip your head around to his still sleeping form and flip him the bird with your free hand. With another purposeful snore, Sans raises one of his hands and returns the gesture. Asshole.

Turning around once more and arriving at the house entrance, you instruct each of the skeletons to wrap a towel around themselves and change in the bathroom down the hall and leave their wet clothes in there. You or Papyrus will run the drier later tonight.

The skeletons do so one at a time, each adequately content to get out of their wet clothes. Judging by each of their expressions, you can tell that they all had a blast being out in the rain, despite how soaked they got in the process.

About half an hour passes as each of the skeletons shuffle out of the single bathroom. Much to your greatly belated and unadulterated horror, you’re going to be sharing a bathroom with nine other people. Sure, they may not have to actually go the bathroom, but the water bill is now going to be atrocious and the end of the month. And this weekend you’re going to be sharing it with even more. You shudder at the thought and wonder again why you deserve such a fate.
You’re at the card table by yourself, going through a checklist on your phone for things you needed to get done when the front doors suddenly swings open again with a painstaking creak of its hinges. Thinking you may not have shut it properly and that the wind and rain may have just blown the door inward, you get up from your chair to close it again. Before you do, you notice that there’s a figure at the door.

From the light cast outside, you can see Ink standing there quietly, colors swirling in his sockets. It’s always kind of freaky how silent these skeletons can be when they want to. If there was a crack of lightning behind him that casted him in complete shadow, it might have been something ripped straight out of a cheesy horror movie.

“Oh, Ink, there you are,” you greet him with a wave. He returns it after a moment’s pause. “We were wondering where you went for a while now. You must be soaked with how long you were gone. Here, let me get you a towel.”

You turn and pick up one of the unused towels on the table that were left after the others changed. A stray thought lingers through your mind as you turn around towards Ink in the doorway. *I wonder if one towel will be enough since he’s dressed in layers. That jacket around his waist must be just dripping with water-*

As you look down to check for yourself about how waterlogged the jacket was, something else catches your attention in one of his hands.

He’s gripping a slipper.

More accurately, he’s gripping the ankle *in* the slipper.

“Ink, what-“

That’s all you could say as your eyes traced back to the body the ankle was connected to before your eyebrows threw themselves to infinity and beyond. All cognition to form cohesive words left you the moment you saw the unconscious body.

There, lying on his back covered in mud and leaves, was Error.

Chapter End Notes

lol whoops have a little bit of a cliffhanger.

With that, I’ve written over 100k words! Yeesh. Every single scene runs away from me, I swear.

We'll have to see if I get another chapter out to you guys before the end of the year. University finals are literally next week, but with that comes little bit of down time and recharging between each of them.

If you'd like to stay updated on ESOM, want to see more Undertale works/art/memes, or get an exclusive sneak peek of the next ESOM chapter, follow my Tumblr page [here](#)!

Also, don't forget to let me know your thoughts on the chapter. Thanks much!
Rain, Rain, Come This Way (Part Three)

Chapter Summary

The rainy night comes to a close.

Chapter Notes

This chapter can also be called: Karma's a Bitch.

Enjoy~

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Pftahaha! You should see your face!”

Whatever façade Ink was keeping on when you saw him in the doorway crumbles away in to wheezing laughter. He’s hunched down, sockets scrunched up as he sucks in another breath he doesn’t need only to continue laughing at you. You continue to stare at Ink as he struggles to get his giggles under control, bewilderment slowly waning in to apathy. Instead of addressing him, you call back to Dream.

“Dream, I thought you said Error was in the basement?”

Dream looks to you from his spot in his chair by the window, now watching the television rather than the rain outside. The TV was switched on once the other skeletons returned from their walk in the rain and had settled down. The drone from it combined with the pouring rain appears to have masked Ink’s laughter enough as Dream gazes at you questioningly.

“I thought he was? I can go check if you want me to,” Dream says, already moving to stand.

“That’s not going to be necessary.”

“What do you mean?”

Before you can even conjure up a reply to that, Sans interrupts from his new position face down in to the loud carpet. Beast and Red tag-teamed him and threw him off the couch so that they could have a spot to sit that wasn’t already occupied.

“who’s at the door, kid?”

A much simpler question to answer. I’ll take what I can get.

“The missing skeletons.”

“why’re ya making such a big deal outta nothin’, then?” Red groused, lights not looking away from whatever show that’s minimally captured his attention.
“Because one of them is unconscious and looks like they lost a fight horribly.”

That successfully captures the attention of the household as Dream and Blue fully rise out of their seats to come and investigate. Taking this time, you look back at Error’s slumped position to fully evaluate his condition from where you can stand without getting wet.

The mud and leaves caking the clothes of Error look relatively fresh as they actively cling to almost all parts of his shorts, exposed bones, and shoes like ivy on a tree. Any longer, and you’d say it’d become part of him. Additionally, his jacket suffered at least a few generous rips in their material which you have to wince in sympathy for. That jacket was pretty cool. And finally, there’s some kind of viscous liquid leaking from a few discolored wounds dotting his arms and legs. You stare at the wounds a little longer in confusion. *Is this that slime emitting thing that Papyrus mentioned once…?*

“Well, you’re actually not wrong,” Ink says, seemingly nonchalantly, rocking on his heels in the doorway. His sentence jars you enough to break you out of your investigation.

“What?”

Did I say that last thing out loud, or?


“Oh.”

Okay, Ink’s not a mind reader. That’s good.

Wait.

How the hell did someone get the better of Error? You’ve experienced firsthand what he can do and you’re more than a little confused. To your irritation, Ink sniggers at you again.

“Pft- I can see the question on your face. ‘How could someone beat up Error?’” He says, poorly imitating your voice for added dramatic effect. You don’t give him a reaction as you blink impassively him, waiting for him to continue. He pouts in protest. Regardless, Ink continues without you ever responding, not bothering to look you in the eyes. “Well, you’re looking at him.” You can feel more than hear the newfound smugness.

Now that you’re taking the time to actually look at Ink as well, you can better see the signs that he’s been adequately roughed up. Not as roughed up the current unconscious skeleton sprawled out on your patio, but there’s still noticeable damage. He’s somehow obtained a bruise? on the side of his head that looks incredibly painful. Your head throbs just looking at it. There’s a substantial amount of mud on Ink’s shoes and the trailing end of his scarf, reverting the scarf back to a similar color around the cervical vertebrae. One thing’s for certain though: Ink’s shoes are no longer garishly gross to look at. *It’s a drastic improvement.*

“Considering the fact that Error’s level of power isn’t lost on me,” you say, shuddering internally, “I’m not all that surprised that it was you who pummeled him to unconsciousness.” Ink just grins, taking your words as praise.

“WHY?”

You and Ink shift over to look at Blue, who looks adequately confused.

“YES, IT’S OBVIOUS THAT YOU WERE THE ONE TO KNOCK ERROR DOWN SEVERAL PEGS—AND NOT TO SAY THAT HE DIDN’T DESERVE IT CONSIDERING
HOW HE’S ACTED WHILE HE’S BEEN HERE—BUT WHY DID YOU DO IT NOW OF ALL TIMES?”

Ink doesn’t miss a beat.

“Because he asked me to.”

The house goes quiet as everyone just stares at Ink like he’s grown another head.

“HE… ASKED YOU TO BEAT HIM UP,” Blue says slowly, obviously skeptic. Ink just rolls his colorful eyes, an orange null symbol and a yellow pip of light, around in their sockets.

“I mean that he wanted to fight, so I couldn’t help but oblige.”

“And why did he want to fight you in the first place?” you couldn’t help asking.

“We were bored,” Ink states matter-of-factly. Like it’s the simplest thing in the world to understand.

“So,” you begin, bringing a hand up to rub at your temples, “you both were bored and the first thing you both thought to do was duke it out.”

“Yup.”

“And in this friendly fight, you beat him in to unconsciousness.”

“Well, I wouldn’t call it a friendly fight.” Ink makes a seesaw motion with his hands. A poor attempt when one is currently gripping Error’s leg. “If Error got a big upper hand, he probably would’ve tried to kill me.” He pauses a second, collecting his thoughts and dropping his arms. “Then again, I could tell that he wasn’t really trying his hardest.”

Well, you guess you could understand the need to run Error in to the ground. Better to be safe than sorry. Or dead in this case.

And you’d also be lying if this wasn’t incredibly satisfying to see Error defeated. Even at first glance, you had this wonderful spiteful pleasure feeling, seeing the person that effortlessly made you feel incredibly vulnerable down for the count and completely at the mercy of the person he despises.

Assuming that he’d adequately answered all the questions thrown at him, Ink begins a motion to walk completely through the doorway. With lightning reflexes that you only possess when someone’s about to do something stupid, you bar him getting any closer inside with your arms.

“There’s no way in hell you’re stepping inside with how muddy you and Error are.” Ink blinks confusedly at you before glancing behind him, back in to the rain.

“Would you rather I just put Error out on the curb?”

With how straight-faced and serious Ink asked you to literally kick Error to the curb, your serious face cracks. The unexpected laugh that escaped you doesn’t help either.

“Actually, you know what, I have a better idea!” Emboldened, Ink peeks his head past your arms to ask the rest of the skeletons. “Hey guys, I’m gonna go throw Error out. Should I toss him in the garbage or recycling?”

You weren’t even sure if they were following the conversation you were having at all, but a unanimous ‘trash’ rang from the couch and loveseat, each of them not bothering to look up from the television or whatever else they were doing. You sputter out another laugh at the synchronized
response, before also offering your own trash vote.

“IS THERE PERHAPS A WAY FOR HIM TO BE COMPOSTED INSTEAD?” Blue inquires, crossing his arms and looking upward, imitating deep thought. That sends you over the edge as you hold on to the wall for support as you howl with laughter.

“G-guys, we shouldn’t just leave him out in the rain. E-especially if he’s injured!” Dream says between his own giggles. Ever the bleeding heart, this one.

“H-he’s not coming in to the house looking more like an eldritch abomination than he already is,” you say, coming down from your laughter high a little. “That’s a mess waiting to happen, and I don’t want to clean mud and other garbage out of the carpet.”

“But still,” Dream pleads, looking at you beseechingly, “everyone deserves to have at least some shelter from the rain. He lives here for the time being like the rest of us.”

You tear your eyes away from Dream back to the unconscious skeleton on your patio again to think about it. His sockets are blank and the white ERROR’s around his face even seem sluggish.

When it comes to serious decisions, you try and evaluate the decision on your own. Even when someone’s trying to influence your decision with good intentions, you tend to drown them out. You’re more than tempted to just let Ink go through with his ridiculous plan before your face softens a little.

Maybe I am being too hard on him? I did think that I was forgoing a lot of my anger towards him for knowledge and all.

But now that this opportunity has presented itself, giving him some just desserts sounds incredibly appealing.

You break out in to a wicked grin. A devilish little smirk not unlike the one you wore on your bone popping escapade.

Sure, bygones are supposed to be bygones. But I have a better idea.

You heft your rain and mud-caked bundle a little as you descend the stairs down to the basement, Ink and Dream following behind you closely. As your feet reach the bottom, you look around a little. You haven’t been down here since the first day everyone decided to drop in, and you can blatantly see the effects they’ve had.

There are pillows, blankets, and even a few sparse pieces of clothing covering the much more reasonably colored carpet like patchy fabric snow. Even with the amount of mess, you can eyeball some form of order in the madness. You’d have to guess that the sleeping areas each have deigned their own were the locations where pillows and blankets were the most numerous. You’ll have to bug Skeletor later about getting actual sleeping pads or something for them. The floor’s bound to be bad to sleep on for so many nights and it’s only going to get worse as the nights keep getting colder.

Additionally, the couch that Beast was apparently sleeping on has moved from one wall of the room back to its original position in front of the basement TV. Which, in itself, could explain why Error holes himself up down here away from everyone else.
You try and remember where the multiverse trio first selected their spot in the basement and pick your way over, giving an attempt to not step on anyone’s clothes. You do end up stumbling over one or two articles, but you can’t bring yourself to care that much. If they have their own clothes scattered about where others will walk, then that’s on them.

“Alright,” you say with a sigh, setting down your towel bundle, “Dream you have the washcloths from the closet and the bowl of water, yeah?”

“Yep!” Dream affirms. You nod while beginning to pick apart the towels.

“Good. Ink, you have the bandages and healing cream too?”

“Yea- wait,” the aforementioned skeleton pauses and pats himself down in some his new non-sopping wet clothes, only producing the bandages from stars-know-where. “Partially!” Ink says instead with a lopsided grin.

You huff, not entirely surprised. “Go back and get it for me if you could.” Ink rushes off before you finish the sentence, so you’re forced to yell up the stairs to his retreating form. “It’s in the medicine cabinet above the sink in the bathroom!”

You and Dream are left alone in the basement as the rain still continues outside. It’s much less noticeable down in the basement, but the white noise it provides is still soothing to listen to.

“He seems… more forgetful than usual,” you observe as you slowly pick apart the dried mud that adhered two towels together. Dream silently nods, staring back up the stairs where Ink disappeared to.

“While I don’t think concussions are possible for monsters, it’s probably the head injury that’s causing him to act this way. I’ll probably give him some of the healing cream too if he’ll sit still for it,” you offer to assuage Dream’s apparent worry.

“That’s thoughtful of you. Really,” Dream says, giving you an appreciative smile. “But… I don’t think the healing cream will have much of an effect.”

Confused, you look up from where you’re crouched to tilt your head at Dream.

“Why’s that?”

“Well, monsters are usually defined by their white, inverted soul. So… I wouldn’t necessarily… um,” Dream trails off, seemingly unwilling to go further in the explanation.

You stare at Dream as he fidgets, unaware of the reason for his uncomfortable shifting.

Suddenly, something Error said that you shelved at the time comes rushing back to you.

"Says the soulless abomination. You’ve probably done some weird shit to emulate actual feelings."

Oh.

“Does this have to do with Ink apparently not having a soul?” you ask, mental cogs whirring.

“Y-yes?” Dream squeaks, fearing your reaction. You look down again, staring at the conglomeration of towels below you in contemplation.

“So, you’d think that because he doesn’t have a soul to heal in the first place, there’s no point,” you say, muttering to yourself. “How the fuck is that even possible? These skeletons are so goddamn
You realize belatedly that keeping Dream waiting isn’t the nicest thing to do to him, so you look back to him with as much of a comforting face as you can muster even when you’re both intrigued and weirded out at the same time.

“I’m honestly not going to ask. Ink probably doesn’t even remember in the first place, given how he is.” At that, Dream lets out a sigh of relief, relaxing the tension in his body he’d built up in anticipation.

“Still though, I’m going to give him some because that bruise he’s got is frankly kind of gross to look at.” Dream giggles but nods. Shaking your head in exasperation with the situation, you go back to unfurling the bundle.

“I’m back!” Timed all too perfectly, Ink jets it down the stairs just as you’re picking apart the final towels. He places both the bandages and the newfound healing cream down beside you without much fanfare.

“Just in time. Let’s get this done quickly so that I can go to bed finally.”

You say that, sure. But you’re going to enjoy the hell out of this.

With that, you’re able to fully undo the thick bundle of towels to reveal Error contained inside. You had to have him curled up in a tight ball so that he could fit in to the towel bundle and still not leave any wetness or muddiness as you carried him.

“I still can’t believe you’re doing this,” Ink says with another snicker of his. “He’s going to throw such a fit when he wakes up in the morning.”

You roll your eyes but dip one of the washcloths in the water in preparation regardless. When it’s others describing him, Error sounds like an absolute man-child.

“Well, Error can deal with it because he should’ve known what he was getting in to when he asked to fight,” you say while wringing out the cloth to your desired level of wetness. Ink just snickers again, enjoying himself. *Well that’s makes two of us that are having the time of their lives right now.*

As you stand to get some blood flow to your knees, you can’t help the vindictive swell in your chest and the victorious sneer that makes its home on your face.

“Now then, let’s finally get down to business,” you say, relishing every word that you throw back at against him. “I want something from you.”

You point down at Error’s chest as Ink laughs and Dream watches on bemusedly.

“Your clothes.”

Chapter End Notes

"What's wrong, Error? Human got your tongue?"

I don’t know about anyone else, but it felt SO good to write that last bit.
Despite Tumblr collapsing in on itself, I'm still very active there! Come follow me for ESOM sneak peeks or updates, other Undertale/Deltarune works/arts/memes, or if you just wanna chat, click here!

Also, I've got a question that I'd like input from you all on! I've been going back and forth for a while now, but the question is this: Should I write the name 'Y/N' out of ESOM? I can see why it breaks up the story for some and why other's may like it for the self-insert aspect. Which is why I'd like your vote on it! I've created a strawpoll and you can vote for it here!

Also, don't forget to let me know your thoughts on the chapter! Thanks much!

(The trash bit is inspired from this bit of art here!)

Works inspired by this one: Sans Puns About Your Misery by alternage

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!