Issues With Letting Go

by KillerSquirtle

Summary

Flowey doesn't deal with loss very well. He hated losing Chara, he hated losing his soul, he hated losing control of the timeline, he hated losing to Frisk over and over. So when he finds something that makes life worth living once again, he will be damned if anything tries to take that away from him.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes
“I don’t… want to let go…”

He always had trouble with letting go. Whether as the “real” him, or as the despicable being known as Flowey. It had taken him years, maybe even decades with how the RESETs worked just to come to terms with Chara.

“It’s best you just forget about me…”

He never even properly came to terms with losing his ability to RESET either. Once Frisk was in the picture, all he ever did was plot and plan his way to getting it back. But Frisk always beat him.

But none of that matters now anyway. There’s no reason to RESET anymore. The barrier is gone, nobody is stuck in that miserable loop. Now the world is wider than ever and the possibilities were endless again.

Well, for everyone but him.

Flowey sighed and looked up at the crevice in the ceiling letting the dying light of the setting sun leak in. Between this and the exit proper, this was all the real sunlight he had ever seen. It was all he would see if he stuck to his self-imposed exile.

He didn’t know how much time had actually passed since he broke the barrier. He did manage to drag himself to Chara’s grave on what little SOUL remnant he had left, but it had been an exhausting ordeal.

One minute he was kneeling down next to the flowers, giving one last proper goodbye to his best friend, the next he could barely keep his eyes open. When he opened them up, leaves and petals and stems were all that remained of him.

But the familiar hollowness didn’t ring true like it previously did. Maybe it was the resounding sense of accomplishment from freeing everyone. Maybe it was the prospect of new, interesting things happening that kept him from feeling like a husk.

Maybe… Maybe it was just the memory of having every SOUL. Going from having nothing, to having the combined compassion and love of every living thing underground was quite the ordeal.

It was a pale comparison of what it once was, but it was something. It was a feeling. One that Flowey clasped onto and refused to let go of for as long as he could, even if he didn’t know quite what it was. Yet.

He chuckled at the prospect—exploring himself of all things! After so long. It was exhilarating to having something new about himself. Something to entertain himself even in his isolation. Something that wouldn’t harm anything.

That’s something that Frisk would want.

Everything important started and ended with Frisk. They were the only one DETERMINED enough to stop him. They were the only one who could be unpredictable and fun anymore.

They were the only one who came when he called out for help.
“You’re the type of friend I wish I always had…”

Not even Chara came…

Flowey felt water hit his cheek. Had it started to rain above ground? When he looked back up at the crevice, he didn’t see anything dripping down. Only more water pooling on his eyes.

Oh. He was crying. It really had been a long time since that happened. He felt that smoldering ember of feeling pick up in his stem as he let his tears fall to the ground beneath him.

What did it mean? Was he… lonely?

What was the point of being lonely if being around other people made him feel nothing? His SOUL was gone, his compassion was gone!

“How stupid can you get?” Flowey furiously wiped at his own eyes with his leaves.

He didn’t need anybody! It was for the best that he stayed down here! Alone! With no one to bother him and no one for him to hurt.

But still, the feeling in his stem wouldn’t let up. It started to ache. To hurt. It was a hurt like never before. Not even when the human SOULs turned on him.

He needed help. He needed someone. No, not just anyone. He needed

“F-Frisk…” Flowey cried out, tears streaming down his face. He turned his head back up to the ceiling in a vain hope that they would hear. “Frisk, please I-”

“Flowey?” a small shy voice responded.

Flowey turned his stem so fast he nearly gave himself plant-whiplash.

Frisk stood in the doorway to the rest of the ruins with a concerned look on their face. They approached him slowly, reaching a hand out like they were gauging whether or not he would attack them like before. He honestly expected as much from anyone he had met.

“What are you doing here? I thought you and everyone else headed to the surface already!” Flowey spat out, trying to cover up his loss of composure. “Oh, I see! You’re here to rub your happy ending in my face!” Flowey started twisting his face into a sadistic grin.

Frisk started smiling again and approached with more confidence now. Not the reaction that Flowey was expecting. But that’s what made them so interesting.

They knelt down in front of him. Just, sitting there, smiling. They weren’t going to make the first move, so of course that left Flowey to respond.

“Don’t you have anything better to do? You won. Go off with the rest of your weirdo friends. Enjoy the world HE gave you all.” Flowey scowled half-heartedly back.

Frisk didn’t move to get up. They didn’t even let their smile falter. They simply reached a hand out to him invitingly.

“I can’t go with you!” he said with a slight snarl “I don’t have a SOUL! I literally can’t care about anything. If I go with you, I will probably just get bored and start killing again… Unless, that’s what you want!” Flowey started to cackle, once again twisting his face into a fanged smile “That’s a wonderful idea! Give everyone exactly what they’ve always dreamed of, only to kill them before
they get the chance to really enjoy it! That’s a wonderful idea—"

Frisk silenced him with a finger to his planty lips and gave him an unimpressed but soft glare. They saw right through his half-hearted ruse to scare them off and he slumped over in defeat.

“How can you trust me after everything…” he started to trail off, but the return of Frisk’s smile cut off his tirade of self-pity before it even started. The thrumming in his core soon relaxed, no longer causing him the pain from before. It almost felt… nice. Whatever it was.

“Alright fine. You win. Again” Flowey said through a pout “Just keep the smiling trashbag away from me. In fact, how do you even know your motley crew of freaks will even accept me?”

Frisk responded with an even brighter smile and a shrug. With a groan, he started to gently pull his roots up underneath him. The unfamiliar chill of fresh air on them sent shudders up and down his stem before he clambered up onto Frisk’s offered arm, wrapping his roots and vines snuggly up their shoulder.

“High-ho, idiot!” Flowey proclaimed with an excited leaf point forward as Frisk happily complied “You’d better get used to carrying me around because no way in heck am I staying cooped up in a flowerpot or a garden somewhere when there’s a whole surface to explore!”

“Wait, so, he asked you to be ambassador just like that?” Flowey asked with a quizzical look “And you said yes?”

“Mhm!” Frisk gave an affirming nod as they skipped through the streets of New Home.

“How the heck did he come to the conclusion that you are even the tiniest bit qualified to do that?! You made friends with everyone in the underground mostly by flirting or playing fetch!”

Flowey pointed down at the stick Frisk was carrying around for emphasis. That little piece of wood had seen quite a lot of non-violent action during their stay in the underground. Frisk started giggling and the feeling reverberated through his body stronger than before.

“And this isn’t coming from some random idiot either! I actually have some political training and it’s not as simple as just ‘hello, nice to meet you, you have pretty eyes’!” Frisk nearly doubled over laughing from his amazing impression of them.

Flowey found himself laughing along too, surprisingly enough. The feeling was tickling up and down his stem, digging its way into his cheeks. It almost made him feel… lighter. Did this mean that—

No. He had let his hopes get up only to get them dashed away too many times before. He was not going to make the same mistakes again. This time, he would be meticulous in his experiments. For now, he would (ugh) play it “nice” around the other idiots Frisk keeps company with. Just to see what would come of it, of course.

“SAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANS”
Oh god. They had just walked through the front door of the castle and they could hear Papyrus’ shrill screams bouncing off the walls. If Flowey had ears, they would be bleeding right now.

For maybe the fifth time during their mostly peaceful trip through the underground, Frisk’s phone got a text alert from the old hag. Frisk hummed happily as they started to type out a response. Flowey peeked down from atop their head to spy on the correspondence. Just out of curiosity.

“What do you call a goat with a beard?

A Goat-tea!

It is humorous because a goatee is a style of facial hair. That one even gave Asgore a chuckle, and I had never known him to appreciate puns like that. It also reminded him that you two still need to discuss some important ambassadorship matters over a cup. I do hope you return soon. :)

Ugh. As overbearing and boring as ever. Flowey wasn’t sure why he was expecting anything else. He could already hear the “my child, is that a new friend of yours?” as they stride in through the entrance to the barrier chamber…

Actually, they just did pass the threshold to said chamber as the thought passed him.

Undyne, for some reason, was holding a curled up and terrified Alphys in one hand and a splayed out limp Papyrus in the other as she did squats. Sans, Toriel and Asgore were surprisingly enough chatting amicably among themselves, though Toriel retained bit of a tense air about her.

Frisk vocalized a greeting and waved with their free hand to get their new family’s attention. Heads turned so quickly that Flowey was surprised that Papyrus’ skull didn’t snap off. He always did have a weak neck, heh.

“Oh, there you are my child! Is that a new friend of yours-” Toriel was cut off by a rampaging skeleton practically vaulting over top of her to get to them.

“FRISK! FLOWEY! WOWEY! I DIDN’T KNOW MY BESTEST HUMAN FRIEND AND BESTEST FLORA FRIEND WERE FRIENDS WITH EACH OTHER!” Papyrus swiftly plucked Frisk up by their underarms and twirled them around joyously. Even Flowey gasped in surprise at the sudden motion while Frisk just giggled. Papyrus always was the least boring out of the entire underground. Even if by only a small margin.

He tucked them under his arm and thrust his other fist to his chest with that sickenly proud smile plastered over his skull.

“OF COURSE, I SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED! FOR I, THE GREAT AND FRIENDLY PAPYRUS, HAVE EXCELLENT TASTE IN FRIENDS. IT WAS AN INNEVITABILITY THAT YOU TWO WOULD HIT IT OFF SPECTACULARLY! NYEH HEH HEH!” Papyrus trilled like an overexcited cockatoo.

Undyne stomped over, mirroring Papyrus with Alphys tucked under her arm. “Hey Punk, what took you so long getting back?! I was dying of boredom here!”

Oh, if she really knew what that was like. Flowey was mid-eyeroll when he locked eyes with the astonished Alphys. Oh right, she knew what he was. At least to some extent. He gave a cheeky little wink back to the doctor and pressed a leaf to his lips. This was going to stay their little secret for the moment.

“Howdy everyone! My name is Flowey! Flowey the flower. It’s nice to meet you all!” Flowey
chirped happily. He played the room with his cuteness and sure enough the surrounding idiots devolved into soft coos and congratulations for Frisk for being the friend making master. Well, almost all of the idiots. Smiley Trashbag was off to the side and oddly quiet. A strange terseness added to his typical dopey grin. That is, until he noticed Flowey looking his way.

“Hey, sorry to ‘bud’ in, but I’m getting antsy for the first time in my life.” Sans stepped forward, sneaking his fisted hands into his jacket’s pockets to hide his sudden aggressive shift. “But since the kid’s back, I think it’s high-time we ‘leaf’ for the surface, don’t you?”

Flowey and Papyrus groaned in unison.

“SAAAAANS! JUST WHEN I WAS CONSIDERING PUTTING THIS DAY BACK ON MY ‘BEST DAY EVER’ LIST, YOU GO AND RUIN IT YET AGAIN WITH YOUR NONSENSE!” Papyrus gently let the human and flower down before stomping his foot in frustration. “AND WORSE OF ALL, YOU DO SO IN A WAY THAT COULD POSSIBLY INSULT OUR NEW MUTUAL FLORAL FRIEND!”

Play it nice, Flowey, play it nice…

“Oh golly, no offense taken.” Flowey waved a leaf dismissively “But, I have to agree. I’m getting antsy to see the surface!” It’s been a long time coming… for everyone.

Frisk obviously agreed as they started bouncing excitedly on the balls of their feet towards the exit, giving Flowey a good jostling. Papyrus and Undyne started joining in their erratic movements. Though Undyne nearly hit the ceiling with her head when she jumped, and Papyrus drive his head right into the rocks above and dangled for a few moments before toppling back down.

Flowey and Frisk shared a small little mischievous giggle at the lanky skeleton’s antics before Frisk started tugging Toriel along by her sleeve. Finally, the group started following along as Frisk and Flowey lead the way through the long hallway.

Flowey craned his stem forward on Frisk’s shoulder, the mouth of the cave was just a few steps ahead and he could already feel the breeze on his face. He flinched violently back as the sudden direct sunlight blinded him, but after blinking the spots out of his eyes, he let out a small gasp.

The surface was… Amazing. Even though he saw it all those years ago, it was still taking his breath away. Just down the mountain trail before them, he could see miles of trees painted a soft orange from the dying light of the sun. Upriver from what he could only assume was the source of Waterfall’s namesake was a small town, starting to spark to life with street lights like the glittering stones back in the underground.

This was it. This was real. Flowey closed his eyes and just breathed in the fresh air, letting the sunlight warm his face, ignoring the vapid squawking of the morons around him before they ran off to spoil the moment. That only left himself, Frisk and Toriel watching the sun set on the cliffside.

“Frisk… You came from this world, right…? So, you must have a place to return to, do you not? What will you do now?” Toriel asked with a melancholic tone.

Flowey felt Frisk tense and shake for a moment under his roots. They weren’t seriously thinking about leaving now after everything, were they? Would they just abandon all of their so-called friends in an unfamiliar world? Would they leave him with these freaks just like that?!

Flowey started coiling in on himself at the sudden prospects of abandonment he hadn’t considered before. Frisk probably had a family worried sick about them, so of course they always had the option...
of just going home and forgetting all about this little adventure!

“I-I want to stay with you” Frisk squeaked out with their barely used voice. They practically leapt into Toriel and gripped at her robes like they were afraid to be torn away.

Toriel was startled at the sudden hug at first before she knelt down and rubbed gentle circles into their back. “You really are a funny child… If you had said that earlier, none of this would have happened.” she cooed “It is a good thing you took so long to change your mind…”

Flowey felt their shaking ease up as they buried her face into the purple fabric. The feeling came back and before he knew it, he found himself nuzzling his petals into the side of their head.

“C’mon, you big baby. Everyone’s waiting for us.” Flowey muttered softly into their hair.

Frisk took a deep breath to recomposed themselves and stood upright again. They reached out and took Toriel’s hand with their free one and gave Flowey a nuzzle in return. Together, they started heading down the mountain trail and into a bright new future.

Things were about to get interesting.
From a literal cave to suburbia, changes don't happen overnight.

For once in his floral life, Flowey was appreciative of down-time. Just him, the backyard, and the endless sky above.

The past week had been nothing if not insanely stressful for everyone. He really shouldn’t have been surprised though. Integrating an entire species into the rest of human society was not going to be an easy fix—especially on the young ambassador representing the monster race.

It started out miserably enough—the first human that spotted the merry group of monster misfits was a drunk, trigger happy hunter in the woods just outside of town. Undyne reacted just about as Undyne-ly as possible and struck the bullet out of the air with a spear before spouting off any number of curses that Toriel had to cover Frisk’s ears for. Five minutes into their happy ending and the second monster war was about to begin.

Thank God for Papyrus being the never-ending optimist and the perfect mediator in that situation. He managed to simultaneously talk down Undyne and get all buddy-buddy with the hunter. Within two minutes, the man was offering them all a “beer” and a ride in the back of his “pick up” into town. Papyrus really was the greatest mascot monsterkind could ask for (even though he didn’t help him or Frisk get a taste of that beer stuff).

Since that first night, it has been nothing but being interrogated by the police, meetings with mayor, and further grilling by the city counsel. Frisk had probably used their voice more in the past fives days than they had in their entire life previous. Stupid Toriel and Asgore didn’t even notice the exhaustion it placed on Frisk talking so much! Eventually, Flowey took up the mantle of sign-language translator since it became apparent that the wannabe politicians that they kept meeting with were too lazy to learn themselves. He kept civil (at least within earshot of other people) to not hinder the deliberations Frisk was working so hard on.

And after all that headache, the actual act of MOVING the monster population into the city was a freaking breeze!

Turns out the town of Ebotton (the settlement closest to the mountain) was a mostly abandoned mining town. With rumours of the cursed Mt. Ebott looming over them and a series of mining accidents in the hills around attributed to the same curse (instead of the company cheaping out when it came to safety equipment), the mining start-up ended before it really began. And it left a lot of empty houses just begging for light-starved monsters to take up residence.

Flowey just about screamed and pulled out his petals at this revelation. The stupidity of humanity never ceased to amaze him. And not the good type of amaze he was looking for.

So, that brought him where he was at that moment; planted in the backyard of their new home, watching the clouds roll by. Frisk was laying down next to him, eyes locked down on a book Toriel assigned them on political relations and economics. The first break they got in days, and they were studying! At least they had a pair of headphones over their ears to block out the noises coming from
the house itself.

Asgore, in a rare moment of competence, had suggested they get an entire townhouse and just knock out the walls that divided up the units so they could all live together and have enough room (and they wouldn’t be fighting over the bathroom in the morning).

Watching Undyne bust through a wall shouting like the Kool-Aid man was funny the first couple times until it started showering drywall and ceiling onto their heads. Of course, once the walls were ripped out, other modifications were presented. Alphys needed the basement soundproofed for her new lab, Asgore needed all the doorways expanded so he could go room to room without ducking down. Toriel just wanted to update the kitchen (along with fireproof it if Undyne and Papyrus wanted to keep up their cooking lessons).

Basically, it got very loud and busy very fast in there. Frisk hated the noise and the smell of all the construction, so Toriel sent the two of them out into the back with a bowl of popcorn and a pair of noise cancelling headphones Alphys built to help them calm down.

Flowey started leaning into Frisk’s hair, just barely making out some of the music playing in their headphones as he closed his eyes. Their dark brown hair was great at absorbing heat from the sun and the warmth on his face was oddly comforting to him. The feeling (god, he really needed to come up with a better name for that) once again flared up in his stem. He still had a lot of questions about it, but one thing he knew for sure was that he liked it.

Frisk shifted under him, slipping the headphones down and turning to face him. Flowey didn’t realize how much of his weight he was leaning on them until the sudden movement nearly had him toppling over.

“Bored?” Frisk asked with a concerned crease in their brow. Boredom was dangerous after all.

“Yes and no? I mean, I’m not doing anything and it’s okay that I’m not. We’ve been doing too much stuff already and now I don’t want to do much.” Flowey stammered half-heartedly. It was hard for him to convey his unusual content state given his history of restlessness.

“Tired?”

“Maybe a little…”

“Me too.” Frisk closed their book and crossed their arms under their head. Their open shoulder inviting Flowey to nuzzle into it before they both closed their eyes. Layers of stress just seemed to peel off Flowey’s entire being. He could even feel some of Frisk’s muscles starting to relax under his petals.

Flowey heard the soft click of the sliding backdoor open and close and slowly lifted his head to see which idiot was intruding on this admittedly intimate moment. He got shocked awake in a hurry from what he saw, though he couldn’t tell if he found it hilarious or terrifying.

Asgore was covered in DUST! Obviously, it was a mix of sawdust, plaster and broken drywall, but it was eerily similar to the dust Flowey was all too familiar with. Flowey started to shake from stifling his laughter and it started to wake Frisk up.

“No no no no! Don’t look!” Flowey barked out and wrapped his stem around their head to cover their eyes. He might find it hilarious, but given how many times they died in their fight with Asgore, well…

Frisk grumbled in frustration and tugged at his stem as Asgore started peeling off the filthy (DUSTY)
work suit he had the foresight to wear and hang it up on the partition of the back deck. He made a beeline for the garden hose next, spraying himself in the face to wash the grime and dust out of his beard and help the poor fluffy fool cool down from the hard work.

“Okay, it’s safe to look now,” Flowey quickly unwound himself from Frisk’s eyes, only to receive another unimpressed glare from his best friend. “Just trust me. You didn’t want to see that.”

“Howdy you two!” Asgore chuckled as he walked over “I hope the noise isn’t bothering you out here. It’s a nice day at least.”

“It really is…” Flowey sighed wistfully.

The three turned their gazes back up at the puffy white clouds passing by. Asgore remained just as dreamily mystified as back on the cliffside when the barrier just broke.

“Thank you for being so patient with the renovations. We are almost finished.” Asgore plonked himself down next to the duo with a loud thud from his massive frame hitting the ground. “In the meantime, have you two thought about what you would like to do with the backyard?”

Frisk jolted upright and started flapping their hands excitedly, knocking Flowey off his perch on their shoulder. Soon their hands steadied enough to form words.

“[We get to pick?]” Frisk signed eagerly, bouncing in their spot.

“But of course! This is your home as much as anyone else’s. Besides, we have so much yard to work with, we couldn’t possibly leave it so bare.” Asgore started chuckling at their excitement. He set his massive hand down on Frisk’s head and ruffled their already messy hair. Flowey felt a bitter scowl start to pull at his features. He used to do the same thing with Chara way back when. Was Asgore really going to treat Frisk like some cheap replacement-

Frisk only giggled louder and captured Asgore’s massive wrist in their arms as he lifted his hand back up.

“Oh, you want to go for a ride now, do you?” Asgore took Frisk’s hands with his and started spinning them around, their legs kicking out behind them as they trilled happily.

Chara always pushed his hand away and pouted at their hair being messed up. Where they shunned away from any kind of physical contact, Frisk was starved for it. Flowey scolded himself for comparing the two again.

“Oh, sorry Flowey. Did you want to go for a ride too?” Asgore gently set a wibbly Frisk back down on the ground before offering the little flower a paw and a smile.

“Erm, thanks but no thanks. I’d rather keep my roots where they are for now.” Flowey leaned away from the paw with an incredulous glance back up at the old king. “I’m just thinking about… all the possibilities for the yard! We do have a lot of space to work with after all!”

“Oh, s-sandbox!” Frisk chirped up as they steadied themself on their feet. Frisk did like building snow sculptures and forts until their hands went red and numb back in Snowdin. Sand would probably work similarly, but without the prospect of frostbite.

Asgore nodded and started running a hand through his beard. “And what about you, Flowey?”

Flowey scoffed under his breath. “I suppose it would be redundant to suggest a garden since the king of all green thumbs will be living along with us.”
Asgore’s bulbous belly started to quake with his booming laughter. “True enough, little friend, true enough!” He turned to face the back-left corner of the yard. Currently it was a mess of weeds and what looked like a raspberry bush gone rogue, but given time and gardening tools, Asgore would turn it into a lush garden of bounty. “Though that is only partially what I have in mind. Alphys suggested we build a nice greenhouse as well so that I may have plants to tend to, regardless of the seasons. Do you have any suggestions of what I should grow?”

“Just as long as there’s no more golden flowers—I don’t need any competition for top Flowey here!” Flowey said cuttingly.

“Oh? But then where would I get my favourite tea from?” Asgore leaned down with a mischievous twinkle in his eye. “Unless you’re offering, Flowey?”

Flowey flinched back with wide eyes. Frisk started giggling behind him and his expression twisted into a hard scowl. How dare they! Why he should rip that ugly old beard right off his face right now—No. Play it nice Flowey. Frisk would flip out and LOAD, then smiley would come along make everything… difficult.

“I mean, why waste limited greenhouse space on a flower that can grow anywhere and spread like wildfire?” Flowey scoffed proudly “I’ve seen them blooming in the harshest colds of Snowdin. We’re sturdy!”

Frisk hummed in agreement, patting the back of his petals gently. Flowey flinched angrily for a moment. Were they being condescending?!

“Food!” Frisk started signing almost too fast to read. “[Tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, pumpkins, spices and herbs!]”

Flowey’s mouth started to water (somehow) imagining all the delicious food Toriel could make for them with all those fresh vegetables. What if they could grow their own cinnamon for pie?! What’s cinnamon even look like as a plant? Is it even a plant?

“You know, Papyrus had the same suggestion earlier! He prides himself on the ingredients for his spaghetti, after all.” Asgore gave a strained smile. The poor fool tried the pasta, didn’t he? At least with Toriel taking over the cooking lessons, the idiot fish and skeleton might be able to make something edible… eventually.

“Ah, there you are! I wondered where you wandered off to.” Speak the Boss Monster’s name and she shall appear-

Asgore did a horrified double take, stumbling back onto his rump before Flowey and Frisk turned to see what spooked him so badly.

Standing there was the rest of their misfit-makeshift family (sans-Sans because the lazy asshole wandered off into town before the work even began), covered head to toe in crumbly, white dust. Flowey couldn’t contain himself this time. Between Asgore’s near-heart attack and the ghastly image of the rest of Frisk’s friends looking like war criminals, he burst out laughing his floral heart out.

And Frisk was laughing too!

“Hey Punks! What’s so funny?!” Undyne demanded. As if she didn’t know.

“Y-You all look like serial killers!” Flowey managed to choke out between his guffaws, bending
right over so he couldn’t face them. He could already tell that Toriel was not amused by the dark joke he just made.

“THAT’S SO SILLY! WHO WOULD WANT TO DO HARM TO DELICIOUS CEREAL?” Papyrus, the ever-oblivious lovable skeleton, only worsened their laugh-paralysis.

Flowey felt Frisk pitter their back to get his attention. “[This is like the monster-equivalent of being covered in red paint, isn’t it?]”

... The two of them collapsed back on the ground, their laughter renewed and their bellies aching. Now this was stress relief!

“You know, I should almost feel offended with you guys laughing so hard in my absence. I’m supposed to be the source of all comedy in this house.”

And there’s a source of stress.

Flowey grimaced up at Smiley Trashbag waltzing over like he owns the place (even though he sort of does), carrying a few boxes of... PIZZA!

“I figured you’d all be bone tired from working all day, so I did something useful and grabbed you all some grub from Grillby’s new place.” Sans froze for a moment at the same image that made Flowey laugh so hard, his eyes flickering in their sockets. “…Yikes. ‘Hope the showers are at least working.”

“Oh, how considerate of you, Sans.” Toriel chirped happily and claimed the snail pizza for herself.

“SANS, FOR ONCE YOU DID SOMETHING INCREDILY USEFUL! GOOD JOB, BROTHER!” Papyrus bounded over and lifted his brother up high in an incredibly sappy (and dusty, oh god just look at his face!) hug!

“Even though he skipped out on most of the ACTUAL work.” Undyne grumbled under her breath as she helped spray down Alphys with the garden hose.

“Hey, I was working.” Sans winked back at some invisible audience “I was working the room at Grillby’s!”

Not even Sans’s horrible sense of humour could deter Flowey’s good mood right now. Pizza was a rare luxury in the underground and the smell of the cheese wafting through the air only made his mouth water. Frisk was bouncing and chanting “Pizza”, and Flowey found himself joining along with their chants and bopping his head up and down in excitement before Sans finally handed them a box.

Frisk plopped down next to him and flipped the lid on their supper with gusto. The two took a moment to just... bask. Golden cheese, pepperoni and bacon that shone from grease. Pizza was a gift from the GODS!

Frisk shoved a slice into their mouth like a starving beast. Immediately regretting that decision and whine-humming over their burnt mouth. Flowey had no such hesitation as he grabbed a slice and tilted his head back to swallow it whole like a snake.

“Flowey! Sensible bites please!” Toriel looked on in horror at his display. “It is very rude, and you
could choke. I do not think that there is a proper method of CPR to use on a plant.”

Pfft, he can’t choke! He doesn’t even need to breathe. He can still burp though, which he did with gusto. Undyne, of course, took it as a challenge and quickly asserted her dominance as the burp-champion. Papyrus only complained about not being able to compete too.

Toriel was not amused.

“What about this one? I-it’s shaped like a pirate ship.” Alphys tilted her tablet screen over so Frisk and Flowey could see the page she was looking at. The bright screen was one of the last few lights remaining as the day started dying down and the fireflies started popping up.

Ever since Toriel and Asgore went back into the house to finish up the painting (Undyne and Papyrus were too aggressive in slathering paint on the walls, Alphys was too short), the remaining friends started discussing their plans for the backyard like the old king suggested.

Undyne wanted to put in a salt water pool so she could smell the ocean whenever she got up. Papyrus wanted to put in a snowbox next to Frisk’s sandbox (if Sans could keep snow on his Hotland station, it was possible!), and Alphys suggested getting Frisk some kind of jungle gym swing-set since she wouldn’t be spending too much time outside herself.

Frisk, as with the last FIVE sets they saw, loved it! But Flowey had to be the logical one out of the two and point out the obvious.

“Bad idea. The metal slide would get too hot. Not everyone has fire-proof scales, Doctor.” Flowey flicked past the ad with a vine, quickly surveying all the options. He didn’t care how much Frisk whined about it being “their choice”, he would not have them getting hurt over something this stupid and complain about it later on.

“Sa-sandbox!” Frisk jabbed a finger at the screen. Smooth wood structure with sealing paint, plastic slide, plastic covers over the swing’s chains so their fingers don’t get pinched, and a sandbox already attached.

“Perfect.” Flower mumbles sleepily, yawning in tandem with Frisk. “Or it would be if we could finally be allowed into the house to sleep on something other than grass!”

“FEELING TIRED? FEAR NOT, DEAR TIRED FRIENDS! I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, WILL INVIGORATE YOU WITH MY SMILE!” Papyrus shouted from behind them. “IMPROVED WITH THE HELP OF MY NEW TINY BUG FRIENDS!”

Papyrus’ face was COVERED in fireflies, lighting him up like a cheap Halloween decoration. Flowey laughed, but only half as hard as he was able to. Exhaustion always put a damper on his AMAZING sense of humour.

“Oh dear, doesn’t that itch?” Toriel put a paw to her muzzle to stifle her giggle.

“NOT AT ALL, LADY ASGORE-TORIEL!” Papyrus trilled proudly “I DON’T HAVE ANY SKIN FOR THEM TO ITCH!”

“Alright, but please leave your little glowing friends outside, will you?” Toriel kneeled down in front of Frisk, steadying the little human in her paws. “Come along, child. Your room is ready and you look ready to drop.”
Flowey quickly wound his way up Frisk’s shoulder before Toriel picked them off the ground. Stupid old hag was about to leave him behind on the lawn! Frisk wrapped their other arm around his stem and nuzzled into his petals like he was a stuffed toy, helping to quell his anger just a little bit.

Frisk whimpered just a little bit as they passed the threshold into the house. The place reeked of fresh paint and sawdust and—were they sniffing him?! Yeah, he was a flower and he probably smelled really nice compared to…

Of forget it. Flowey grumbled half heartedly and nuzzled Frisk in return. “Stupid smelly house…”

“Fear now, my dears. We painted your room first so the paint is dry, and we vacuumed up all the foul-smelling dust.” True to her word, the second she opened the door to their new shared room, it was just a breath of fresh air… over a stale interior.

Of course, it was practically identical to his room back in New Home. Same bed, same dresser, same box full of dumb toys he wasted hours with. At least she had the decency to personalize it just a little bit. A new desk, a bookshelf stuffed with reference books from Toriel, manga volumes from Alphys, joke books from Sans, and a shelf under the window next to the bed just for him!

Toriel set Frisk down into the plush bed, tucking them under the soft sheets and the bliss was evident on their face from the word go. She tried urging Flowey off of their arm, but he was stuck fast and far to comfortable to be pried away.

“Good night Frisk, I love you.” Toriel cooed quietly before stepping out of the room and turning the lights off.

Flowey looked over onto Frisk’s serene face. Looked like they were fast asleep already…
Asriel’s ears perked up. The faintest echo was bouncing off the familiar cave walls of the Ruin’s outskirts.

**Oh no…**

He looked over his shoulder to his parents still talking with the mayor of the small town. Still knee-deep in some political matter that even his mother said would be “too boring” for him right now. Surely, they wouldn’t notice if he slipped out to investigate. They did raise him to help anyone, right?

He slowly tip-toed his way down the less-tread road. With how small the ruins are even compared to the rest of the underground, it was surprising that this area was so empty.

“H-help! Somebody!”

The cries got louder and more desperate. Whoever was crying sounded really hurt. Asriel picked up his pace, panic starting to set into his soul. What if he was too late? What if he couldn’t help? What if-

What kind of monster was that?

“H-hello?” Asriel hesitated. Whoever they were, this monster looked hurt and… wet. They were covered in some kind of red goop too. Wait-was it coming from inside of them?!

They weakly lifted their head to him. Tears were pouring from their eyes and mixing with the red dripping down their face.

“Please, don’t hurt me…” they whimpered hoarsely.

Why would they think he would hurt them? They looked plenty hurt already. Almost like they… fell.

Asriel looked up and saw light streaming down. They came from the surface… that was a long and bumpy fall they took! He was horrible at healing magic, but Mom could fix them up in a second!

“Don’t worry, I’m here to help!” Asriel kneeled down and gently lifted them up so they could lean against his side “I promise, I’ll take care of you. My name is Asriel…”

“I-I… I’m Chara…”

**Please no…**

“Chara? Chara, please come out!” Asriel was banging on the bathroom door. This was the third time this month…

Panicked clattering and slammed drawers echoed from behind the door before Chara opened it. Their neutral face betrayed their hand nervously tugging down on their sleeve.

“Didn’t know you were in such a rush to use the toilet, Asriel.” Chara muttered as they passed him by, returning to their shared bedroom.
“You know that’s not what I meant!” Asriel hurried after them, biting back tears. The last thing he wanted was for Chara to distract him by calling him a crybaby. “You... You know I hate it when you do... that.”

Chara simply laid on their bed, hugging a pillow and turned away from him. Asriel hesitated a moment, trying to steel his courage. All he needed to do was talk and keep talking until he talked himself out. He sat down on Chara’s bed, his back turned to them like theirs to his.

“I do it so you don’t have to.” Chara cut him off in an instance. Asriel whipped his head around, starring at the back of Chara’s messy crop of hair.

“I’m so used to being punished. But now...” Their shoulders started to shake, but Chara didn’t turn to face him. “You’re all so nice and sweet, and I’m still the same walking talking fuck up. I’m so scared that I’m still ruining everything and you’re all too forgiving to even mention it!”

Their shaking only got worse. Asriel only wanted to reach out and hold them, but he knew that would only make them panic. So many people have hurt them in their short life. Too many. He felt so helpless, but all he could do was listen.

“O-one day your patience is going to run out, and all that punishment is going to come out all at once! So, I have to keep...” Chara curled in on themself even tighter, wrapping her arms around their head.

“I don’t know!!” Chara let out a sob and they finally broke. They rolled over to face Asriel and for the first time since he found them, Chara wrapped their arms around him in a tight hug, hiding their red and tear-stained face in his sweater. Asriel slowly eased their arms around them to not spook them further.

“We won’t hurt you, Chara. We love you. I love you. What those people did to you before was... wrong and you didn’t deserve it.” Asriel mumbled into their hair, hoping that they could hear him over their own sobs. He never had a good way with words like his mother did, but she was gone for the night with father, so he had to be brave for them. “I wish I was strong enough to find those people and beat them up for you! Then I could protect you and the whole Underground like a true God of Hyperdeath!”

Maybe not the best time to bring up their play-character names, but it was worth a shot to make Chara laugh.

Chara quivered a little. Oh no, were they crying more-

Oh, they were giggling.

“A-and I wish...” Chara sniffled and wiped their eyes on their sleeve. “I wish I was strong enough to be what you guys need me. L-like the demon who comes when people say its name!!”

Please, god no... Not this dream again!

“It’s a demon! Run!”

The humans were scurrying around them in a panic. Chara had prepared Asriel for such a reaction while the two of them were still in planning.

It was jarring to say the least. So many people, so like Chara yet... not. He thought that maybe bringing Chara’s body to the flowers would have at least shown they were... He didn’t really understand why, but it was Chara’s idea.
(“There they are!”) Chara turned their shared head towards the small garden in the town center. The beautiful golden flowers they were always speaking so fondly of were swaying gently in the spring breeze.

Together, they all but charged to the flower patch and knelt down, gently resting Chara’s body among the flowers. Asriel reached down and plucked a flower up to their face, twirling it in his fingers and sniffing it. It was amazing-

And arrow whizzed passed their face, barely grazing their nose and ripping the head off the flower they held. Asriel and Chara stood in a panic, still clinging to Chara’s old body close as they stared down the encroaching mob of armed humans.

(“It’s… it’s them!”) Chara tensed and Asriel felt a combination of fear and rage emanating from their part of their shared consciousness. Their vision tunneled towards three specific humans in the crowd. (“This is our chance!”)

(“But, Chara-“)

(“Asriel, we talked about this! They’re no match against us the way we are now, anyway.”) Chara lifted their arm up and Asriel felt a sickeningly wide grin split their face.

(“N-no!”) Asriel pulled their arm up at the last moment, sending a stream of pure destruction magic into the sky and scaring the villagers further. (“Chara, I can’t do this! I’m sorry-”)

(“Asriel, this isn’t a debate! We have to-“)

An arrow pierced into their shoulder and Chara screamed out in pain in their mind. Over and over, the humans barraged and pummeled them.

“P-please! They hurt me once! They’re hurting me again! They deserve to die! PLEASE ASRIEL, PLEASE! I DON’T WANT TO DIE AGAIN!

“I DON’T WANT TO LOSE YOU TOO!

“ASRIEL!”

“Flowey…”

Flowey’s eyes shot open and his stem shot his straight up, friendliness pellets at the ready for… the dark, empty, safe room. Right. This was what was real now.

Flowey looked back down as Frisk groaned uncomfortably. His vines were gripped tight around their arm and their hand was red and swollen from the pressure.

“Oh. Whoops.” Flowey unwound himself entirely from Frisk’s wrist.

He started snaking his way from under the blankets and up onto the window shelf above the bed as Frisk sat upright and rubbed the blood flow back into their hand. He tried ignoring the look they were giving him.

“I’ll listen…” Frisk whispered sleepily. Oh, of course they would want to hear his life this late at night when they were both exhausted! They are so nice it was sickening sometimes.

Flowey glared and pushed their forehead back down towards their pillow with a vine. “Go back to sleep, idiot.”
Frisk whined in protest, weakly pushing back up against his vine. But not even the power of
determination can defeat 4am! They collapsed back down and were asleep before they hit their
pillow.

With a satisfied smirk, Flowey ducked under the curtains and looked out at the sea of stairs
blanketing the sky. Shining more magnificently than any wishing room in Waterfall. He could never
get bored of looking at this.

Finally, now Flowey can brood in peace!

Think! He meant THINK in peace. Nothing angsty about his current situation at all. He’s just the
soul-less incarnation of a lonely heart-broken prince trapped within a flower doomed to forever-

Yeah, okay, it’s really angsty. But at least with good reason. And Frisk at least helps him feel less-so.
But that’s part of the problem. Even with that feeling-

Okay, no! He is naming that stupid half-feeling right now so he doesn’t have to feel like an idiot
every time he starts thinking about it.

Uhhh, how about Pulse? Sure, why not?

Anyway…

Even with his Pulse making him satisfied with just being around Frisk, he hasn’t felt anything at all
around the rest of the family. Not even his parents! He can’t just spend his entire life clinging to
Frisk’s arm, right?

Well, to be fair, they do need him. Who else would bother giving quick and easy sign translations
23/7? Frisk doesn’t seem to mind either, so long as he doesn’t coil too tightly. He might have to work
on that part though.

Maybe, even though everyone is free from the monotony of the Barrier, they’re all still too
predictable. He knows everyone too well and he can easily predict how they’ll react, even in this
limitless world.

Frisk was—still is—new to him. Unpredictable in some ways. They were a new and unprecedented
factor in the equation that was the Underground. Now the experiment isn’t contained at all, and the
unknown factors outnumber the known a bazillion fold. Maybe all he needed was to (ugh) makes
some new friends… like Frisk wanted in the first place.

Dammit! He’s playing right into their adorable and soft hands once again!

“GOOD MORNING HUMAN AND FLOWER! IT IS I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, HERE
WITH YOUR WAKE-UP CALL TO START THIS GLORIOUS DAY!”

Flowey would have throttled Papyrus every morning if he didn’t share a room with Frisk. He was
not a morning plant in the slightest, and Papyrus screaming them awake was making him seriously
consider adopting his “kill or be killed” philosophy. Their skeleton friend was going to be the death
of him sooner or later from how exhausting he could be anyway.

It didn’t help that Papyrus didn’t understand that not all humans scream themselves awake at the slightest loud noise. While Frisk liked to play it off like a funny quirk, Flowey was still unconvinced.

Whatever, they’re both awake, Frisk is on the floor, he’s hungry, might as well get on with the day.

“HONESTLY, WHAT IS IT WITH YOU AND MY BROTHER AND SLEEPING ON THE FLOOR?” Papyrus scolded while he plucked Frisk off the floor and onto his shoulder. Flowey just groaned as he slowly snaked his way off the mattress and up the offered boney arm and up to his usual host. “IT IS A GOOD THING I AM SO ACCUSTOMED TO CARRYING PEOPLE TO THE BREAKFAST TABLE OR ELSE YOUR MORNINGS WOULD BEGIN WITH SUCH LANGUITY! NYEH HEH!”

“Yeah, lucky us…” Flowey grumbled under his breath. Frisk gave him a small tired shrug and ran their fingers over his petals.

Were… were their hands shaking?

Flowey was about to mention it when Papyrus started his gentlest stomping towards their bedroom door and Frisk pulled their shirt collar up over their nose and mouth. Oh, right, the construction smells might not have died down in the night.

Flowey took a few deep sniffs as the two of them were carried through the house and down the stairs. All he could smell was Asgore’s tea steeping and Alphys and Undyne’s breakfast miso soup. The weirdoes. Who eats soup for breakfast?!

“All clear for smells.” Flowey cooed with a not-so-subtle condescending pat on Frisk’s head. Frisk only quirked an eyebrow back at him. “Yes, I’m sure! It’s not like I want you smelling my head again. God…”

Frisk giggled and pulled their sweater back down, only to stick their tongue out at him. He returned in full force before Papyrus plonked the two of them down at the kitchen table.

“NOW TO GO SEE IF I CAN PERSUADE SANS OUT OF BED. THE WORK OF THE GREAT PAPYRUS IS NEVER OVER!” Papyrus pirouetted out of the room and back up the stairs towards his brother’s room.

Toriel was seated across from them, but she was slumped over asleep on yet another book and a wall of crumpled up pages of paperwork was off to one side, and a cold mug of Asgore’s tea to the other. She looked like she was up all night trying to come up with proposals to the schoolboard.

Frisk lifted a hesitant hand towards her, but Flowey took a more direct approach and jabbed her head with a vine before they could stop him. Toriel jolted awake, papers flying around in her slight panic.

“Oh, good morning my children…” Toriel yawned wide into her paw.

“Geez lady, you look terrible.” Flowey snickered when Frisk gave a disapproving grunt, but that was all the concern he could manage to show.

“I suppose I do…” Toriel took a sip from the lukewarm tea with a tired smile “But we have quite a lot work ahead of us if we want to obtain lasting peace and prosperity. That alone is worth the sleepless nights.”

“Yeah yeah, your dream school isn’t going to build itself.” Flowey reached over and grabbed a
couple muffins from a Muffet’s bakery box “But no matter how many all-nighters you pull, it’s not going to spring up overnight either. Learn to pace yourself better.”

Frisk drummed their hands on the table and cooed to Flowey “worried?”

Flowey responded by shoving a muffin into Frisk’s mouth to stifle their giggling.

“Yes, I must admit the school is a rather large priority if only for selfish reason, but it is hardly our only major goal for the near future.” Toriel leaned back in her chair and rubbed her eyes while she gathered her sleepy thoughts. “It may have been a stroke of good luck that Ebotton was such a small community that our sudden appearance didn’t cause a large-scale shock in the human population, but the town is still lacking key pieces of infrastructure. With the school aside, we still need to establish health care facilities with the capacity to care for monsters, a public transit system for the growing population centers, and Alphys has mentioned issues with the existing telecommunications system. Add onto that the fact that the entire monster population does not have citizenship and we have quite a lot on our hands…”

Flowey’s demeanor shifted from bored to furious at a dangerous speed. His stem shot up straight and awake at Toriel’s last comment.

“How are we not considered citizens of a land we have lived in—hell, BEEN TRAPPED IN—for thousands of years before this stupid country was even established?!” Flowey spat “They should be asking US for citizenship to begin with!”

Frisk held up the other muffin to his face in a vain attempt to distract him. Pastries will not quell his fury this time!

“While I don’t condone your language, Flowey,” Toriel gave an unimpressed glare from over her mug of tea to the symbiote on Frisk’s shoulder “I do appreciate your passion in this instance. Your knowledge of history and monster law has been a great asset so far.”

Flowey glanced back in his mind at the timelines wherein he read every book in the Underground. It was one of his more benign timelines until he started setting all those fires.

“Hey, a flower’s got to remain knowledgeable in this world!” he chirped with a cheeky wink.

“Well, I am grateful for it either way.” Toriel surprisingly enough reached over to pat Flowey’s head in gratitude. He pulled his head back at the last moment, but it was a nice sentiment at least. “It is only because of the good first impressions you, Frisk, and Papyrus have given to the officials we have met that we have been able to establish the population as we have…”

And the fact that monsters’ currency was pure gold didn’t hurt. Typical greedy humans were more interested in lining their coffers than making amends for the centuries of imprisonment that monsters had faced.

“I know you have already done so much this week, but I have arranged a meeting with the local schoolboard tonight to see if I could fast track the establishment of my school, and it would help considerably if the ambassador was there with me.” Toriel gave a small pleading look over to the tiny human across the table. Frisk merely puffed out their chest in determination and pride.

“[I will spend the whole day studying so I can help better!]” Frisk signed out eagerly.

Flowey was considerably less eager. Another day spent in front of books, then paperwork, then old people in suits that look at them all like freaks. Some of which have guns! Oh joy…
Frisk’s fingers ran over his petals gently. “[You want to take today off? You probably already know everything I’m going to be reading up on anyway.]”

He took an honest minute to mull over the option. On the one leaf, he did know everything Toriel’s books would be teaching them and re-reading that stale garbage didn’t appeal to him at all. But on the other leaf, he wasn’t sure what he would do without Frisk, and he didn’t like the idea of leaving them alone at the meeting with a bunch of stuffy schoolboard members and Toriel. Then again, the meeting wasn’t until later…

“As long as I don’t have to hang out with Sans all day and you pick me up before the meeting starts. I still have a job to do as Frisk’s official translator!” Even he found it odd that he was demanded to keep a responsibility, but one thing he could feel even without the Pulse was pride and he took pride in his fluency in sign as it was one of the first things he taught himself.

“Well, bud, it just so happens that I can’t look after you anyway.” And here comes the smiling sentient garbage bag, tucked neatly under his brother’s arm and dragged around like a teddy bear with no sense of self awareness. “I have plans for the day. And to petal you the truth, I wouldn’t want to spend the day with you either.”

Papyrus unceremoniously dropped him into a seat at the table (to which Sans immediately fell asleep in) and cheered “BUT THAT JUST MEANS YOU CAN SPEND THE DAY WITH YOUR BESTEST SKELETON FRIEND, FLOWEY! OH, WE WILL HAVE SO MUCH FUN!”

If Flowey had shoulders, he would shrug.

“…Eh, why not?”

Chapter End Notes

Hey guys, sorry for taking so long. Finals were kinda kicking my butt for a while.
WHO WANTS SOME WORLD BUILDING?!
Heart-to-Hardware

Chapter Summary

In a small town, the hardware store is the place to be!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Why does a town this small need a hardware store this HUGE?!

Flowey didn’t really like crowds, but half of the entire monster population and about a third of the humans in town were stuffed into the massive parking lot of some big chain store. He shouldn’t have been too surprised; his “family” just got finished renovations and a lot of other monsters would want to make some adjustments to their new homes. He could see Vulcans and Pyropes looking over fire-proofed floorings, Woshua with a cart full of cleaning products and a humidifier, and an Icecap trying to find an AC unit that matches its hat.

“WHAT A WONDERFUL DAY FOR PEOPLE TO BE PURSUING HOME IMPROVEMENT! DON’T YOU THINK SO, FLOWEY?” Papyrus glanced over onto his armoured shoulder and to its golden passenger clinging to it. His battle body wasn’t nearly as comfortable as Frisk’s human squishiness. And it reeked like sweaty skeleton.

“You think every day is wonderful. Even when we were stuck under that god-awful mountain” Flowey turned to flip through the sizable list Asgore sent them off with. Say what you will about his actual political effectiveness (and Flowey could say a good many things), but the man takes his gardening seriously. “So how can anything be actually wonderful is wonderful is the default? By your logic, this day is no better than when your washing machine exploded and flooded your house with suds.”

Papyrus stopped in his tracks right in the aisle and started that OBNOXIOUS POSE AGAIN. Oh boy, here comes a cheesy monologue in the middle of the store with everyone staring. What is it with skeletons and having no sense of self-awareness?

“BUT EVERY DAY IS WONDERFUL, MY DEAR FLOWEY!” Papyrus pounded his fist to his chest and smirked with undue smugness “BECAUSE WE ARE AWAKE AND ALIVE, THIS DAY HAS INFINITE POSSIBILITIES FOR US TO MAKE THINGS WONDERFUL!”

The bystanders around them were of course staring; some in awe, some in confusion. Hell, a few were even applauding the optimism exuded by the boney annoyance. If only they knew. If only everyone really knew how very much finite possibilities were. It’s stuff like this that made Flowey start hating one of the last interesting monsters around. Well, until now that is.

“I thought I heard a familiar sounded voice! Pappy you sonnuva gun, how you doing?”

[ACT] *CHECK

Archibald Drunner LV 5
Proud of his beard

Resolute Soul

Oh, that hunter guy that brought them into town. Fancy meeting him here. At least this time he wasn’t pointing a gun to anyone’s chin.

“AH! GOOD TO SEE YOU, HUMAN-ARCHIBALD!” Papyrus strode over and eagerly took Archibald’s hand into his own with a firm shake. “WE HAVE BEEN DOING VERY WELL SO FAR, THANKS TO YOUR ASSISTANCE! WE ARE JUST HERE TO PICK UP SOME SUPPLIES TO IMPROVE OUR ALREADY MARVELOUS NEW HOME. MY FLORAL COMPANION HAS BEEN PUT IN CHARGE OF MANAGING EVERYONE’S REQUESTS!”

Flowey barely lifted his head from Papyrus’ shoulder and just tossed the scrap of paper to the old man in flannel. His early wake-up call and late night brooding must have left him more lethargic and benign than normal.

“Bah, only my doc calls me ‘Archibald’; call me Archie!” Archie (ugh) chuckled before looking over the list “Boy-howdy you got a packed shopping itinerary here, boys. Someone must have a serious green thumb to be needing all this.”

Flowey chuckled darkly and twisted his face into a vicious fanged grin. “Yeah, you shot at him and called him Satan-Sasquatch! Heeheeheehahahah!”

Nothing. Not even a flinch from the old timer. All Archie did was chuckle and slap his knee. Man, is Flowey losing his touch or are all humans just numb to his antics?

“Boy, you are one freaky flower. If you could teach me that by Halloween, I’d be the talk of the street.” Oh, he was so tempted to bite this man right now. He wants scary? He’ll get scary!

“Anyways, you boys are in the right—opposite side of the store for most of this stuff! C’mon, let’s get you to the garden center.”

Blah Blah Blah… Over an hour spent on Papyrus’ uncomfortable shoulder listening to two loud idiots talk in excruciating detail about nothing! Sports! The weather! The junk Asgore wanted them to buy! Hell, Archie even had an opinion on pasta that turned into a massive argument. Flowey would have had an aneurism (or the plant equivalent of one) if he weren’t so tired. Thankfully, Archie offered them a ride in his truck after Papyrus discovered he couldn’t borrow the carts to take everything back to the house (and still being denied whatever the heck that “beer” stuff is).

“So boys, how you liking ol’ Ebotton so far? If you got any questions, just ask me. I’ve lived here a good 30 years. I bet the world has changed quite a lot since… Well, you know.” Archie tried to laugh off the statement as he trailed off. Like centuries of darkness and hopelessness was some kind of joke! Flowey shot the man the dirtiest possible glare he could manage.

“WHILE THAT IS TRUE, WE HAVE MANAGED TO KEEP SOME SEMBLANCE OF UP TO DATE WITH THE REMNANTS OF HUMAN CVILIZATION THAT FLOWED DOWN THE RIVER AND WOUND UP AT THE DUMP. A VARITABLE UNTAPPED TREASURE TROVE OF TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE!” Papyrus cooed about all his fond memories of sifting through garbage. “SO MUCH OF OUR DEAR DR. ALPHYS’ PERSONAL ANIME COLLECTION WAS RESCUED FROM THE WASTES!”
Flowey could swear he heard Archie mutter something about talking to city counsel about proper waste disposal when his eyes turned to the side window. Sure enough, he saw human after human sparing them and any other monster on the street with a quizzical look. It may have been a far cry from shouts of “demon” and grabbing weapons like the last time. But still, it was… concerning.

“Yeah, I have a question Archie,” Flowey’s tone turned serious (he even reduced the antagonism so Archie would be more likely to give an honest answer). “How do you humans feel about monsters?”

The old man’s face turned more somber than he’d ever been before and he took a deep breath. “Well, that’s about the only question worth asking now, isn’t it?” He drummed on the steering wheel for a moment as he gathered his thoughts, staring ahead like the red light would hold all the answers. “I guess, the long and the short of it is that people are… unsure. That can be just as dangerous as anything else.”

Papyrus quirked his head and “nyeh”-ed in curiosity.

“See, humans are a rare combination of both incredibly smart and unbelievably stupid.” Wow, some self awareness from the guy who talks like Yosemite Sam of all people. “We can think of a million different outcomes to anything, but we will hyper-focus only on the bad ones and makes poor decisions out of fear. So much is up in the air right now with monsters appearing outta nowhere like you weren’t just fairy tales, people are just waiting for something to snap and all hell to break loose. It won’t take much to do it, either…”

That’s right… Humans are notorious for their fear of the unknown. Monsterkind was all but forgotten in the time since the barrier went up. Hell, even magic was gone from the human world! Asgore used to tell stories of human mages that he used to study with back before the war, and they could have given him a run for his gold for their mastery of fire magic. For such power to be in the hands of creatures so foreign…

“NYEH! WELL THAT IS JUST SILLY!” Papyrus pouted as much as a skeleton could. “WHY WOULD ANYONE BE AFRAID WHEN NOTHING BAD HAS HAPPENED YET? IF NOTHING IS CERTAIN, THAT ONLY MEANS THAT THERE ARE INFINITE POSSIBILITIES OF GOOD THINGS TO COME!”

There was a beat. Archie just stared between the two monsters for a moment. Silence became chuckles, became heartfelt laughter, became a car honking from behind for them to move since the light changed.

“Paps, if the rest of the world was half as optimistic as you, we’d all be in a better place!” Flowey could tell the old man was giving the widest grin under his bushy beard. “But, you know, I’m glad you monsters are coming in and actually making something of this town. ‘Rest of us were fine with just sitting by and watching it all waste away, letting our kids grow up knowing if they wanna be anything in life they gotta get the hell outta here as soon as they can. But here you guys are putting up farms, factories, stores, restaurants, anything just ‘cause you’re happy to be in the sunlight! Monsters are making this place live again, and that’s just amazing. So, thanks.”

Papyrus was actually brought to tears by the man’s vote of confidence, but all Flowey heard was gratitude that monsters were helping make his livelihood secure. While it wasn’t a venomous plight for monsterkind’s destruction, Flowey was still left with a faint bitterness that wouldn’t leave. His only relief came when he was finally put back into the soft earth while Papyrus and Archie (and Undyne once she saw how heavy some of the stuff was) started unpacking all the supplies and tools from the back of the truck. Feeling the cool, fresh earth around his roots perked him right up.

Flowey took a glance over at the scraps of paper Undyne dropped when she ran over to help and
saw she was sketching out designs for her proposed pool. Though, the drawings looked more like fish ponds with death traps in them. No way she was going to get permits for backyard harpoon guns and flamethrowers in a residential area.

Asgore stood up from weeding one corner of the yard and came over to greet the returning friends. “Ah, howdy Mr. Drunner, good to see you. I hope you have been well.”

“Well if it ain’t King Fluffybuns!” Archie said it. He said the thing. He said the thing and spurred Undyne into a howling laughter that caught Flowey up in it too.

Asgore’s belly quaked in the vain attempt to stem his own chuckles as he sheepishly covered his snout with a paw. “I see you’ve become acquainted with Gerson since we last met.”

“Oh yeah, that turtle is a hoot!” Archie chuckled, setting down a large bag of topsoil near where Asgore was working. “We meet up at Grillby’s every night. I win money off him in pool and he wins it all back at darts! Fella’s got good aim for only having one eye.”

“Hey! I resemble that! You wanna go, old man?!” Undyne crowed angrily as she dropped about two hundred pounds of playground equipment, gardening tools, and Papyrus onto the lawn.

“He spoke highly of you, little missy!” Archie chuckled with a wave over, seemingly turning Undyne’s anger into pride.

Pieces of the playground were haphazardly strewn about the lawn when Undyne wrestled them from their box. Papyrus eagerly started making comments about how “puzzle-like” this was… before they found the instructions. Undyne cackled something about how real monsters don’t need stupid things like instructions. Flowey gave them an hour before they either set the whole thing on fire, or give up and use the instructions. Honestly, he couldn’t decide which would be more amusing.

“But boy, he’s really trying to get caught up with human history since before the Barrier. He’s been asking me so many questions about this, that and the other thing, I’m starting to feel like I’m back to being a teacher!” Archie mused, running a hand through his scruffy beard like a sagely old wizard.

“Oh, you used to be a teacher? Perhaps it would interest you to speak to my w-” Asgore’s brow creased and he took a deep breath. It’s been years and he still hasn’t gotten used to it? Man, get over it! “My ex-wife. She’s trying to established a mixed species school and she would love to have you as a teacher.”

Archie’s demeanor turned melancholic as he leaned against the fence and pulled a strange box and a metal flip lighter from his jean pocket. “I’d like to, but I haven’t actually been a teacher in a dog’s age. There was…” He plucked a small white paper stick from the box and twirled it pensively in his hand. “There was an altercation with another teacher. He said some things about my son I took exception to.”

Asgore’s brow creased further in concern. Archie merely stuck the paper stick in his mouth and set it one end on fire before billowing out smoke like a dragon. A neat, but useless party trick, and nowhere near as cool as some of the things a real dragon could do with their smoke either! A pale human imitation, of course.

“I… had not realized you were a father. I would love to have your son over for a cup of tea one of these days.” Asgore awkwardly tried to steer the conversation into a happier direction.

“I’m sure he would have loved that, but unfortunately Atticus is… no longer with us.” And failing. What a twist! “He left us of his own accord years back. But don’t you worry none, I hence made my
peace with that as much as I can…”

Oh man, now this was getting interesting! Flowey saw the thousand-yard stare grow in Asgore’s eyes. He could tell every thought going through his head. ‘Was this Atticus kid climbed the mountain?’, ‘Had I killed him?’, ‘Does Archibald realize what I’ve done?’, ‘What do I do now?!’. The tension building in the air was delicious, and Undyne and Papyrus were too busy to notice it and but in! Archibald pushed himself off the wood of the fence and looked Asgore right in the eye once again.

“And no, he didn’t take the hike up the mountain. He did us the kindness of leaving a body to bury. His voice was calm and quiet so not to alert the others in the yard, but Flowey was close and unnoticeable enough to listen in. “Listen, not too many people had cared to recall the real story behind the cursed mountain, but with you monsters popping up outta nowhere, people are gonna start asking the right questions and looking back into the old wives’ tales and figure out fact from fiction. Seven human souls, right?”

Oooooh! He knows! Asgore is stiff as a board and sweating bullets in the way only Toriel has been able to make him. It took Flowey all of his willpower and artificial DETERMINATION not to burst out laughing.

“My only bit of advice to you is you’d best get your story straight before dangerous people start asking questions. I like you monster guys, and I can hardly fault you for whatever you had to do for your survival and freedom, but not everyone’s gonna be so sympathetic…” With that, the old man sauntered over to the two monsters struggling to put together a swing set. Casual and calm like nothing had even happened and leaving the King of all monsters in a cold sweat.

Now this is going to be interesting!

…

IF ONLY IT WASN’T HIS JOB TO PREVENT IT! DAMN AMBASSADOR DUTIES!

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact: I based Ebotton slightly off of the atmosphere of Possum Springs from Night In The Woods!
Checkmate Then Check!

Chapter Summary

Monster-Human relations get a much needed boost, and so does Flowey's blood-sugar levels!... Wait, flowers don't have blood.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Two hours. They have been in this damn meeting for two damn hours. Two hours which could have otherwise been spent productively. Playing video games! testing out the new swing set! eating pie! Anything would have been better than sitting around listening to old humans blather on in circles about bureaucratic nonsense!

“Oh, I’m sorry, even though your credentials far exceed anything we require and you’re far more qualified than any of us to be in charge of children, just because you don’t have a slip of paper with a stamp on it saying you’re a citizen and you’re not a criminal issued by our local government, our hands are tied. Oh, so so soooo sorry dear Queen who has lived on these lands for thousands of years before any of us were born!”

What absolute garbage…

Flowey was about to pull out his own petals, and he could feel that Frisk was doing no better. They loudly drummed their hands on the table as they wrecked their young brain for any type of loophole in the situation. The school board members leading the meeting were just snickering on the other side of the table, muttering about how “bored” the young ambassador must be with all this. It was taking everything Flowey had in him to keep a civil and… cute expression on his face.

Glancing just past his petals, he could see Toriel doing much worse than Frisk, but in a different way. She tried maintaining an air of calm professionalism this entire time, but Flowey could see the look of heartbreak slowly building in her eyes. He’d never know her for being so defeatist when it came to political matters like this. But then again, with the amount of “loss” in her recent life, things were bound to change.

Flowey felt a surge of DETERMINATION soar up his roots and stem from Frisk’s arm (Oh yeah, that’s the stuff!). They vocalized to get his and Toriel’s attention before signing beneath the lip of the table. He felt a smirk cross his face—the same kind he felt when he was about to utterly dominate some poor sap in a fight. Toriel herself got a small spark of hope back in her eyes, but she remained cautious.

“My child, are you sure this will work? It seems awfully… risky.” Toriel muttered under a paw to her young ambassador.

“[Don’t worry mom, we got this.]” Frisk signed back with a cheeky wink. Wait, that was his thing! Was Flowey starting to become a bad influence on them? He was so proud!

“Yeah, trust us. I’ve seen this type of thing a dozen time in mafia movies!” Flowey snickered, turning his more innocent façade towards the board members on the other side of the table (ignoring
Toriel’s comments about how he shouldn’t be watching violent movies in the first place. “Pardon me, but I believe we maybe have a solution to our little predicament!”

An old woman with glasses and a nose so pointy she could probably dust someone with it leans forward and steeped her fingers. She had been playing ringleader for this group of idiots all night, and all Flowey could tell was that she had a really petty and vindictive SOUL.

“And what do you propose Mr. Dreemurr? As we have been discussing all night, as… impressive as all Ms. Toriel’s documents are, they are basically worthless unless backed by human governments. And without citizenship, that’s not going to be happening anytime soon.” The old crow crooned in an inauthentic apologetic tone.

The crowd on her side all mumbled in agreement; a mousy woman with a bun so tight it might just be the only thing holding her together, a man so fat Flowey isn’t sure how he’s breathing, and some old guy with eyebrows so bushy he probably can’t even see. What a pathetic entourage. Beating them will be almost as satisfying as straight up murdering them! Almost… not quite.

“Well, golly, that is a problem though. But it sure is convenient how it’s our only issue, right?” Flowey touched a vine to his chin innocently, trying to draw them in like the sickeningly sweet smell of a venus flytrap. “I’m sure if we just had those citizenship papers, we could have that school up and running in time for fall!”

“Yes, quite.” the crow-lady sneered over her fingers. “There’s nothing I want more than to help you establish your wonderful proposed school. But without documentation, our hands are tied.”

Heh. Gotcha, bitch!

“Well, then it’s settled!” Flowey chirped happily. Frisk clapping their hands together agreeing with him. “If we can get citizenship before the end of the month, you’ll have Toriel’s school established before the start of the next school year.”

Oh, the urge to sneer back at the shocked board members was almost too much for Flowey. Too bold of a claim, was it? Thankfully, these bureaucratic types like to keep meticulous records of all these stupid meetings. Before any one of the hags could object, Frisk daintily pointed to the recording device that sat on the table between the two opposing groups.

“Your words, not mine!” Flowey gave a cheeky wink in tandem with Frisk. Now even Toriel was having a hard time maintaining her stony demeanor as she hid a smirk behind her hand.

“N-now hold on for a moment!” the crow stuttered and glanced to her team for any insight on how to object without backtracking. “We… Building an entire school up to code within such a short time frame is hardly—”

“Oh, I assure you, Ms. Wiseman,” Toriel folded her hands calmly on the desk, a little too cheerful grin gracing her snout. “I will personally see to and fund the actual construction of the building. It will take very little time and it will be up to code.”

The board began muttering among themselves again. They, of course, saw firsthand just how fast monster had been able to almost double the size of Ebotton within the span of a week. There was no question that if magic were involved, the school could spring up practically overnight. The fat man huffed and leaned over to whisper into the crow’s ear.

“Y-yes, that’s a good point. Ms. Toriel, while you do boast an impressive resume of terms you are knowledgeable in, we do have some concerns over your understanding of human history in the time
since your kind became… indisposed.” Wow, she was really grasping at straws now.

“I would be more than happy to pass some kind of exam in order to prove my aptitude with such subjects if it would make you more at ease.” Toriel gave them a challenging grin, a glint of defiance lit up her eyes.

They only needed one last push…

“[Think of how much good your board will provide for the country--if not the world!]” Frisk signed excitedly from their seat. “[Having the first school with not only a fully integrated student-base, but teachers and administrators as well! It could change everything, and you would be at the front of it all!]”

That’s right, stroke the ego. While these people would rather have Toriel as some underpaid lunch lady in a full-body hairnet, having any monsters or students in their schools would be a huge boost to their notoriety. Awards, press, the works. And they knew it.

Within twenty minutes, the contract was made up and signed by everyone present (Though Flowey made sure to snag a copy of the recording just in case those chumps tried to go back on their word) and the deal was set. If Toriel had citizenship before the end of June, the school would be open by September. Not that it would be any issue getting her citizenship since they were getting *every monster* citizenship well before then!

The moment the three Dreemurrs stepped out of the building, they let out a collective sigh of relief.

“My children,” Toriel smiled down at the two. “We are going for Nice Cream!”

This night just gets better and better!

“Alright, let’s see what we got this time…” Flowey mumbled as he fumbled with the wrapper off his nice cream. The pointless compliments the guy wrote on the wrappers were always good for a laugh, and Frisk liked to collect them like trading cards. “‘Bad times may be bad, but they will pass like any other time.’. Not bad for once. Realistic. Haven’t gotten this one before, right Frisk?”

Frisk grinned over and nodded, their strawberry cheesecake nice cream still hanging out of their mouth. While Flowey was glad the nice cream guy was expanding his menu of flavours, he was still having a hard time wrapping his head around a few of his more… interesting flavours. Like Toriel’s. Who the hell makes snail flavoured ice cream?! Snails are savoury meat! It’s downright blasphemy to make ice cream—something meant to be sweet—savoury! And whose idea was it to make garlic sprinkles?! Whatever, it kept the old hag’s mouth shut for a while at least.

Frisk’s brow wrinkled as they read their own wrapper compliment. Flowey craned his stem over to see what it said and he nearly dropped his nice cream from laughing so hard.

“‘You have a lovely singing voice’?!” Flowey chortled “Oh man, the guy is going to flip out when he realizes! So much for ‘the frozen treat that warms your heart’ thing!”

Frisk turned to him in an unamused pout. Sure enough, they stuck their strawberry-slathered pink
tongue out at him, leaving their nice cream defenceless! Flowey dove for the frozen delight and Frisk yanked it away from him. Kind of hard to do when the person you’re avoiding is attached to your arm. The two of them wrestled and spun around for a good couple minutes before Frisk thought to pop the nice cream back into their mouth... before they groaned in pain and gripped their head.

“HA! Told you not to bite it, you moron!” Flowey taunted, taking a victorious lick of his key lime pie nice cream. “Now you have brain freeze!”

Frisk stomped their foot on the ground repeatedly, making Toriel stop and turn to them. She wasn’t very impressed with the two of them fighting, even if it did amount to little more than sibling squabbles. But like always, Flowey was the instigator.

“What have I told you about not fighting?” Toriel demanded in the most “mom”-way possible.

Both Flowey and Frisk shook their heads innocently after the brain freeze ebbed away. Home was in view, and it looked like there was a bit of a commotion going on at the front of the neighbour’s house.

Possibly the gaudiest looking van Flowey had ever seen (though he hadn’t really seen that many vans in his days) was parked in the driveway. The thing was painted to look like the night sky, complete with all the planets from Sans’ astronomy books rendered in a cartoony fashion. The closer they got to it, the more it smelled like someone had been living in the thing!

Asgore was out in the front of the house talking to one of the neighbours; Amphihere. She was a large feathery serpent monster with surprisingly dexterous wings that Flowey knew from Snowdin as a resource manager for the forest. She probably had her wings full with all the new construction since she and her family moved out of the Underground.

“She’s really just such a sweetheart, and it’ll be great having someone around the house during the day to look after Artie.” The white winged monster cooed to Asgore. “You should have seen their face when they met her! It was like love at first sight. I think she’ll fit in just fine…”

Toriel was the first to approached Amphihere, while Flowey was trying to get Frisk to snoop in the van (without much luck). “Hello there, Miss Amphihere, what seems to be going on in our little neighbourhood?”

“Oh, Lady Toriel, you seem to be in a good mood this evening!” Amphihere slithered over and gave a small bow to the ex- (But somehow still very active and influential) Queen. “We’re just moving our new tenant into the basement.”

Flows turned and heard a familiar thunderous stampede of footsteps approaching. Oh God, here they come.

“Yo Frisk!”

The small yellow wyvern came barreling down the walkway of the house right at them. Frisk moved out of habit to catch them when they inevitably tripped and fell. Which they did. And made Frisk drop their nice cream! Frisk seemed a lot less upset now about losing their nice cream than when they were keeping him from stealing it. They were just rebalancing Artie and giggling.

“Artie for the love of-”

“Frisk, Flowey, dudes! You guys have to meet my new big sis! She’s so cool, man!” Artie quickly jumped to their feet and waggled their tail in barely contained excitement… before getting distracted
by the rest of the steadily growing crowd in front of the house. “Yo, Miss Toriel! How’s the school thing going?”

Toriel kneeled down and pat Artie’s head between their slowly budding spines with a smile. “It will be open in time for the next school year. I very much hope you will be in attendance.”

“Yooooo! Awesome!” Both Frisk and the small wyvern started jumping around again, thoroughly jostling Flowey on his comfortable perch again! All while Artie started gushing over how amazing their new “big sis” was. First Undyne, then Papyrus, now some mystery girl? The monster kid changed heroes like echo flowers change phrases! Such a weird kid. But to compare to the near-invincible Undyne and Papyrus the… interesting, this lady must be something else.

“Lil’ Dude, I thought you said we were gonna start your flying practise tomorrow. You look like you’re trying to launch yourself into the stratosphere!”

[ACT] *CHECK

Penelope Tellic LV 1

ATK 4 DEF 6

HP 28/28

New at the “Big Sis” thing

Inspired Soul

You have to be kidding! Artie’s star struck by this poor excuse for a human?! Scrawny, hoody-clad, and with the charisma of… Napstablook! What did they see in her? And what were their parents thinking?! Letting a human live in their basement! She could be a serial killer, or a molester, or… or…

No, she’s not cool enough for that. She certainly doesn’t have enough LV. And Flowey’s not lucky enough either.

This “Penelope” person seemed to be in a perpetual daze as she stumbled between the front door of the house and the back of her god-awful van, with Artie’s second mother, Mandersal, behind her. Artie skipped after them both and took a box from the girl to balance on their tail.

“Thank you, Lil’ Dude.” Penelope chirped in a singsong voice “This is the last of it, I promise. I still can’t believe how much stuff I managed to fit in here…”

Mandersal chuckled, tucking a few bags and boxes under her four arms. “Well, that’s what happens when you travel a lot; you tend to collect souvenirs and creature comforts along with your memories!”

“Penn! Penn! Look, this is Frisk and Flowey—the ones I was telling you about yesterday!” Artie bounced excitedly. Frisk started copying his bobbing movements before smiling up at the other human girl. Flowey was just getting bounced around and the last thing he really wanted to do was meet some new gross human.

Penn kneeled down to Frisk’s height and took their outstretched hand in her own for a gentle shake. Frisk excitedly signed out some flirty comment or another and the human girl’s face grew blank. Of course, no human around here bothered learning sign language. Time to pull his weight as a
translating at least.

“Frisk said—”

“Frisk said ‘your eyes are brighter than the stars’ in sign language, isn’t that cool?” Artie jutted in. Flowey sent them a glare in a vain attempt to set them on fire. Translating was his job! Not some lizard whose stubby wings barely peak out from their poncho!

Penelope just gave a lackadaisical grin. “Well Artie wasn’t kidding when they said you had quite the way with making friends, Frisk. Nice to meet you, little buddy. Though, if my eyes really were bright like the stars, I’d have, like, heat vision or something.”

Oh, great. She’s a nerd like Alphys. Like they needed more of those around. At least she doesn’t seem smart enough to create unholy abominations like him or the Amalgamates! But she was still a dangerous human.

“Howdy! Nice to meet you miss Penelope!” That’s right, dial up the charm, Flowey. “I’m Flowey! Flowey the flower!”

 “…Aren’t you the guy that Artie says keeps trying to teach them curse words?” Oh crap! He has a reputation already?!

Her grin wavered for only a moment before she reached over and pat his petals. “You little bugger! I think I’m gonna like it around here (but I’m still going to be keeping an eye on you, flower-boy!).”

Yikes! Can all humans switch their hostility on and off like that?! There may just be hope for him to have some fun with this one… But not tonight. Flowey felt absolutely exhausted after today. Frisk mirrored his sentiments as Artie’s family started heading in, Frisk yawned widely. Toriel obviously noticed as she saunters over and picks the pair up.

“Come along my children, you look tired.” Toriel stroked their hair gently with a smile. “A nice warm bath then off to bed with you two.”

Bleh, bath night. Here comes soggy roots and stingy soap in his eyes.

“Frisk, do you think my petals look dingy?” Flowey was glaring at his reflection in the mirror. He was sitting on the counter as Frisk was starting to fill the tub up. Honestly, they both could use a bit of cleaning; they were covered in sticky nice cream (thanks a lot Artie!).

Frisk climbed back up the step stool to the counter and looked back at their own reflection along with Flowey’s. It was odd, but whenever they looked at a mirror, they always look like they’re seeing themself for the first time. It was almost… melancholy. They mushed up their cheeks and pulled at their bottom lid to get a good look at their freckles and red-brown eyes.

“Maybe?” Frisk mumbled softly, rubbing a finger along his pets. “Feeling okay?”

“Just… tired.” Flowey started leaning into Frisk’s fingers for the moment until they pulled away. Frisk delicately picked him up from under his roots and set him on the side of the tub before starting to peel their sugar-sticky clothes off.
Flowey’s eyes went wide in… horror? Curiosity? Frisk’s back was absolutely covered in scars. Monster magic doesn’t usually leave bodily damage, and the scars were too uniform to have been from their initial tumble into the underground. They were faded too… like they were from their life before they fell.

Frisk gently set themselves into the warm water and playfully splashed Flowey to shake him from his troubling thoughts. He just glared half-heartedly before slowly sliding into the water next to them.

“…Hey, Frisk?”

“Mmm?”

“Last night… you said you’d listen to me, right?” Flowey didn’t look up from his own vines making ripples in the water. “Well, I just wanted to say that’s a two-way street. Well, sort of. I mean it’s not so much listening as reading since you sign more than you don’t talk a lot-”

“Huh?”

Flowey finally turned to look Frisk in the eye, feeling the Pulse pick up in his stem. “How many times have you gotten yourself killed by everyone in this house? At least twelve… And yet you went through hell and back more than once just to make it so you could all live happily together here on the surface…”

Frisk smiled down to him, completely unfazed by being reminded of their multiple brutal deaths at the hands of their family!

“So, where do you get off keeping everything to yourself?!” Flowey tilted his head closer to Frisk’s to let them see the seriousness in his eyes “All that work to surround yourself with family, just so you don’t let yourself rely on anyone? That’s so stupid!”

Frisk looked almost panicked at his little outburst. He didn’t blame them for being worried. He knew how dangerous his temper was, but in this instance, it was out of concern.

“So if you have something that’s bothering you, you can come to me with anything. You can trust me! Probably more than anyone else!” Flowey slowly leaned his face into their shoulder and nuzzled it. It took a moment, but soon enough Frisk’s fingers started running along his fingers. “I understand more than anyone… Like the RESETs. Please don’t shut me out…

“Please.”

Chapter End Notes

Hey Folks! So yeah, as with the UnderShield series and Soul Dichromatism series, Monster Kid’s name here is gonna be Artie! Just cuz calling them "kid" would get kinda confusing.
Trust is a Funny Thing

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Get back here you little-”

“NO!”

“Stop! Squirming!”

“No! No no no!”

“This will be over in a minute-”

“AAAAAAAAAH!”

Toriel burst through the door, hands blazing and ready to turn a certain golden foul-mouth into ashes for hurting Frisk. Instead she finds Flowey and Frisk having a mini-stare down on opposite sides of the small bathroom; Flowey was sitting on the counter with a brush coiled in his vine, and a pajama-clad Frisk was standing in the empty tub with a towel still on their head.

“Finally, some back up!” Flowey glanced up at Toriel, unperturbed by the fact that she was ready and expecting to kill him at that moment. “Can you hold Frisk still so I can brush their hair? One of us doesn’t want to get lice in the bed we share!”

Toriel looked between her two children (well, adopted child and their plant-friend) with a look of utter befuddlement. The two were fighting because Flowey was trying to be considerate and helpful?

She carefully extinguished her paws and sat down on the edge of the tub before gently lifting the towel from Frisk’s head. Like he said; their hair was a bit messier than normal, and their face was contorted into a scowling pout directed at their floral friend.

“Come now, my child, don’t you want to look nice for all the people and monsters you will inevitably flirt with?” Toriel said with a warm chuckle. She gently coaxed Frisk out of the tub on onto her lap, warming her hands back up and running them over their hair to help dry it.

“Don’t encourage them, lady.” Flowey grumbled “One day flirting is going to get you into trouble, Frisk! Now get your butt on the counter and let me fix your-”

Frisk just shouted incoherently in refusal, almost like they were barking. Toriel pulled away in surprised when they started squirming about.

“Well, it wouldn’t have hurt if you just stayed still!” Flowey scowled in return and pointed the brush at Frisk once their barking session was done. “I didn’t yank on your hair! You pulled your head away and yanked it out yourself!”

“Perhaps I should take over hair brushing duties for now.” Toriel reached a hand out for the brush, but Flowey wasn’t interested in giving it up or his brushing duties.

“Nuh-uh! Frisk has to get used to letting me do this, and to stop squirming!” Flowey craned his stem so he was right in Frisk’s face. The two exchanged glares for a second, but he was surprisingly enough to first to lose. “C’mon Frisk, we just talked about relying on each other…”
Frisk’s expression turned soft and then guilty. He was right, of course, like usual. They gently pushed themselves up from Toriel’s lap and clambered onto the counter next to Flowey, their back to him.

“Gentle…” Frisk mumbled, starting to fidget with the buttons on the front of their PJs trying to ease their nervousness.

Frisk went ridged the second the brush came into contact with their scalp. It didn’t exactly assure Flowey of their trust in him, but at least it was keeping them still enough to let him do his work. He kept a rhythm between running the brush through their hair and stroking their head with a vine. Soon enough, Frisk’s shoulders slumped from the soothing ministrations and they began to relax. Flowey smiled nostalgically. This reminded him of when Chara would brush his- er, Asriel’s fur to relax. Now that he didn’t have any hair to speak of, he was starting to see the appeal in playing with it himself. He bet if they could, Frisk would be purring right then.

“You seem well practise in hair combing despite having none yourself, Flowey.” Toriel cooed, watching their oddly intimate moment like a creep.

“Yeah, well, I’m full of surprises, lady…” Flowey stuck his tongue out to appear too busy with Frisk to really carry on a conversation. Toriel was treading dangerous territory and she knew it; probing in the most mom-way possible. While Frisk kept their promise to keep his secret, the two of them never really came up with any sort of cover story. Flowey was mostly a mystery to everyone in the house and it didn’t sit well with her and her paranoid-parenthood.

“There, done.” Flowey puffed up his stem in pride when Frisk marveled at his job in the mirror.

“Now, was that really so bad?”

He teasingly booped a vine into their nose and laughed when they wrinkle their face up in mock-offense. They can’t even get back at him because he doesn’t have a nose! Ha! Frisk’s face scrunched in thought at their options for retaliation and Flowey was practically egging him on with his smirk.

Frisk’s face turned stony and he could practically smell the DETERMINATION coming off of them. Smelled kind of like… licorice. They weren’t giving up, but they weren’t moving either. What the hell were they planning-

Lightning fast, Frisk’s hands shot behind and cupped Flowey’s head before bringing him up and smooshing both of their faces together. Frisk giggled and nuzzled aggressively into him before letting him drop back down. They kept giggling, but his pollen was clinging to their nose.

Flowey was just… staring. Did that actually happen? What was that? Did

Did that count

As a kiss?

Flowey loudly gagged and sputtered into the sink. “See, lady; this is why you shouldn’t encourage Frisk’s flirting!”

Teeth were brushed, good nights were said and hugs given. A bedtime routine was completed and that left Frisk and Flowey alone in the darkness of their bedroom; tired, but not tired enough to
silence their unspoken worries. They both agreed a bathtub wasn’t the right venue for a serious bearing of their souls (metaphorically speaking, of course), so they decided to wait until they were both dry and alone. At least that was the plan.

Flowey was at a loss for where to being and that was starting to freak him out. The more he thought about it, the less he discovered he actually knew about his best friend. He didn’t know their birthday, their favourite food, their favourite song… Why they climbed the mountain, why they’re so determined, why they shake so badly when people start yelling… What happened to them before they fell?

“Fl-Flowey…” Frisk sat up, pushing the comforter off their small frame and pulling the curtains back just a sliver on the window to let some moonlight into the room. In the soft light, Flowey could see their eyes contemplative and… sad. They glistened just a little from tears they were refusing to shed.

The two of them didn’t want to let anyone know they were still awake. Thankfully, sign was the perfect language for covert late-night conversations.

“[Can you promise me something? Please keep those scars on my back a secret for now. I’m not ready to talk about them yet. To anyone.]”

Oh. Of course. He obviously crossed a sore subject earlier… But he nodded without a second thought. They kept his biggest secret, so it was only fair he kept one of theirs. He almost felt honoured to be trusted like that. The Pulse ran up his stem some form of melancholy; a bitter sweet feeling like dark chocolate, but a feeling nonetheless.

Frisk flexed their fingers pensively, gripping them into a fist then releasing it over and over like some kind of sign language “uuuuuuuh”.

“[Do you…]” they brought their hands to their mouth, refusing to look Flowey in the eye like they were afraid. He slithered forward and rest his head on their knee to try and convey some encouragement. “[Do you still think I’m dumb?]”

The Pulse sent a shock to his system like a punch to his nonexistent stomach. He deserved that. He really did.

“I… no!” Flowey steeled himself in a quiet, but firm whisper. “No, you are not stupid, and that’s an objective truth. Could an idiot negotiate living conditions for an entire people within a week? Could a moron bring and keep this family together? No way in hell!”

The words felt foreign as soon as they left his mouth, but it really was how he felt. Frisk was just as unconvinced as he would be that those words were genuine, though. Their frown persisted on their face, and their eyes looked like they would overflow if not for their DETERMINATION. Flowey needed to sound more, well, Flowey-y.

“Don’t get me wrong, though, you’re still a pain.” Flowey contorted his face into a sarcastic smirk. “You’re unbearably naïve, stubborn as a bull, and you tend to bite off way more than you can chew on a regular basis… but that’s part of the reason why you’re so special to me.”

There was that smile again. It was muted and still a little watery, but Frisk was definitely smiling again. The Pulse became a soft tingling sensation that eased Flowey from his guilt.

“If anyone can’t take those annoying parts of you along with all the good, then they aren’t worth anything.” He snaked up Frisk’s legs to their arm and shoulder and pressed his face right into their cheek, hoping his whispers were coming in clearer. “I… I don’t want you any other way than
‘Frisk’. The whole package. Even the weird flirty bits.”

Tears dripped down onto Flowey’s petals and Frisk’s soft giggles were sending small quivers through both their bodies. Flowey didn’t dare move from his spot as the Pulse was getting a super charge from his host and he wanted to savour it. Savour this moment.

“Thank you…” Frisk’s usually raspy voice sounded angelic in that moment. The real Angel who emptied the Underground, including himself. His angel. “W-wanna know why tulips are my favourite flower?”

“I sure hope second after me, right?” He glowered at his human half-heartedly before they nodded and eased his jealousy.

“Because,” Frisk cupped his head and pecked his forehead. No questions this time; THAT WAS A KISS. “T-two-lips are better than one.”

…

“Okay, I changed my mind. I’d like you better without the puns.”

“Fight me or run away!” Toriel’s hands shot out twisting torrents of flames that scorched the earth. No sane monster would ever go toe to toe with an angry boss monster on a good day, and she was playing keeps with a child just because they took offence to being kidnapped.

This was maybe the third time Flowey saw this scene play out that day. Although, the term “that day” kind of lost its meaning with the RESETs that occurred with every one of the kid’s deaths. But this time was different. He was… scared.

The human child shouted in pain as magic embers licked across their arms when they went to guard their face. They looked so much like Chara, couldn’t she see it?! How was she so willing to hurt this kid in some empty notion of protecting them?!

He was rooted to the spot, his own laughter coming out like a script, but his mind was reeling at him to do something. Anything.

The split second before the RESET stretched out like an eternity; the human child’s body falling backwards and their lifeless eyes glaring holes into him. He did this. He let this happen. Even without RESETting himself, he had the power to stop the fight. But he did nothing.

Frozen air whipped through the human’s hair and their clothes like it was nothing. Every inch of exposed skin was shades of pink and red as a clear indication that they needed to warm up. Still, the human kept a smile on their face despite their own chattering teeth and being repeatedly pummeled.

Bones sprung up this way and that, and the kid’s legs were buckling under the extra weight of the blue magic and their muscles giving out in the cold. Papyrus, as amusing as he was, was completely clueless when it came to reading people. He wouldn’t stop squawking about what he would do once the human was caught, like their life was just a means for his stupid selfish endeavors. They were beaten within an inch of their life before he even considered he was living a pipe dream of celebrityhood.
But Flowey was safe and sound. Nestled under an evergreen not too far from the makeshift battleground. Able to make out every jittery word the human could mumble out between their bouts of shivering. This time he even stole a cinnamon bunny to eat while he enjoyed the show. The sugar was nothing in his mouth and he only wanted to scream, but his mouth betrayed those feelings with its own sadistic cackling.

Blood. It had been so long since he saw real, actual blood. The human was cut up, but the injuries were mostly superficial despite how impressive the fall from the broken bridge actually was. Thankfully, golden flowers were an amazing cushion for any situation.

He didn’t want to see this. The small, sweet human he had been watching over had blood dripping from their busted lip and they weren’t moving. It looked too similar to...

But he reached out a vine, swiping at the blood on their cheek and licking it clean. He wanted to throw up so badly, but he was still trapped as an observer in this body.

“M-mmm! Tastes like DETERMINATION alright!” Flowey’s chirps echoed in the empty cavern next to the dump. “I wonder if I could just farm you for your DETERMINATION and regain control of the timeline. Wouldn’t that be swell? I could keep you alive just so you could bleed more and more for me! Butuuut where’s the fun in that?”

God, had he actually said those things? The Pulse was thrashing around painfully in his core. He wanted out. He wanted this gone. He wanted to fight this creature so badly, but it was himself.

The same Flowey that watched the kid get skewered by Undyne countless times. The same Flowey who cheered along with the rest of the Underground as Mettaton tormented the human on TV. The same Flowey who became a beast of unimaginable power just to murder one kid over and over again like a petty, time-altering sadist.

The same Flowey who felt nothing when Frisk was brought to tears over the story of Asriel and Chara...

No. I’m not the same. I’m different. I feel different. I won’t do those things to Frisk ever again. I can’t!

But they can.

Toriel, Asgore, Papyrus, Sans, Undyne, Mettaton and Alphys. They’ve all done such unspeakable things. And they could still feel everything Flowey couldn’t when they did.

How could Frisk stand to be around any of them?

How can I trust them not to hurt my Frisk ever again?

---

Flowey felt like he had lead running through his steam when he finally woke up. His head was pounding and he could barely lift it off of... what the hell was he leaning on?

He groaned with effort and hissed at the sudden bright light in his eyes. Blinking to try and get his focus back, all he saw was... brown. Warm, brown... hair. Frisk’s hair. He must still be in bed... but when did their bed become so cold on the roots?
Frisk’s head jolted upright when he started making pained noises and they looked at him like he was butterscotch pie after a hard day. Dried tears stained their cheeks along with grass stains and dirt.

“…Morning?” Flowey grumbled out from his unusually scratchy throat. Frisk dove down once again and wrapped their arms around his thin stem in the tightest hug they dared to give him, shuddering with tears. He would have tried to return the gesture if he felt about a hundred pounds lighter and not like death.

“Flowey, thank goodness you’re awake.” Asgore’s tenor rang out over Frisk’s crying and Flowey could feel his footsteps thundering closer through his roots. “You gave us quite the scare. I hope you are feeling better.”

“I feel like sh-uh… low quality fertilizer.” He grumbled, tilting his head just so he could take in his surroundings. He wasn’t in his room at all, but actually planted in the backyard in some moist topsoil. “What’s going on?”

“Well, I have an idea…” Asgore knelt down to the two and put a massive hand down on Frisk’s back as they pulled out of the hug. “Flowey, just how much time this week have you spent rooted?”

Oh. Oh! Oh, crap… He was a massive idiot. No wonder he’s been feeling so tired. But it’s not like he could have just left Frisk to go around town to meetings and the like while he was sitting in soil! They needed him and-

“I thought so…” Asgore chimed in, Flowey’s expression shifting was answer enough to him. “Fortunately, we have a solution to this little conundrum. And it will still allow you to see to all of your duties as assistant ambassador!”

Please no. God, no!

Frisk turned to the side and brought a small flowerpot into view—decorated to the nines with stickers.

Flowey just tilted his head back in a scream.

Chapter End Notes

Who here saw it coming? Flowey has evolved into a pot-belly!
The Cursed Clay Pants

Chapter Summary

WARNING: There’s gonna be some Political shit in here
Flowey and Frisk contemplate how to get their work down while dealing with certain physical limitations

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

This wasn’t working. This was a horrible idea in its entirety! It was like wearing a pair of clay pants! It was so demeaning and stupid… It wasn’t just uncomfortable for him, he could tell that Frisk wasn’t having a fun time either carrying the stupid freaking pot around! It was far too heavy, Flowey had the sneaking suspicion that the texture of the pot was bugging them, and the cheap stickers’ glue was already melting onto their hands. How the hell were either of them supposed to get any work done like this?!

So, there they were, sitting on the lawn once again, staring down the useless claw pot in front of them while Frisk was picking bits of glue and torn stickers off their hands. Flowey was starting to feel a little better now that he had time to lay down his roots for a while, but he was starting to feel a little… claustrophobic. It wasn’t like the Underground where there were only so many places he could visit and he could tunnel his way around without getting lost. The surface work had so many things that he just couldn’t see from where he could dig up from! Stupid cement foundations…

“[Wagon filled with dirt?]” Frisk signed over with their already friction-burnt hands. They were going to need some aloe or something later and they are definitely not buying that brand of stickers ever again; no matter how funny the sadistic bunny’s sayings were.

“Stairs. Stairs would suck…” Flowey mumbled before taking a sip from his juice box nestled in the grass in front of him. This world really wasn’t flora-accessible.

Hell, some monsters were still having a rough time getting around easily! Asgore-sized monsters couldn’t fit in doors, nobody spoke Froggit or Moldsmal, and many aquatic monsters were having a tough time finding their way to the shoreline. So much for the political correctness movement.

But then again, if everything were perfect from the start, he and Frisk wouldn’t have a job. And there’s nothing that gets Frisk more DETERMINED these days than doing the impossible and actually making the world a slightly bearable place.

But right now, the most unbearable thing (aside from his mobility issue) was all the noise going on next door! Power tools, yelling and clattering metal, ever since he woke up from his… dirt-starvation coma. What the hell was Artie doing?!

“Frisk! Yo Frisk!” Speak the monsters name. “Check it out!”

Frisk’s head whipped over to the fence and their face immediately perked up, completely ignoring the current predicament for whatever asinine nonsense the armless idiot next door had going on. Flowey turned his head to shout at the annoying little pet, only to be shocked into silence. The idiot
Periodically Artie’s head would peek over the edge of the wooden fence, flapping like an uncoordinated moron, before plummeting back to the ground. Were they jumping on a Moldsmal back there?

Frisk paced between a step towards the fence and back towards the accursed pot, looking to Flowey for guidance. Obviously, they wanted to go see what the commotion was, but they didn’t want to go see without him and they both hated the stupid thing.

With a sigh and a roll of his eyes, Flowey gently uprooted himself and settled back into his uncomfortable “clay pants” for them. Frisk tugged their sleeves down over their hands to protect from the surface of the pot and ran towards the wooden fence, balancing him on top while they cling to the side to look over.

They have a trampoline now. The idiot is learning how to fly by bouncing on a trampoline.

Papyrus stoop proudly over the deathtrap made of springs and nylon, nyeh-ing about how great Artie was doing, how high they’re getting, how bouncing is almost exactly like flying. Like Papyrus knows the first thing about aeronautics. Sure enough, though, Artie’s magic sparked to life around their undersized wings and they hovered in the air for a few milliseconds longer, but it was still hardly flight…

Artie’s weird human tenant/“big sis” was sitting nearby against an old tree in the yard, curled up around a sketch pad and watching the yellow wyvern bounce around, taking quick glances over to Papyrus before going back to her paper. Flowey glowered down at the intruding human. What was her game in all this? What was she planning? No way a human would willingly just move into a monster’s basement this soon after monster reintegrated into society—nobody is that progressive!

She probably felt the daggers he was glaring into her, because during one of her pauses to ogle the skeleton (please, please don’t let her have a crush on the guy. That would just be creepy), she caught sight of the two neighbours and waved over at them.

“Hey little dudes! Good to see you’re still alive, Flowey.” Penelope hoisted herself onto her feet and sauntered over to them, leaning on the fence next to Flowey’s pot. “You had Frisk really worried there. Especially when you lost your face.”

He lost his face?!?

“I mean, you looked pretty much like any more flower, but knowing that it was you kinda made the whole thing really weird. Who just loses a face?” Penelope rubbed the back of her neck with a tired groan. This was the first time Flowey really got a good look at her, and she was a sight… tired eyes, hollow cheeks, dull-looking SOUL. She wasn’t exactly a prime example of a human specimen. “And Frisky-bits here wouldn’t leave your side for a second. They really care about you, so you’d better return that loyalty before you lose them.”

The smug little bitch reached down and started ruffling Frisk’s hair like she knew them! How dare she touch his human’s hair! That’s his job! Flowey really strained himself not to shoot her full of
pellets in that moment. Lucky for her Toriel showed up behind them before he lost his restraint.

“Oh, good afternoon Penelope, I hope you’re doing well.” Geez, Toriel wasn’t looking too much better than Penelope; she looked like she had barely gotten any sleep last night as well. Bags under her eyes, a wrinkly gown and her fur was matted down. Hard to believe the once-Queen of all monsters would let herself get so disheveled.

“Just Penn is fine, Miss T. I’m doing okay, sorry for stealing your skeleton away, but we needed an extra set of hands setting up the trampoline.” How the hell could some nobody human speak so casually to a boss monster of all things?! Was she really planning something or was she just a moron?

“INDEED, YOUR HIGHNESS, MY WONDERFULLY LARGE HANDS ASSISTED IN BUILDING THIS WONDERFUL HUMAN FLIGHT TRAINING DEVICE!” Papyrus chimed in, doing his dumb pride-pose again… “AND THE HUMAN PENEOPE HAS AGREED TO PAY ME WITH HER ARTISTIC CRAFT!”

“Oh, you’re an artist, Miss Penn?” Toriel and Frisk both leaned in closer towards the human girl. Flowey watched with a smirk as she stammered and pulled her sketchpad closer to her chest, like she was afraid they would rip it away from her. Flowey was temped to.

“Yo! You kidding me?!” Artie power-launched himself over like a little yellow rocket, only stopping safely thanks to Papyrus and his blue magic, setting them down safely (damn). “She’s like, the freaking best at art and stuff! It’s the coolest!”

“W-well in the loosest sense, I guess I’m an artist. I just make things, dunno…” Penn mumbled, looking down at the page she was working on and tearing it out of the book. “I took a few artistic liberties with your brow ridge and the hair for… obvious reasons. I wish they had skeletons like you back in life drawing class; it would have made it a lot more interesting…”

Papyrus’ jaw nearly fell right off of his skull from gasping so loud. Flowey would have taken it as indicative of the girl’s abilities if it wasn’t freaking impressed-by-everything-Papyrus. He turned the page around to show Frisk, Toriel and Flowey and by god it was a drawing of one of the strangest (and ugliest) looking human faces Flowey had ever conceived!

“I’M GORGEOUS AS A HUMAN!” Papyrus all but screamed “THAT PROUD JAWLINE, THOSE CHISELED CHEEKS, THAT DEFINED NOSE, THAT WONDERFUL HAIR! THANK YOU, HUMAN PENEOPE!”

Papyrus lifted the poor human right up off the ground in a bone crushing hug like he was going to squeeze the SOUL right out of her! And just as suddenly, he dropped her back on the ground and right onto her tailbone, before breaking into one of his gravity-defying jump-flips to the house.

“I AM GOING TO TAPE THIS TO A SHIRT AND SHOW IT TO EVERYONE! THEY ALL MOST KNOW THE MAGNIFICENCE THAT IS THE GREAT PAPYRUS RENDERED AS A HUMAN!”

Flowey heard Penn mumble something along the lines of “oh god no, please let him be joking” and he started to cackle. That’ll teach her not to ask Papyrus for help. Now everyone to going to see what a hack she is!

“My dear, did you mention something about ‘classes’, are you a student?” Toriel chirped, looking down at the girl on the ground. She really needed to focus on something other than school for once before she dusts herself.
“Huh? Oh no, not for a while. I mean I used to, but it was just some liberal arts degree I never finished for... personal reasons.” Penn avoided eye contact, once again rubbing the back of her neck as she stood back up. She said ‘liberal arts’ like it was something to be ashamed of. What did it even mean? “Like, I know you’re trying to get a public school up and running, how’s that going?”

“It’s going quite well thanks to these two!” Toriel leaned down and patted both Flowey and Frisk on the head. “But I still have a lot to work to do on my end. I’m catching up on some of humanity’s more recent history. Right now, I’m studying the Second American Civil War. Honestly, it is quite difficult to wrap my head around all the… intricacies of that conflict.”

“You don’t have to pretend like that war was anything less than really fu-uh freaking stupid, Miss T. My grandparents fought in it and they were the first people to point out how much of a total cluster the whole thing was when they told us their war stories.” Penn ran her hand through her messy reddish hair and glanced away. Flowey may not have been the best at reading body language, but the way she talked about a freaking war she felt more second-hand embarrassment than remorse. Were humans just desensitized to war or something?!

“Oh, you have second-hand knowledge! Do you think I could trouble you to recount the event for me? I think it might be easier to understand if told from the perspective of someone who lived through it, or from their grandchild.”

Penn chuckled and lifted Artie up and over the fence. “Sure thing. Get comfy kiddos, it’s story time!”

“Like it’s possible to be comfy in this stupid pot…” Flowey mumbled under his breath. Before Frisk could move him off of the fence, Penn’s eyes went wide and her eyes started darting between Flowey and her house. He glared back at her, CHECKING her just in case she was planning something and her dingy soul was looked considerably less dingy. She was filled with INSPIRATION and he could practically feel it radiating off of her. Quite a different flavour from DETERMINATION…

“Right, get comfy I-I’ll be right back. I got to get something…” Penn ran off into Artie’s house and vanished.

“Aw man, this is going to be awesome! Penn is the best at story telling, you guys are gonna love it!” Artie cackled as they raced Frisk towards the swings. Toriel started mumbling to herself about needing to get this thing called ’patio furniture’ before sitting down on the end of the slide next to the children.

Flowey was barely out of his pot and dug into the ground before Penn leapt over the fence and sprinted over, arms filled with junk. She didn’t even stop in her run as she swiped the pot away from him and rushed over to Asgore’s gardening corner. “Sorry guys, had an idea and it helps me think if I have my hands working on something. Be with you in a second!” Penn shoveled topsoil into an old leather purse with her hand, before holding it up and shaking it. What the hell was she doing?

True enough, she finally sauntered over in front of the swing set and dropped her junk to the ground, getting to work on… something.

“Alright, now let me recount a tale for you from my grandparents and what I can recall from high school history class; this is story of how Canada accidentally conquered one of the most powerful countries in the world and became a world super power.” Penn wasn’t even looking up from her work to see the absolutely flabbergasted expression on Flowey’s face.

“How the hell do you just accidentally conquer a country?!”
“That’s why it’s a story!” Penn snickered back “Anyway…

“The States had already been going downhill for a few years prior to the second civil war, right? Recession, strained international relations, radical domestic violence, the whole nine yards. But things kinda came to a head when somehow the country elected a freaking fascist to power with an overwhelming majority government. White supremists started coming out of the woodwork-”

“White Supremists?” Toriel tilted her head quizzically.

“Oh, right, monsters don’t… Well, humans are more messed up than you think. We get judged on the colour of our skin and white or Caucasian refers to people of like… European descent. Y’know, not like me or Frisk, right? Almost anywhere in history you have people being racist pieces of— well, nine times outta ten, whites have a hand in it…

“Anyway, basically when this was still the US, things were getting pretty divisive, and having a racist reality TV star was not helping to cool race relations down. The guy wanted certain ethnicities registered ‘as a terror deterrence’, which was pretty messed up as seeing how most of the domestic violence was perpetrated by whites and… well the guy made a lot of questionable decisions.

“Final straw though was when, outta nowhere, the guy declared war on Mexico! Like, half the population outright refused to go to war, protests broke out, martial law was all but official declared. Things got bad really fast.” Penn’s face of disgust was mirrored by Frisk, even while she was doing… something with the flower pot. She had peeled off the stickers and sanded the outside down, now she was coating the outside with some weird shiny, clear goop. “What made things worse was the sh-er, stuff going down with Russia at the time. People always suspected the President was making deals with Russia under the table, but nobody knew for sure. But things got really scary when those supposedly non-existent dealings fell through and Russia sided with Mexico for like a week; just long enough to launch a strike on the US’s eastern seaboard and send the whole country into poop… They were lucky that nuclear weapons were internationally outlawed just a couple years before, or else things could have been way worse.

“Thankfully, that’s where Canada stepped in! At first, we were only there for humanitarian and war relief; getting refugees outta dangerous places, right? But the thing was, the white supremists or ‘Right’, would not let up in their domination schemes! Even when the country was being either embargoed by every other trading nation, or attacked by Mexico and Russia! Eventually, the ‘Left’, aka the non-supremists, officially asked Canada to help and we obliged. And since Canada was and still is one of the more likable countries around, we got a lot of support from the international community in pushing the Rightists back.

“And after all that, the Leftists joined Canada, and gained 37 states, including us here in Colorado, and became a world superpower. Hawaii, Guam, and Puerto Rico all declared their independence afterwards and are actually doing pretty good now. Mexico actually reclaimed Arizona and New Mexico as states. And the remaining US got the wall it wanted, but it was mostly for the benefit of the rest of the world to keep them inside. Now they’re stuck in the bottom-right side of what used to be their country and that place is more unstable now than Korea used to be!

“Uh, the end for now. I’m skipping over a lot of details but they’re really not for kids to hear…”

Toriel gave a warm chuckle “Well you certainly gave a more… personable recollection for the events than my text books ever could. Thank you, Penn. I’m sure-”

“Done!” Penn held the old satchel up, the shoulder strap of it now considerably shorter, wider and it now had a fluffy tube sewn around its entire length. “Now you can carry Flowey around without putting too much stress on your arms. Just fill it with dirt and away you go! And…”
Penn reached over and rolled the now glossy-coated flower pot over on a pair of wheels she took off of a skateboard. “This’ll let Flowey move around on his own at least.”

Frisk leapt off their swing and gasped in awe at the makeshift inventions. They marveled at the smooth feel of the leather and the softness of the fluffy shoulder guard before they slung it over their shoulder. They didn’t sag unhappily like they did just carrying the flower pot around, but they did twirl around and giggle before kneeling down to Flowey.

“In! In!” Frisk opened the flap of the purse up, tilting it down for him to crawl in. Flowey glared the bag down for a moment before he finally succumbed to Frisk’s eager smile and slinking inside.

It… wasn’t horrible. The give of the leather was a lot more comfortable than the rigid clay, like a proper pair of pants instead of… Okay, why does he keep making pant-analogs?! Anyway… Flowey could still wrap up Frisk’s arm like he could before and bask in the warmth and DETERMINATION radiating off of them… It was cozy.

“See! See! I told you guys my Big Sis was the best!” Artie trilled proudly, prancing around them and Penn.

She was… something alright. What was her game?

Chapter End Notes

...It took me like two weeks to write one chapter for my new fic "Edittale", but only a couple hours to do this chapter... What even is my writing capability? I shoulda been doing homework this whole time...
To the Cosmos

Chapter Summary

Flowey tests out how true his new "travel-friendly" accouterments are.
[This chapter is dedicated to Neil DeGrasse Tyson! If you have netflix, go watch Cosmos! You won't regret it.]

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Legends told of the unsurmountable treasures locked within the impenetrable walls of the Fortress of Destidoom. For eons, its silhouette marred a darkened shadow onto the valley below, cursing the lands. Many brave adventurers came to these lands in a vain attempt to find their fortune or glory in conquering the stoic castle. No man or monster has ever made it out alive…

But I am neither, and today I claim victory!

“Eat pellets!”

A shower of pellets pummeled the measly castle, sending sand flying everywhere (though especially into Frisk’s hair). Frisk giggled excitedly and vocalized explosion sounds, crushing a few of the remaining towers of their sandcastle under their own hands. If Artie wasn’t more preoccupied with the swings at the moment, Flowey would have tried to convince them to rampage through a city of sand castles like he saw in a few of Alphys’ movies where the mouths don’t sync up with that the people were saying. If monsters could really grow to be that size, humanity would have never had a chance in the war!

“Okay, now this time, let’s make just one giant tower and push it over!” Flowey snickered, starting to pile up as much sand as he could in his leafier vines and signalling Frisk to do the same. They really needed to get some proper shovels and buckets for the sandbox.

Frisk was obviously having a blast running their hands through the silky-smooth sand, building up and tearing down crudely made buildings and writing their name with a finger. Flowey, on the other hand, was surprised by how much fun he was having just mucking around in the sand. He was distracted enough with the game of build up and smash that he wasn’t even disappointed that Artie hadn’t fallen off of the swing once!

But then the stench of nervous lizard filled the air and killed his good mood. What did she want now?

Alphys toddled along the grass towards them; messy, overflowing folders tucked under her arms and no doubt a dozen or so Mew Mew Kissy Cutie-themed USBs stuffed in her coat pockets.

“Frisk, we have to get going!” Alphys sputtered out with a slightly milder panic than her usual tenor “S-sans just called and h-he says the scientific board members for the region want to see o-our research right away!”

That… might actually be a good thing. While Flowey could only trust Dr. Alphys to further screw
things up, if monsterkind could provide a scientific benefit to the human world at large, it would definitely help with their overall image. But, again, that is only if Alphys didn’t screw it up too badly. Leave it to the Ambassador team to do some pre-emptive damage control…

Flowey tucked himself in his (surprisingly comfy) satchel and prodded Frisk with a vine to finally get their attention away from their sand-tower. They looked between him and Alphys in confusion for a moment, obviously they had zoned out the entire spiel Alphys gave.

“C’mon. Ambassador stuff.” Flowey wrapped his vines around the bottom of the bag and hopped it over to his human companion before trying to pull himself up onto their shoulder. “We have nerds to go schmooze!”

Frisk snorted out a giggle as they pulled themself to their feet and the Flowey bag snug on their shoulders. They started repeating “schmooze” under their breath and snickering to themself. Admittedly, it was a funny word, but it’s a pretty apt description of their ambassador duties.

“Yeah, yeah, yuck it up now.” Flowey poked their cheek gently to bring them out of their parroting. “We’re probably in for a couple hours of nerd talk-induced boredom.”

“O-oh don’t be like that.” Alphys chimed in like somebody actually asked her to join their conversation. “The uh research facility a-actually has a science museum open for the public. They even have a planetarium! You might have fun.”

Wait. Planetarium? That means space and planets and stars, right?

Flowey’s eyes went wide and a smile started pulling at his face. Frisk must have seen the realization hit his face because they nodded to him and started grinning like they just had just been promised cinnamon bunnies for dinner.

“Aw man, are you guys leaving already?” Artie pouted as they started wriggling off of their swing seat (and finally landing on their face!) before hobbling over. “I wanted to hang out more… But if you dudes have some important ambassador-ing to do, then, uh, more power to you! I’ll be cheering you on from right here!”

Ambassadors with a cheer squad? If it was anything like the Flowey fan club… Eh, whatever it took to accomplish his (and by extension, Frisk’s) goals.

“Well, why don’t you c-come along too? The more the m-merrier!” Alphys started clicking her claws and muttering to herself “B-but the cab might be a bit cr-crowded and-”

“Wait! I bet my Sis can give us a lift!” Artie started bouncing around excitedly again “Hey! Sis! Can you give us a lift somewhere?”

Penn and Toriel looked up from their conversation, the latter looking like she was going to pass out on the spot. Seriously, why was she shooting the shit with some nobody neighbour girl instead of taking a nap?! At this rate, she’s going to be too tired to make dinner, and that would leave Papyrus and Undyne to cook. Is she trying to get them all dusted?! Penn took the presumptuous request in stride though.

“Huh? Oh yeah, sure. The Cosmos has enough room for everyone.” Penn jabbed a thumb over her shoulder in the general direction of the neighbour’s driveway. Good god, she NAMED her car? “But one of you guys has to navigate, though. I have no idea where anything is around here.”

Oh, fucking fantastic, they were going to be riding around in the back of that godawful smelling-
“And before anyone says it, I deep cleaned the f- heck out of my van this morning. So, yeah, no worries on the smell...”

Oh, well… Flowey resigned himself to be the judge of that! they had standards, and if they aren’t met then he would have to prepare himself for spending the entire car ride with Frisk smelling his head.

Flowey braced himself as the gaudy painted van door opened before them, but instead of body odour and laundry, he was hit by a wall of fabric shampoo smell and a cherry air freshener hanging off the mirror.

Well. That works.

Penn helped to buckle Artie and Frisk in before Alphys fired up the GPS on her phone… then plugged the phone into the stereo and started blasting the soundtrack to one of her obnoxious cartoons!

It was going to be a long trip…

---

Thank fucking GOD Penn pulled the “don’t distract the driver” rule and turned Alphys’ music off. Flowey just had to suffer through Artie gossiping about everything that’s been going on in the last week…

“And so then, Mittens started screaming and pointing at my sleeves going ‘what are those growths!?’, and I was all like ‘those are my wings, yo!’ and everyone was just like ‘you have wings?! Do they even work?’ and I just started laughing ‘cause those guys have known me for how long?’ Frisk’s legs kicked out happily as they giggled, Artie’s wings flapping around animatedly as they spoke.

Flowey was just barely poking his head out from under the flap of the bag, his eyes were darting between Frisk and Artie’s faces and he was not happy. Not just because Frisk’s legs were bouncing the seat around. Not just because Artie had nearly whacked him in the face with a wing. Twice.

It was… Flowey wasn’t sure what it was.

Frisk was happy, he was getting to go see something to do with stars, the Pulse should be tingling happy in his stem. Instead, he had this searing… sour feeling, right at the back of his petals.

He wasn’t… Jealous? Of course, he can’t be jealous! Artie was an insignificant puissant in Frisk’s life compared to him! They met like once in WATERFALL!... And Frisk saved their life. But, Frisk would have done that for anyone, they saved Undyne with that water. They barely talked to Artie afterwards! ...And now they live next door. And possibly going to be in their class at Toriel’s school in the fall…

…Maybe Flowey should consider putting Artie in their place to reaffirm his spot as #1 Frisk Friend.

Finally, the research facility/museum started coming into view from the front window of the van. It was… pretty unassuming. It mostly had plain white walls on the outside, aside from the wall facing
the front of the building which was basically one giant window. Flowey could see a large domed roof way at the back of the building. It reminded him a little of Alphys’ HOTLAND lab… he just hoped there was considerably less anime inside.

And his hopes were immediately reassured.

From the moment the group stepped into the main entrance, they were quite literally star struck. Suspended from the ceiling was a massive mobile depiction of the solar system, just like Flowey had seen in a few of Sans’ nerd books before, only far more majestic. Spotlights shown down on each of the celestial objects, giving them life and occasionally a flash of a comet would pass by.

Even the floor was abuzz with activity. Right from the front door, different paths were marked out and lit up from coloured strings of light imbedded in the tiles of the floor. Each path was labeled with a different department or attraction. From “Dinosaurs” to “Robotics”, Flowey wanted to see EVERYTHING, but “Space” captivated him the most. He was just glad he wasn’t the only one gawking around like an awestruck idiot, and seeing Frisk’s eye light up with the same wonder… the Pulse’s sour note from earlier was all quickly overrun.

“Welcome to the Rocky Mountain Center for Science Enrichment.” A woman’s voice sounded over the intercom, smooth and melodious only to add to the awe from the display. “Please note, that while our research facility is not open to the public at this moment, we do have a special exhibit on display in our natural history department: Giants of the Cenozoic Era. Audio tours available at the front desk.”

“Yoooo! Dude, this is amazing!” Artie set off into a spin in the center of the floor, following the path of a few of the planets from the mobile and almost crashing into a few other patrons as they went. Penn quickly caught up to them and steadied them with an outstretched leg before they smacked into a model rocket piece on the floor.

“Yeah, it’s pretty cool, but it’s got nothing on the NDT Center back in Toronto.” Penn remarked as she looked over the map of the center near the front desk. “They get live feeds of the earth from satellites, and sometimes astronauts give presentations from up in their space stations. It’s really cool.”

How the hell can this person be so nonchalant about cameras in space?! Just being able to see the sky was positively amazing already, but seeing the world from miles up in the sky was unthinkable. Feeling small in the world is a far cry from being cramped up under a mountain…

“Dr. Alphys I presume?” Frisk and Flowey were shocked out of their wonder by a few other humans approaching, all of which were wearing glasses as thick as Alphys’. Right, of course. They were here for work, not for fun. Gotta talk to some nerds.

“Th-that’s me alright, but you kind of already guessed, so… y-yeah.” Alphys stammered out as she started shaking the hands outstretched to her, trying not to knock her tail into a wheelchair one of the scientists was riding in.

“I’m Dr. Marian Bolaji, we spoke on the phone.” A tall woman with a bright yellow head wrapping said as she leaned down to take Alphys’ hand, her eyes were just as bright as Frisk’s had been a moment ago oddly enough. “I must say, we’re all very fascinated by the nature of your work and we are really eager to get started! I’m sure we will forge a strong and beneficial partnership for years to come, if you’d lik-”

Another of the scientists nearly leapt towards Frisk and Flowey, kneeling down and grabbing Flowey by the stem, pulling him uncomfortably close.
“Amazing…” he began muttering to himself, his breathing hot and heavy and smelling like tuna right against Flowey’s face! “Somehow the stamen actually reformatted themselves to not only perceive light in the same function as a human eye, but the pistil has formed a functioning mouth…”

Flowey was about to rip the living puss-bucket a new nose with his friendliness pellets, but Frisk was the one to beat him to the punch. They batted the doctor’s hand away from his stem, angrily whining at them like he was hurting them. Once Flowey was freed from the creep, Frisk took a few steps back, holding an arm over his satchel protectively and sending a dark glare the doctor’s way.

It felt weird being the one protected this time, but the Pulse made him feel oddly warm, so he really wasn’t complaining.

“Dr. Namdol! We have discussed this!” Dr. Bolaji yanked the considerably smaller and scrawnier man to his feet and away from the group of monsters, a stern look on her face sending him into trembling remorse. “That behavior is entirely inappropriate! These are our collogues, not test subjects!”

Tuna-breath stammered incoherently, looking between the taller woman and Frisk before nodding and stumbling back towards the hallway the scientists had arrived from. Flowey made no attempt to hide his disgust when he stuck his tongue out at the man’s back.

“I am so terribly sorry for that.” Dr. Bolaji kneeled down as close as she could to be at Frisk and Flowey’s eyelevel, deep concern marred on her features. “You have ever right to take offense to Dr. Namdol’s actions. Rest assured he will be reprimanded for that…”

“We’re all a little overwhelmed by the… new concepts that Dr. Alphys presented during our call. In all honesty, the very idea of magic breaks so many of our preconceptions about science and the universe as a whole. Especially after meeting with your associates already…”

Associates? Alphys only mentioned Sans coming along to this meeting. Who the hell else would-

“WOWIE METTATON, YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO CAPTURE ALL MY BEST SIDES!”

“Oh, but of course, Papy-dear. Especially when they’re all the best!”

Oh dear god…

Flowey peered over the top of Frisk’s mop of hair and saw Papyrus (true to his word, wearing a t-shirt with that awful drawing taped to it) and Mettaton wandering out of the doors labeled “Dinosaurs”, looking through pictures on Papyrus’ phone. Penn looked truly mortified at the drawing on his shirt, but allowed Artie to drag her in closer to their personal-hero and TV-hero.

“AH, THERE YOU ARE YOUNG MONSTER CHILD!” Papyrus trilled happily before picking up his protégé and hoisting them onto his shoulder. “I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU MADE IT HERE, FOR THIS PLACE IS TRULY AMAZING! METTATON AND I JUST EXPLORED A WONDEROUS HALL FILLED WITH ALL SORTS OF AMAZING BONES! I DARESAY, THESE HUMANS MAY JUST GIVE ME A RUN FOR MY MONEY WHEN IT COMES TO BONE-EXPERTISE, SO I WILL HAVE TO TRY THAT MUCH HARDER IN THE FUTURE! NYEH-HEH!”

Flowey glowered around the room, trying to find the smiling bag of trash that was no doubt in hearing distance of his brother. But given the radius at which Papyrus’ voice carried, Sans could be clear across the other side of the mountain range and still be in earshot. It didn’t hurt trying to find him first though…
He did notice Dr. Bolaji whispering something to Alphys, giving a soft smile and passing her a few colourful pieces of paper. That had better not be a bribe or he would be a seriously pissed off Ambassador’s translator/assistant. Frisk hadn’t seemed to notice though and just scampered over to hug at Mettaton’s shiny pink boot.

“METTATON, THIS IS PENN, THE HUMAN THAT MADE THIS WONDEROUS REIMAGINING OF MY FACE!” Papyrus practically shoved a very unwilling Penn into Mettaton’s chest plate and her expression shifted to… Flowey could only describe it as “just woke up and cannot believe reality right now”.

“Oh my! Aren’t you just a little darling!” In true Mettaton fashion, he completely disregarded Penn’s personal space and wrapped one of his noodley mechanical arms around her. “Allow me to introduce myself, I’m Mettaton, current number one monster star and soon to be the biggest superstar in the world!”

Penn’s look of befuddlement didn’t let up as she looked Mettaton up and down. Alphys did a pretty good job of making the robot egomaniac look humanoid, so why was did she have to look twice at him when she was fine around other monsters?

“Does…” Penn’s eyes squinted more, staring at Mettaton’s face with curiosity “Does the name David Bowie mean anything to you…?”

Mettaton puffed out his bottom lip in thought and unwound his arm from Penn, bringing his hand to his chin. Flashes of familiarity passed through his visible eye and Flowey could practically hear whirring coming from his head.

“Hm… Odd. It does sound familiar but I really can’t place it. And I’m usually so good with names. It’s a gorgeous name either way!” Mettaton turned back to face Penn, almost slashing her across the face with his obnoxious shoulder spike things “But the point is, Beautiful, that I can extend that starship to you! I have an offer that would take full advantage of all your wonderful artistic traits and show them to the world!”

Oh god, here he goes. Preying on the nervous but (questionably) talented just to help himself get along. Mettaton probably still has that Burgerpants guy still under his mechanical thumb even after breaking free of the underground.

“Watch out, Lady; Mettaton has a habit of mixing live ammunition and real explosions into ever show he does. Even the cooking shows…” Flowey glowered up at Mettaton. The nightmare/memory of Frisk on his sadistic TV show still fresh in his mind. If he could get back at Mettaton by scaring off any potential stepping stones to fame, then he was going to take it.

Penn’s eyes went wide as she took a few steps away from the mechanical narcissist.

“W-wait so… th-that stuff you said about… And Frisk?” Penn looked up to Artie, still perched on Papyrus’ shoulder and looking through the photos of fossils with him before they turned their head back down to their ‘big sis’.

“Yeah! Frisk was so cool when they were on the show! They were defusing bombs and shooting down drones and dodging lasers!” Artie started flapping their wings around excitedly. Frisk giggled and waved a hand bashfully, trying to play off the mortal danger and celebrityhood.

“Oh, come now, I’ve learned to tone it down for human audiences!” Mettaton pouted, directed a pointed glare back down at Flowey in return. “Besides, the human authorities took away all my weapons and rocket fuel. I don’t even have my MMT-brand Anytime Fireworks anymore…”
Oh no, the crazy self-admitted killer robot is without his unnecessarily flashy arsenal, whatever with monsterkind do for entertainment now? Flowey rolled his eyes, unperturbed by Mettaton’s self-pitying dramatic bullshit. Frisk was at least snickering at the diva moments.

“Well, we should get going, we have dinner reservations, don’t we, Papy-dear?” Mettaton finally broke from his pout to trail a gloved finger under Papyrus’ chin, sending a hot-orange spark up his spine and straight to his face. Papyrus gently set Artie back on the floor and squeaked out a rushed goodbye before being dragged along by the mechanical diva.

Flowey let out a sigh. Now that the distraction of “family” was gone, there was nothing keeping them from that boring, stuffy nerd meeting instead of exploring the actually fun parts of the museum with Penn and Artie… Frisk mirrored the sentiment, running a finger along his petals while their eyes glanced forlornly towards the space department with him.

“H-hey, I know you two want to enjoy the museum instead of this meeting, but it has to be done sooner rather than later…” Alphys shuffled over, Dr. Bolaji in tow and a knowing grin on both their faces.

“Which is why I’m giving you two month-long passes.” Dr. Bolaji smirked as Alphys held out the colourful papers from before; pass cards on lanyards.

Frisk’s eyes went wide and they stammered out excitedly before grabbing two of the lanyards and holding them close to their chest. Flowey grabbed one of them, looking it over incredulously. It was real. It was really a bribe… But he wasn’t unhappy about being bribed like this!

Chapter End Notes

Hey, sorry for how late this chapter was, it's been hectic as all hell over here and I was struggling with writer's block for a while. I have a more definite idea of what I want to do for the next chapter so for sure that’s gonna be coming out sooner! Thanks for all your patience and kind comments, keep em coming!
Aiming Higher and Crashing Down

Chapter Summary

When you realize just how big the universe is, sometimes that can make you feel truly small and insignificant... Or just really bored from all the nerd-talk.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Flowey might as well have been in an entirely new country, because for the last two hours he couldn’t understand a word that was coming out of anyone’s mouth!

Turns out Sans had actually shown up to the meeting before anyone else got there and lead the discussion down the migraine that is whatever the hell Quantum physics actually meant. Flowey thought he had a pretty good grasp on the reality-warping abilities that DETERMINATION granted a person, but these nerds were going a mile-a-minute talking about “alternate realities” and “quantum phase-shifting”.

At least when Sans lead into Alphys’ more practical works in robotics and monster biology he started to feel slightly less lost. Hopefully, she would include NOT TURNING MONSTERS INTO ABOMINATIONS WITH HUMAN SOUL GOO as part of her overall thesis.

Frisk on the other hand… Flowey could still feel them being overwhelmed by everything going on. They could barely get two words signed out before the conversation made a gigantic leap ahead without them. They knew how important this collaboration would be for monsterkind’s establishment within human society, and they barely understood what was going on…

For all their DETERMINATION, they were still just a little kid and had limitations.

Flowey lifted his chin up from Frisk’s shoulder and leaned in closer to whisper into their ear. “Don’t feel too bad; All the other politicians we’re going to be talking to won’t even know half of what you do about SOULs and magic. This nerd-stuff isn’t going to matter day-to-day.”

Frisk turned their head and pressed a finger to their lips in an attempt to scold him for implying Sans and Alphys’ research didn’t matter. Despite that, he could still feel the worry and tension lift from their tiny shoulders. The Pulse thrummed through his petals, assuring him of a job well done.

“And magic itself could also be a much more complex system in which the evoker actually allows for other dimensions to manifest a measurable change on our physical plane of existence!” One scrawny little man gushed like he was meeting a movie star. Flowey really had to hold himself back from laughing at his expression alone. “This changes everything! If we could just—”

“-And magic itself could also be a much more complex system in which the evoker actually allows for other dimensions to manifest a measurable change on our physical plane of existence!” One scrawny little man gushed like he was meeting a movie star. Flowey really had to hold himself back from laughing at his expression alone. “This changes everything! If we could just—”

“Dr. Palmer, I think that’s enough speculation for today. We don’t want to front-load our long-term partnership with Dr. Alphys and Dr. Sans too much.” Dr. Bolaji interjected with a hand on the scrawny man’s shoulder, pulling him back down to the meeting table and away from the whiteboard. “But I think I can speak for everyone here when I say we whole-heartedly accept your partnership
proposal!"

Aw yes!

“However…”

Aw crap.

“There are few stipulations we must enforce for security purposes, I am afraid.” Alphys’ claws gripped the table hard at that phrase. She could definitely feel her sins crawling on her back now. “Firstly, while I have no doubt that there would be those who would donate their SOULs post mortem for scientific research, I must insist that their actual SOULs be kept on site within human possession. You may take samples of the essences that you described back to your private lab, but all direct monster interaction with the subjects must be supervised.” Dr. Bolaji waited on a shaky nod from Alphys before turning back to another scientist who was busy taking notes down on her tablet computer.

“Secondly, for further security as well as efficiency, we must insist that you take on one of our approved human interns to assist in any off-site experiments you partake in. We will supply you with a list of candidates by the end of the week, but you must make a decision before we can proceed with our partnership. We also require full disclosure on all experiments, and copies of all research notes to be given to our labs for confirmation and archive. Are these terms agreeable?”

Jeez, lady, go from mother hen to cutthroat in two seconds. While he hated the idea of having some randy human nerdling around the house, Flowey had to hand it to her; she was the one of the sanest people he’s met so far. She knew how dangerous a raw human SOUL could be in the hands of a monster. She might be playing all nice and friendly with monsters, but she sure as hell isn’t trusting them right away.

Sans and Alphys huddled in towards Frisk and Flowey, Alphys shaking like a leaf.

“Wh-what do we do? What do we DO?!” Alphys stammered out in a panic. Jeez, she’s acting like someone asked her to call to order a pizza instead of doing it online. Wasn’t this partnership supposed to be her idea?

“Well, they’re probably going to ask us to sign our names on some paper. Then we go home, and I dunno about you, but I’m thinking about taking a nap.” Sans said with a non-committal shrug. “Cmon Alph, they’re not being unreasonable, just careful. It’s not like we were going to take any SOULs they gave us anyway. Besides, having an intern around just means less work for us.”

“Yeah, at least this time you’ll have some oversight!” Flowey bit back the VERY powerful urge to contort his face into some horrible melted abomination, but the message got through to her loud and clear anyway. With supervision, she won’t have the opportunity to make terrible mistakes like him or the Amalgamates ever again. He would make sure of it.

Frisk tugged on her sleeve, giving Alphys the best reassuring smile they could, conveying all the encouragement they had to offer. Torn between her crippling fear of the implication in Flowey’s words and the small amount of confidence that Frisk gave her, Alphys nodded to them and turned back to the humans sitting across from them.

“Y-yes, your demands are very reasonable a-and we accept your proposal!” Alphys gently pounded her fist on the table, stammering with confidence!

Papers signed, hands shook, Flowey was getting bored with the protocol of these stupid meetings.
Just once, can’t a meeting end with candy or something?

“The museum doesn’t close for another half hour if you want to explore for a little while.” Dr. Bolaji said, kneeling down and reverting back to her kindly smile.

Now that’s more like it!

“‘We have travelled so far, learned so much, yet this is only a fragment of all there is...’ Were the words spoken by Serena Carle; first person to set foot on Mars. Along with the 19 other brave, brilliant individuals aboard the Izanami IV shuttle, Carle’s team established what would later become Centurion; Mars’ first colony and current terraforming station....”

Flowey was completely awestruck. Never in all the times he had read about the stars, or even in the short time that he spent looking up at them had he ever thought that it was a place you could GO.

All around him lay artifacts to the contrary though; models of space shuttles, soil samples and footage taken on the moon and Mars, a live video feed from a CITY ON THE MOON.

The wonders the world beyond the mountain had to offer...

“Oh yeah, I remember the day that happened.” Penn gave a melancholic smile as she sat down on the bench next to Frisk and Flowey, Artie in tow with a weird animal skull-shaped hat. Looks like they were exploring the fossil exhibit before meeting up with them. Frisk’s eyes never left the screen in front of them, replaying the footage of the Mars landing while a voice spoke over it. “I wasn’t much older than Frisk when I watched the landing on TV. Hard to believe they’ve got more than 120 people up there now... Maybe one day you’ll be visiting for ambassador work. Wouldn’t that be something? Monsters and politics in space!”

He... He might go up there one day? He could get closer to the stars?

Flowey actually felt tears well up in his eyes and he didn’t care. From just seeing real stars for the first time in his life, to the thought of going up into the sky all within a month was overwhelming in the best possible way. He was so happy it almost hurt.

Frisk saw his tiny tears glinting in the light of the projectors around the room and leaned down closer to his face, wiping his eyes with their sleeve.

“[Do you need to take a break?]” Their brows were furrowed in concern for him.

Even Flowey had to admit, crying like this in front of other people wasn’t like him. Maybe more like Asriel, but not Flowey the Flower. He started choking out a watery laugh, shaking his head so much that his petals rattled against his face.

“No, I’m good. I’m better than good!” Flowey leaned his face more into Frisk’s sleeve-covered hand, wiping tears and some pollen onto the blue fabric and hiding his smile. “I’m just... I never thought I could be this happy in my miserable life. And it’s all thanks to you, Frisk. You gave me this.”

Frisk smiled brightly down at him, moving his satchel from the bench to their lap and wrapping their arms around it in their approximation of a hug. Flowey stretched and wrapped his stem around them
as many times as he could before it began to hurt, even then the Pulse was egging him on.

“Man… space really is so cool, yo.” Artie mumbled slack-jawed in front of one of the displays modeling the composition of the sun, just loud enough to take Frisk’s attention away from Flowey for a second. They giggled and nodded back, trying to move amidst Flowey’s “hug” and trying to set him back on the bench. Way to ruin the moment you stupid stunted wyvern…

“Yeah, well hate to be the bearer of bad news, but we gotta get going now. Museum closes in five.” Penn said before pushing off of the seat. Frisk reluctantly hopped down as well and started following the young woman out of the exhibit and into the main hall.

Alphys was busy texting away, most likely with Undyne by the way her eyes lit up with slightly less guilt and anxiety than normal. Maybe they were talking about the nerd-meeting, or Undyne’s orientation with the local police, or some stupid cartoon they were watching, who cared? She had bags and bags of souvenirs and books from the Museum shop slung over her shoulders and she was practically giddy… Flowey was already planning on stealing that T-Rex plush toy she had gotten, though.

The van-ride home was a quiet one, thankfully. Artie and Frisk were exhausted from trip overall and were leaning against each other in their seats for a nap, and Alphys was trying to fight her social-overstimulation by plugging herself into her earphones and tapping away on her phone. That just left Flowey and the weirdo from next door. Oh, joy…

Flowey could just barely make out her eyes’ reflection in the rear-view mirror. Dull, tired, and worried… Hell yeah, she should be worried. He was onto her little scheme—forcing her way into their lives just so she could claim she’s a friend of the new famous ambassador and all that it entails. And that’s not even including if she was a spy for some corrupt group trying to plot the downfall of monsterkind before they even had a chance to settle.

Yeah, he was onto her. Might as well let her know she isn’t shit!

“Don’t let Mettaton’s eccentricities get to you, he’s like that with everyone.” That’s right, start out with something that could sound reassuring, then BAM. “The only reason he made you that offer for a TV show was because you’re the first human artist he’s met.”

“I know…” Penelope’s response was calm and immediate. Flowey was honestly taken aback. She didn’t even try to defend her work or anything. He glared back at the rear-view mirror and her expression hadn’t changed at all. Still that thousand-yard stare onto the road ahead…

What was her fucking deal?! Did she know that he knew that she’s a spy and just not care? Doesn’t she see him as a threat?! Flowey retreated further into his bag just to stew in his hatred, the rest of the trip spent in relative silence.

Flowey just about started to fall asleep himself when Penn pulled into a stop in the driveway.

“I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, AM A DATING MASTER! NYEHEHEHE!” Well at least he had a good date, but why does he have to be so loud?!

Frisk and Artie jolted awake upon hearing Papyrus’ trills echo through the neighbourhood. Disorientated at first, then scrambling over each other to get out and meet with their favourite skeleton to get all the juicy gossip out of him. Flowey groaned as Frisk jostled his satchel around onto the shoulder.

Papyrus laid buried underneath what appeared to be the entire Dog Squad from the Royal Guard,
with Undyne kneeling down next to his head. Apparently, he was in a really good mood because he hardly cared about Lesser Dog chewing on his ulna… Then again, the glittery lipstick marks on his skull were another good indicator.

“Well look who finally got back from their little nerd outing!” Undyne leapt over the dogpile (heh) and put Alphys in a lovingly brutal headlock-smooch-gentle-suplex combo right into the mound of fur and fluff behind them. “Did you guys have fun?

“Oh man, it was so awesome!” Artie shouted before bounded up and clinging to Undyne’s shoulder like a scaly parrot. “We saw all these cool bones from ancient monster-animal things! Then there were these cool robots, but none of them as cool as Mettaton—”

“NO ROBOT COULD EVER SURPASS THE COOLNESS LEVELS OF METTATON, FOR I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, HAVE VERY HIGH STANDARDS AND HE IS THE ONLY METALLIC MARVEL THAT MY METAPHORICAL HEART WILL EVER BELONG TO…” God, Papyrus sounded like a lovesick fool. When Mettaton eventually gives him the shaft so he can pursue some shallow “Hollywood” romance just for the sake of the scandal, the entire neighbourhood is going to go deaf from his wails. And as funny as that sounded to watch, it would cause way too much of a headache in the long run, and Frisk’s ears were way too sensitive to stand it even in the short run. Reminder for later: threaten Mettaton so he doesn’t break Papyrus’ heart.

“So so ho-how was your p-police tag-along?” Alphys stammered as she tried to dig her way out of the slobber and wagging tails of at least five canine warriors.

“Uuuuuugh!” Undyne groaned dramatically, tossing her head back, throwing Artie into the air, falling back against the dogs, and catching the little yellow annoyance before they hit the ground. “Nowhere NEAR as cool as they seem on TV. I mean, yeah, they have a lot of rules and junk that make sense, but there were no shoot-outs, no car chases, no bringing down international crime syndicates! The most exciting thing we saw was some guy getting a speeding ticket… Dog Squad did like meeting the K-9 unit tough.”

“Too bored without your kill humans on sight protocols, there?” Flowey jeered. The awkward silence that ensued be damned, Undyne needed to be reminded of what her job used to be. She held onto the ideology of ‘ALL HUMANS ARE SCUMBAGS THAT SHOULD DIE’ for too long for her to suddenly become the law of an entirely new world again. Not with Frisk’s life on the line. If boredom is what took her to cool her bloodlust, then let her rot in mind-numbing paperwork and leave protecting the little human to HIM!

The absolutely terrified look on Penn’s face before she ducked into Artie’s house just made Undyne’s bashful stammering all the sweeter.

Toriel, looking thankfully well rested for the first time in a week, popped her head out of the front door of their own house to break up the little powwow. With a little help from Frisk and Undyne (and a Sans who just showed up), the dog monsters were chased off, hopefully towards their own houses down the block.

The rest of the evening was a not-too-unpleasant droll of everyone sitting down at the newly refurbished dining room for dinner, talking in greater detail about their days… At least Flowey got to talk about the space junk he saw.
Mornings… Mornings sucked. Papyrus is too loud, the sun is at just the right angle to get you in the freaking eye, and the bed just beckons to you its sweet siren song. Now Shyren’s song obviously because her genre ties more in line with Pop-ballad rather than the lullaby that their star-print bedsheets sing.

At least there’s always cartoons.

Frisk was sitting on the floor, bowl of cereal perched on the coffee table before them, and a groggy Flowey clinging to their arm. Undyne and Papyrus were sitting back on the couch, completely engorged in the human entertainment. Flowey could barely comprehend what was playing on TV at the moment (maybe something to do with superheroes?), but it was all just white noise anyway. Listening to Frisk’s amused hums and heartbeat through their shoulder was enough for him, then…

Until some frantic banging on the door broke him from his calm stupor.

Frisk’s head nearly dropped right into their cereal bowl in surprise when it sounded like someone was hitting a watermelon against their front door. Undyne was the first to spring into action—practically vaulting over the coffee table with a spear already in hand before glaring out through the small window next to the door frame.

When she tore the door open, Artie toppled colossal head-first into the doorway from the momentum of knocking in the door with their head. Fortunately, they sprung up quickly enough so Frisk wouldn’t have time to go over and (ugh) help them up.

“Y-yo, dudes, you gotta help me! I- She-” Artie was bouncing around on their feet, looking up between everyone in the room with a level of genuine panic that Flowey had never seen them with before. It was like they were actually taking something seriously for once. “Penn- Something is wrong with her! I think she’s like sick or something! A-and my moms al-already left for work and I don’t know what to do-”

Tears welled up in the little wyvern’s eyes as genuine dread kicked in. If that human really was sick, why bother panicking? One of them could always just absorb the SOUL for extra fire power—

No, wait. Bad idea. If a human died while in a monster’s house, it would just inspire mass hysteria and make smooth race relations impossible… Ugh, better help out.

Papyrus gently tucked Artie up into his battle body’s chest and wiped their eyes with his scarf.

“FEAR NOT, LITTLE FRIEND, THE GREAT PAPYRUS AND CAPTAIN UNDYNE WILL SAVE YOUR HUMAN SISTER WITHOUT A DOUBT!”

“Yeah kid, don’t sweat it! We got this!” Undyne patted the wyvern’s head before bounding out the door and (unnecessarily) kicking the door to Artie’s house in with a battle cry, Papyrus in tow.

Faster than you could say “trouble”, Frisk was scrambling to the door after them, thankfully grabbing Flowey’s satchel on the way out. Turned out trying to climb down someone’s arm and into a leather sack of dirt was a lot harder when that person was in motion. Flowey was barely rooted before Frisk had stopped at the doorway to Artie’s basement (kicked in once again by Undyne).

Honestly, Flowey was expecting bloodstains, or government surveillance equipment, or satanic markings on the wall, but the really weird thing about Penn’s room was how… unlived in it looked. Sure, she had just moved in the day before, but everything was still in boxes other than a ratty mattress laying on the floor and a couple clothes. The kitchenette in the corner looked so untouched, Flowey doubted that she had even eaten anything since last night.
Penn herself was… just a ball. She was crouched in on herself in the middle of the room, her hands laced on the back of her head, shaking like a leaf and mumbling under her breath. Undyne tried to snap her out of it in the most Undyne-way possible; by grabbing her shoulders and violently shaking her. Penn started screaming bloody murder the second someone made contact with her and didn’t stop until Undyne let go. What the hell was going on?

“Sh-she was weirdly quiet last night after the museum.” Artie mumbled after hopping off of Papyrus’ shoulder. They started circling around Penn’s crumpled form like a concerned shark. “She didn’t eat anything, I don’t think she slept at all, a-and she keeps repeating the same thing over and over again: I’m sorry, it should have been me. I’m sorry, I couldn’t have done it.”

Frisk was starting to shake just from seeing Penn in this state. Was this like a common human disease they’d seen before? Flowey squinted his eyes and CHECKED Penn out to see what was going on.

[ACT] *CHECK

Penelope Tellic LV 1

ATK 4 DEF 0

HP 24/24

Fallen Down?

…Wait a minute. 24/24? No DEF at all? Flowey could have swore it was higher when he first met her.

[ACT] *CHECK

Penelope Tellic LV 1

ATK 4 DEF 0

HP 22/22

“Uh, guys, is it just me or is her HP doing something weird? It says her HP is full, but the total keeps dropping.” Flowey craned his stem out from his bag, looking the human over. She had no obvious damage done to her body or her SOUL… Her now very dull, very grey instead of periwinkle SOUL. He’d ever seen anything like this happen before… How very interesting~!

Chapter End Notes

Hey, sorry this took so long to get out. I'm the worst at getting distracted…
What's the Number for 911?!

Chapter Summary

PANIC! In the Basement

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Okay, okay, there’s no need to panic!” said a very panicked Undyne.

She and Papyrus had CHECKED Penelope too, her HP was indeed dropping in a way nobody had ever seen before. When Papyrus tried to reach out and use his healing magic, nothing happened. Well, nothing GOOD happened. Her HP didn’t increase, and all Penn did was whimper and back off like the skeleton was trying to electrocute her.

“I-I know! We’ll get Alphys! YEAH! She’ll know what to do!” Undyne started racing towards the stairs when Flowey stepped in and tripped her with a vine.

“Alphys can’t even look after comatose monsters without melting them! You really think she’d be able to fix a human that’s doing… this?!” Flowey met the snarling barracuda with a glare of his own. He didn’t waver, even when Frisk’s shoulder started to shake his bag. God, she smelled like low tide and salt.

Wait. Frisk was shaking?

Flowey turned his stem down and looked in horror that whatever was happening to Penn was starting to affect his human. HIS. Was she contagious?!

Frisk was shaking, not quite as violently as Penn, and their breathing was definitely starting to become erratic like hers, but they were somehow still the most-sane person in the room. They fumbled their cell phone out of their pocket and dialed in three numbers before pointing the receiver to Flowey… Oh right, humans have emergency numbers to call.

“911, what’s your emergency?” a fast-speaking man’s voice came over the speaker as Flowey took the phone in his vines away from Frisk so they could sign for him.

“Uh, this is 253 Cherry Drive, we have a woman here who- she’s having trouble breathing and we can’t get close to her without her screaming like she’s hurt. Please send an ambulance!” Flowey transcribed Frisk’s hands into the receiver.

“Okay, is she in any immediate danger to herself or to others?” What? How could Penn hurt anyone even while she was in ideal condition? She looks more like she’s going to implode…

Weirdly enough, Flowey could see Frisk’s expression darken at that question. He looked back to them for some kind of instruction to relay back to the operator, but their hands had balled up in front of their mouth instead, their breathing coming out between their knuckles in a harsh huff.

“Uh, no. She’s just curled into a ball right now” Flowey said, worry starting to mar his face as thickly as it did on Artie. He couldn’t tell what was going on in Frisk’s head, and the Pulse
thrummed with worry so palpable he felt like he was going to be sick. The only time he saw them like this was… was right before they went to face Asgore for the first time. But this was completely different than walking into a fight! What was going on?!

“Alright, a medical team has been dispatched to your location, please stay on the line and alert me if her condition changes at all. Try and keep her from moving if possible.”

Flowey all but dropped the phone on the carpeted floor, his attention fully on Frisk and deaf to Undyne’s orders for Papyrus and Artie to go to the door to bring the doctors down as soon as they got there. He tried craning his stem out to look Frisk head-on as best he could and get their attention.

“Frisk, hey, what’s the matter?” Flowey spoke with as soft a voice as he could muster, trying to gently pry Frisk’s hands away from their mouth so they could breathe easier. They only started squirming and wrestling against his vines violently, like he was made of garret wire and he was going to strangle them.

They weren’t talking, and Flowey had no idea what to do. They caught whatever human disease Penn had. *That useless waste of skin had gotten them sick, and Artie had pulled Frisk into this mess! His Frisk! His Frisk was hurt and it was all their fault! He was going to rip them A P A R T-*

Flowey was torn from his violent thoughts by the sound of Papyrus’ thunderous boots coming down the stairs towards them. Two humans in bright red uniforms followed after him, pushing a weird stretcher with some kind of… well, he could only really describe it as a cross between tank treads and mechanical caterpillar legs for wheels. Whatever they were, they let the equipment smoothly glide down the stairs and towards the shell that was Penelope.

Undyne had managed to straighten Penn out manually; holding the human’s legs in one arm and her torso in the other. For some reason, one of the med-techs freaked out when he saw this and asked Undyne to put her on the stretcher. Like she was any better curled up in ball…

Surprisingly, Penn didn’t curl back up right away, she just kept stared up catatonically, gasping and looking like a fish. One of the tech wrapped something around her hand, leading up to a device attached to another computer-tablet while the other tried talking to her and dug through her pocket for her wallet. How unprofessional can you get? You don’t loot someone until AFTER they’re a corpse. But all she pulled out was a single card.

“Miss, do you know where you are? Can you tell me your name?” The shorter of the medics (“Jasmine” as her name tag read) asked as her partner (“Alexander”) looked over the computer with increased worry. “No use, Al, she’s unresponsive. At least we have ID; Penelope J. Tellic, 23. Any hits?”

“Yeah, got a hit, Jaz. She hasn’t been in for a while though; last doctors visit was a broken wrist due to an assault.” He responded, eyes still glued to his screen. “History of anorexia, diagnosed anxiety but never medicated. Her vitals are all out of whack too; blood sugar’s way down, bpm is at 94. I’m gonna give her a mild sedative and see if we can get her down enough to respond.”

“Al” pressed a few buttons on the small device attached to the tablet and a clear fluid ran through the tube connecting it to Penn’s hand, while Jasmine strapped her into the stretcher properly, even yanking her hoodie off-

Wow, Penn was even scrawnier than he thought! Cool shoulder tattoo at least.

Finally, she began blinking properly again. Her breathing started evening out too, only for her to start crying and apologizing more coherently like the pathetic sack she was. He would have been
enjoying this a lot more if Frisk still wasn’t shaking and sick like her.

“Hey! Patient zero over here infected Frisk, too! If you guys have any cure for her, they’re a higher-priority patient!” Flowey spat out to get the paramedics’ attention.

Al finally looked up from his computer and his face creased with more worry when he saw Frisk’s small shaking frame in the corner near the kitchenette. He took a couple steps over and kneeled down to them, looking at the both of them with a surprising calm demeanor.

“This isn’t really something that’s contagious. But, I promise, you’re both safe and you’re going to be fine. Nobody is going to hurt you, or yell… Just breathe…” The medic all but whispered to them. If he didn’t have any medicine for them, then he’s just about useless-

Frisk’s shaking started to ease when Al put his hands on their shoulders, letting them outright go in for a hug to a total stranger. As the man rubbed their back, Frisk’s breathing started evening out. They tapped on his chest twice and gently pulled away, giving a more reassuring nod to him that they were fine before letting him go back to his partner and Penn’s side.

Just like that, Flowey was at a loss... He couldn’t hug them like that. Not even on a good day. Frisk was always worried about snapping his stem. He would have been useless in this situation even if he knew what to do...

“Miss Tellic, do you know where you are?” Jasmine asked again, gripping Penn’s free hand in her own to get her attention.

“My apartment… I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have-” Penn whimpered out between her whimpers. It only took a few seconds for her face to get soaked in her own tears and snot. Pathetic.

“It’s okay, miss. Do you feel in danger? Are you a danger to yourself?” the paramedic never broke eye contact with Penn for a second, even when Penn’s grip on her hand was nearly turning her skin dark red from the tension.

“Yes. I came to Eb-Ebott to die. I’m sorry!!” Penn choked out “I’m sorry Frisk, i-it should have been me! I was too late! I should have been-”

Those words came like an invisible punch to the gut to everyone in the room (save for Flowey of course). Artie finally broke down crying, tearing themself out of Papyrus’ arms and landing right onto Penn’s stretcher bed, collapsing on her in their version of a hug. She wrapped her arms around the little Wyvern as best she could with her arms still bound to the stretcher.

“I’m so sorry, Artie! I tried this time, I really tried! You deserve b-better than-”

“It’s alright, miss. We’re going to take you to the hospital, you’re going to be all right. None of this is your fault, you’re just sick.” Jasmine gave Penn a reassuring smile and a squeeze on her shoulder. With a nod to her partner, he attached the tube in Penn’s hand into a different bag of clear fluid already attached to the stretcher before the two of them started pushing the bed up the stairs and out the front door.

“You sure you want to come with us, little friend?” the taller medic asked down to Artie, who was still lodged against Penn’s chest and refusing to move “She’s going to be fine, but it’s not going to be a fun time. I’m sure your friends here can help look after you in the meantime!”

Artie shook their head, adamantly refusing to leave their “big-sis’” side. Al nodded to them, gently hoisting the stretcher into the back of the ambulance and closing the doors. He froze for a second in thought before he detached a large strange metal and plastic box from the back of the ambulance.
doors and set it on the ground.

“Jaz, you go on ahead okay? I’m going to hang back here for a bit and take the scooter back to the hospital.” He called out to his partner who was already getting into the driver’s seat of the truck.

“Educational damage control? Alright, just don’t be too long, boy scout.” With a dismissive wave, the ambulance quietly pulled out onto the road, leaving the man and the strange box in front of the growing crowd of monsters.

All the commotion of Undyne kicking two doors down and a human emergency vehicle on a was enough to get the attention of half the neighbourhood (and wake up Toriel). Despite all that, Al’s focus was on the few who actually saw Penn’s condition.

“I’m sure you have a few questions, huh? Well, I’m not going anywhere for a bit, so you can ask away.” With an oddly calm smile, Al squatted down on the odd box, hands on his knees and looking right up between Undyne and Papyrus.

Undyne was the first to answer (and in a very “Undyne” way too) “Yeah, I have a question; WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT?!?”

“PLEASE TELL ME THE PENN-HUMAN WILL BE OKAY! THEIR HP WAS SO VERY LOW WHEN YOU GOT HERE!” Papyrus bellowed out in actual anguish, clinging to Undyne for both physical and emotional support. Obviously, he had been keeping a lot in just to let the professionals work. Thank god…

A few of the neighbours murmured amoung themselves; those that had seen Penn were concerned. Those who hadn’t were just wondering what the hell the uniformed man was doing around. Toriel even emerged from the house looking like she just woke up, immediately going to Frisk’s side in worry. Frisk clung to her gently like they did with Al before, Toriel rubbing their shaking back and easing their worry…

“HP? That’s monster terminology for HOPE, right? Dr. Alphys have a talk to our hospital on that kind of stuff the other day, so forgive me if I get some things mixed up, but I’ll try to explain it as best I can.” Al held up his hands, trying to calm the two down. Amazing how he can stand his ground when facing an anxious skeleton and a concerned-angry Undyne. “Alright, well, Humans and Monsters are the similar in the fact that our emotional wellbeing has an impact on our physical health, but with Humans it’s more of a two-way street.

“For us, our bodies have can affect our emotions and SOUL just as much as the SOUL and emotions affect it. See, we have these things called hormones, which are chemicals our bodies produce to do a lot of things, and there are specific ones that affect emotion. Miss Tellic’s HOPE was going down because she was lacking the Serotonin and Dopamine—the hormones that help you feel happy. The parts in her body that produce those hormones have gotten sick and broken over time.”

“But… YOU CAN FIX THAT, RIGHT? I-IF A MONSTER RAN OUT OF HAPPINESS AND HOPE LIKE THAT, THEY WOULD… F-FALL DOWN…” Papyrus stuttered out, he was shaking from crying as Undyne held onto the poor sap. He really didn’t want to see his human-artist-friend die.

“Oh, of course!” Al chirped with optimism, a collective sigh of relief coming from the monsters around that knew what was going on. “Depression is unfortunately common, but there are a number of ways to combat it; medication, therapy, support from family and loved ones. Miss Tellic will be just fine with some help and it looks like she has a lot of people caring for her already.”
Flowey’s eye went wide in realization. He… wasn’t a true monster. He was physical matter. Not exactly a human, but still not composed of dust and magic like everyone else. He may not have a SOUL to command his emotions like everyone else, but… maybe if he got his hands on that “hormone” stuff, he wouldn’t NEED to!

“But… I feel the need to ask you to pay especially close attention to her mental state, just in case what she said earlier was true…” Al rubbed the back of his neck, a scowl starting to etch its way onto his face as his eyes rose to face the mountain looming in the distance. “Ebott has a reputation as a… “last destination” of sorts for people. Between the mountain, the forest around it, and the lake, we get hundreds of suicide-tourists coming in from all over every year… And it seems like your friend was one of them…”

Hushed whispers and gasps came from the small group. Hurt and astonished that their mountain home was a site for humans to take their own lives from sadness… Flowey just got mad at the fact that with all those humans dying anyway, how is it only EIGHT CHILDREN made it Underground to free them?! What were they even doing up there if-

Flowey turned, seeing Frisk’s face bury deeper into Toriel’s dress at that.

…They couldn’t have… Right?

Not them. NOT THEM TOO. NOT AFTER CHARA. PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE NO NO NO

The Pulse struck through Flowey like a lightning bolt. He could feel his roots shaking in the dirt uncontrollably. He coiled up around their arm tight like she was afraid they’d slip away from him. He slammed his face into their cheek, whimpering something pathetic and stupid he’s sure, but he couldn’t care less at the moment. He needed to make they were safe. He needed them to stay with him… Frisk’s fingers running over his petals helped a little at least.

“…But, there is some good news with that. Doctors specializing in that kind of emotional and mental distress flock here too because they know they’re needed. We’re able to prevent most of them with the right attention and care.” A soft melancholic smile spread on Al’s face, trying to reassure the group of monsters. “Penelope will get all the help she needs, I promise. Just make sure to take care of each other too, okay?”

A few more monster crowded closer to him with more questions, but it was nothing Flowey cared about. He kept himself buried in Frisk’s hair and cheek, whispering them assurances that he would protect them and they could trust him.

He had never felt so helpless before in either of his lives. Not even when Chara was dying before Asriel. Frisk had suffered—was suffering and all he could do was watch someone else fix the problem. Someone else touching his human with their unworthy mitts. This needed to be fixed… He needed to be fixed.

Before Underground, if he wanted something, he had to work to get it. To beat Undyne, he needed more LV, to get that he needed to grind through monsters to get it. But now was not a matter of arbitrary stats… he was going to need a little help.

With the crowd of monsters satisfied and starting to disperse, Al got off the metal and plastic box, pushing in some kind of latch and unfolded it into a full-sized motorized scooter! He gave a final smile back to Undyne and Papyrus and thanked them for their help with Penn earlier. With a rev of the perky little engine, the paramedic sped off down the street, on the tail of the ambulance.
Flowey had insisted Frisk take a nap after everything that happened that morning, and after hearing what had gone down, Toriel insisted all the more. With them asleep in their room, Toriel back to her studies, Undyne and Papyrus fixing the doors she broke in the neighbours’ house, Asgore out back gardening, that just left good old Flowey alone with a certain someone in the house.

Slithering along the floor, no bag or pot to get in his way and impede his movements… or attacks. He made his way down the stairs to the basement, pointedly ignoring all the bogus hazard warning sighs plastered over the metal surface on the door at the bottom.

The door opened with a woosh, a mist of anti-bacterial spray dousing him right from the frame. Even the noises didn’t get her attention away from her laptop.

Typical, watching some stupid cartoon when all the important stuff was going on upstairs. Not that she would have been useful in that situations anyway. Didn’t she have work to do for the lab downtown to get their partnership started? Tsk tsk.

Oh well, this was far more important anyway.

Flowey slithered right up behind her, red thorns coating his ever-growing mass of vines and roots. His face began contorting into one of sadism and disgust; one she is familiar with.

Finally, she turned in her office chair, her headphones falling off her head in fear.

“Oh, Doctor Alphys~” Flowey trilled with a dark chuckle “You’re going to help me with a little something~”

“Wh-wh-what do you w-want?!” Alphys cowered behind her cup of noodles.

“You’re going to make me huggable!”

…

“Uh… What?”

Wait. Shit. That… didn’t come out right.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the delay, I had to rewrite some stuff like 3 times just to make sure I got the medical stuff as accurate as I could
Refusing to Be Useless

Chapter Summary

Flowey and the good Doctor Alphys have a long-overdue heart-to-heart

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“-And then when the guy said that the mountain was a famous suicide hotspot, they started shaking and clinging to Toriel! So what kind of conclusions am I supposed to draw from that?!” Flowey was animatedly flailing his leaves about to better illustrate his frustration.

Flowey was curled up around a warm mug of tea at Alphys’ desk, the doctor herself scribbling down notes across from him as she listened. He gave up on his attempt at intimidating her after his unfortunate slip of the tongue. No way he would recover after that. All those thorns and extra vines were too much trouble to really maintain anyway.

Fortunately, Alphys’ curiosity temporarily overrode her fear long enough to ask him plainly “why?”.

He was left fumbling with his words for a few moments as he considered his options. He… really didn’t have much of a plan other than scaring the hell out of the lizard, and he was kicking himself in hindsight for his lack of planning. In the end, he decided the truth was the path of least resistance. Besides, he was going for nice Flowey now.

Alphys quietly drummed her claw tips along the top of her desk in thought; the well-worn grooves in the desk top made him think it was a typical habit for her. Lizard sweat poured out her temple as his story was hitting far too close to home for her. To think that everyone’s favourite human…

“It makes sense to some degree…” Alphys muttered plainly after a few moments of contemplation. “Humans would have spread rumours of a cursed mountain where you could never return from as a means to keep people away from where monsterkind was being held. But such rumours would actually appeal to people looking to disappear. And Frisk’s refusal to defend themself could be seen as an act of self-destructive in of itself…”

Alphys put her notepad on the desk, rubbing her eyes tiredly. She was… handling this entire thing pretty well. Probably because she was hearing it second-hand after the fact. If she had been there, the paramedics would have had three cases to deal with. Instead she’s been hiding nice and safe in her little basement, while everyone else was trying to save that idiot from next door’s life.

At least she can be useful now. Not like she can make a decent cup of tea either-

“But how does this tie into your huggability?” Flowey outright choked and spat his tea out. Alphys chose the WORST time to break the silence!

…Wait, since when can he choke?

Whatever. Not important right now!

Flowey took a small moment to get his breathing back to normal and gather his thoughts. He shoved his tea mug to the side and locked eyes with Alphys with a straight face. No silly façade, no
He needed help. He **needed** to do this no matter what. He was swallowing his pride for something, and it was taking a lot for him to do. Desperation? Desire? What would Alphys even say if she found out about The Pulse?

“Look. The only thing that helped Frisk in that moment was some random human giving them a hug. We can’t always rely on strangers’ help or even Toriel being around whenever one of those... *events* happen. But I’m always around Frisk as their translator! Only...” Flowey gestured his leaves down to his body, what little it was. “*This!* Isn’t going to work. I’ve been able to deal with this body for so long, it’s never been *ideal*... but I managed.”

Flowey tried half-heartedly not to let his bitterness show in his voice. This was Alphys’ fault after all, and he wasn’t going to let her forget that. Either she helped him out of a genuine desire to protect Frisk, or guilt. Either way he got results, so he’s not picky.

“But now I have a reason to need more from myself. This isn't about getting around, or holding stuff, or even defense; I can do all that just fine as I am.” It took everything in himself to not burst out laughing at the *self defence* garbage. “I need a body that can hug Frisk and make them feel safe! Something solid and soft and warm like they are. Not just some mess of thorny vines that feel like garret wire.”

“B-but if this is a matter of modifying your body, w-wouldn’t Asgore be more suitable to ask? I-I mean, he is the resident gardener...”

“Yeah, an *organic* gardener. Anything he would come up with would take too long and probably smell god awful!” Flowey gagged at the thought of spending weeks at a time buried in literal cow shit just to grow a few inches. Plant biology be damned!

But, for a moment, Flowey’s earnestness seemed to move the doctor. Her expression softened and her eyes took on a misty sheen as she glanced between the flower’s face and her research-filled computer. She of all people could understand what would best help the small human, and everything Flowey said made sense. A hug when you needed it was a powerful thing...

But then she just had to go and be the logical one and remember who she was dealing with!

“I-I don’t know, Fl-Flowey.” Alphys waivered, pushing her desk chair just a few inches away from him. “I g-get where you’re coming from, b-but this all seems... risky. There are a m-million different ways for this to go wrong! And w-when things go wrong a-round me, they **really** go wrong.”

Excuses. She just didn’t want to give him more power. She could probably already tell something was off with his LV. After all the effort he put in to be genuine and helpful, this is what he gets! ...

Oh well, guilt works just as well.

“Oh, but doctor, think about the possibilities. This may be the one way for you to truly atone for your sin of the Amalgamates~” Flowey slinked closer to her along the desk, speaking like a tempting serpent. He saw Alphys’ eyes go wide behind her sweat-fogged glasses, the gears already turning in her head as to deciphering his meaning.

“W-w-what? At-atonement?” Alphys stumbled, pressing her head against the back of the chair as far as it would go, but not daring to take another step back or break eye contact with him.

Flowey hid a smirk. He got her right where it hurt.
“Well, I read your notes on me. More specifically, on what I was supposed to be. A soul vessel, yes?” Flowey feigned deeper thought, tapping a vine to his chin like someone would use their hand. “Now, if we could somehow create a more suitable body for me, we could create more! Maybe not with consciousnesses of their own this time, but they would still be perfect for separating and containing the souls of the Amalgamates!”

Flowey hated the idea of losing such a wonderful source of amusement that was the horrors Alphys created right before himself. Their mindless fumbling, their constant gibberish, the way they were perpetually deforming and regenerating into fractals of grotesquery. Hours of fun, and it would be even more if they were ever in the same room with a human! Not to mention, their mere existence was an endless source of blackmail on lizard doctor. Just mentioning them would almost bring her to tears and now was no exception as she dug her claws in to scratch at her own scales nervously.

“Just imagine it; they would finally be freed from the immortal trap of their bodies, their minds separated and able to form independent thoughts again! Maybe even Toriel would forgive you.” He might lose something fun, but if it meant getting proper arms it was worth it! Alphys brought her claws to her mouth, and started to nibble on them pensively. She still wasn’t convinced, he’d just used his trump card and he was losing patience.

“You would probably try something, with or without my help...” Alphys said after a moment with a sigh. Flowey perked up hopefully right away. “So long as I’m helping, I can at least take notes, and make whatever you want to call this somewhat safer...”

That last part was debatable, but she was right overall. Flowey was determined to see this through, even if it means breaking into her lab and injecting himself with who-knows-what each night! He could hardly contain his excitement at the prospect!

“This might actually coincide with Sans’ proposal anyway…” Alphys spun her desk chair around and looked over to a few boxes stacked in the corner. “It’s hard to tell with the condition his previous research is in.”

The boxes looked like they’ve seen better days; most of them looked singed from a fire and were barely holding together without papers spilling out from tears along their seams. Flowey slithered off the desk and scuttled over to the research greedily. Of course, the trashbag was holding out on him! This might just be the answer he’s been looking-

…What the hell is this?

Flowey leafed through a few of the papers on the top and the writing (if you could call it that) was in no language he’d ever seen before. It looked like someone just vomited a bunch of emoticons onto a page. No matter how deep he dug into the papers, the symbols persisted and the conditions of the actual pages only got worse; crumpled, torn or burnt almost beyond recognition.

How was this supposed to help anyone?!

“I-I know, I had a similar reaction…” Alphys mumbled behind her mug of tea. “Sans keeps showing up with more and more of those boxes from wh-who knows where, and I can’t understand any of it. H-he says it can be translated, but he won’t give a cipher for it. So, until he can transcribe for me, we can’t pursue his proposal.”

Flowey slammed the papers in his coils down and just about screamed in frustration. Of course, things wouldn’t be that easy with the scumbag! They ever were! The asshole was so lazy that just getting him to translate would take forever—probably even longer if he learned that Flowey was interested in his results!
And who’s to say that these scribbles even meant anything at all?! This could all just be some scam for easy research grants that he prettied up with science buzzwords! He could coast along for months and then just produce a calculator that runs on magic or something and have those stupid humans be satisfied!

Alphys was reeling fearfully back in her desk chair from Flowey’s rather violent ACT of frustration with the research papers. He needed something to destroy right now to relieve some of his tension, and she knew it.

“B-b-but a-almost for s-sure from th-the theories he’s t-told me about w-with his proposal, h-his research is a-almost c-certainly w-what we need. O-or a step in the right direction. Y-yeah!” Alphys stammered about, her eyes darting everywhere but Flowey’s face as he slowly turned back to look at her with a dangerous sneer.

“Oh really? You sure it’s not just the secret to making hotdogs?!” Flowey shot his stem straight up and into Alphys’ face, forcing her to make eye contact. Oh, how easy it would be to just ring her sweaty little neck…

“H-h-he said i-it’s a-about using h-human S-SOUL ESSENCE to af-affect biological matter and magic!” Alphys curled up on herself like an armadillo; the spines along her back even spiking up and through her shirt. Flowey pulled away from her form, properly intrigued.

Frisk’s DETERMINATION was the ESSENCE of their SOUL and it had a massive effect on the physical world. Hell, DETERMINATION was what kept Flowey from being just a normal, inert flower in Asgore’s garden. And from just a week of living amoung humans and CHECKING them out, he found that there are a lot more colours of SOULS, indicators of their ESSENCE, than just the seven he had seen Underground. If DETERMINATION alone was all that was needed for him to be able to think and move around, who knows what other abilities PATIENCE or JUSTICE or even INSPIRATION would be able to give him…

This was very interesting~

“S-Sans went a lot further in-depth w-when he was explaining it t-to me earlier, b-but we can’t do anything until he translates the f-formulas in his research a-and we get those ESSENCE s-samples from the human labs.” Alphys slowly uncurled from her ball, probably as she felt Flowey’s murderous intent drain away.

“I have to wait a whole week?!!” Flowey visibly drooped at the thought of having to wait an ENTIRE week for any kind of results. No, no, he must remain patient. He has lived untold EONS within the time-loop (actually, it might have only been a couple weeks, maybe a few months at most? One of these days he really needs to sit down and figure out how long he actually spent looping), he could wait just a few more days to be able to hug Frisk.

…And he seriously cannot believe that hugs have become a priority for him. He’s turning into Papyrus!

“Probably c-considerably more than a week, realistically.” Alphys chewed on her thumb claw idly as her eyes flickered around the room and at her scattered devices. “We would n-need to fully analyse the composition of our samples, test them on both living and expired tissue and dust, reaffirm Sans’ previous formulas, and we still have to wait on the new equipment being shipped in…”

Oh, this was not helping Flowey’s mood. Alphys went stiff when she sensed his growing glare.

“W-well, I could come up with some sort of mechanical solution in the meantime!” Alphys turned
unusually chipper as she started digging around one of her messy desk drawers and leafed through her pile of half-finished blueprints. “Do you require a fully articulated body, or just the torso and arm apparatus? Oh, I could install an auto watering and soil heating system! Maybe a jetpack too because everything needs jet propulsion, of course.”

She held up what looked like two blueprints of what looked like clunky prototype Mettatons. Flowey was… tempted. Despite one of the drawings clearly having cat ears installed. But when he gave it more though, what Alphys was offering basically amounted to no more than flower pots with wheels, and he already had one of those. He couldn’t easily imagine himself cuddling up in bed with Frisk with a cold metal shell and a muffler puttering from under the blanket.

“Yeaaaaah no. Remember, I’m going for cuddly here. I can’t exactly comfort Frisk if as a giant soup can.” Flowey set the blueprints aside on Alphys’ desk, getting an odd look back from the doctor. “…What? Frisk likes soft things. And last time I checked, poly-carbon alloy doesn’t fit that description.”

Alphys still didn’t move, and Flowey couldn’t quite read the look in her eyes. Her excitement over starting a new project had quieted and she wasn’t even afraid of him like before. It wasn’t even like the smug sneer she had on when she posted her godawful 20-page long essays on her anime shit. It was making Flowey feel… exposed for some reason.

“You’re oddly passionate about this…” she mumbled.

He almost felt insulted. Of course, he would be passionate about this! When Frisk was in trouble, he couldn’t do anything about it. He just stood there, clueless and…

“You weren’t there, Doctor.” Flowey looked her dead-on. Serious. No threats or snark or lies. “You didn’t see how scared they were, how much pain they were in. You didn’t feel their heart beating out of their chest, or how badly they were shaking. I was, and I couldn’t do anything. I never want to be that helpless ever again. Not when they need me.”

The Pulse thrummed down his stem right to the tips of his roots. It felt weird to say that out loud. Weird, but right. He didn’t care if it made him seem soft or weak. If anything, he felt a lot stronger now that he had something. A goal. The goal. To keep Frisk happy and safe. To never see them get that bad ever again. To protect them from all the evils of the world he knew to be fact, but they refused to acknowledge.

“W-well then…” Alphys muttered as she turned and pushed her chair away from the desk once again (he swore she could have seen a smirk on her face for a second. “W-we may not be able to m-make adjustments to your physical f-form just yet, but there is still stuff we can work on in the meantime.”

Alphys started rummaging through a different box than Sans’ research; it was much newer and it even have the logo for the science center they visited last night on the side. She started pulling out couple books and pamphlets, but they didn’t look like typical scientific journals (or manga, thankfully) with their soft pastel covers. When she scooted back over to him, he got a better look at the small pile she held; “Mental Illness in the Modern Age”, “Understanding Neuro-Divergence”, and “Communication Between Mind and Soul”.

“Self-help books?” Flowey said with a quizzical glance. It made sense, but…

“Doctor Bolaji sent me these to get an idea of humans’ understanding of the SOUL. T-they’ll actually be quite useful in our future research, a-and for… well, my own use too.” Alphys stuttered bashfully.

So, this is what humans understood about their own souls? Looks like a bunch of new-age hippy
crap like what Flowey saw next to the organic section at the grocery store. Man, humans have really fallen quite a way since having the power to create the barrier…

“Wait a minute—” Flowey sent another cutting glare back at the doctor “I know you said these experiments on me were going to help with your research, but I’m not going to do your studying for you!”

Alphys held her hands up defensively and nearly dropped the books onto Flowey in a panic. HA! Busted for being a lazy scientist, yet again!

“N-No! These a-are just the physical copies!” She pointed a shaky claw over to the side of her desk away from Flowey where a small tablet laid hooked into her computer. “They came with d-digital copies, I’m just downloading them n-now.”

Oh… Well. That explains that.

Flowey wrapped a few vines around the books in front of him and gave them a thorough look-over. Could these really hold some sort of secret to helping Frisk, or did the Science Center just blow their budget on shit that equated to no more that “try yoga” and nothing remotely useful?

Whatever, it was worth a shot…

Chapter End Notes

Oh my god, I'm so sorry for not posting in a freaking minute. I kept getting distracted and depressed etc. Hopefully I'll be able to keep a better posting schedule from here on out, but if not feel free to pester me with messages... For now. Don't get too used to bugging me
Studious Stupidity

Chapter Summary

All thanks to the books at the local library. Also the internet, because books are for nerds and this is the future.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

This morning had come around in a particularly frustrating full-circle. Flowey once again found himself on the coffee table he was sitting at earlier, but instead of watching cartoons with his favourite human, he was stuck in his stupid clay pot once more with text books and notes scrawled around.

So much for a relaxing day off. But then again, this wasn’t really his “official” job as far as anyone knew.

Despite the books’ sometimes flowery (ugh, don’t tell Sans that one) language, they did give some interesting insight into how humankind treated emotional issues. So much text was dedicated to reaffirming that mental illness was indeed an actual physical issue that could/should be addressed with care and medication like any other.

Why wouldn’t it be anyway? You wouldn’t tell a cripple they’re “not trying hard enough” to walk, so why tell a person they’re not trying hard enough to be happy when their brain’s all messed up?

Then came the topic of “neurodivergence”, which Flowey actually found fascinating. Not being an illness that someone can get rid of with medicine, but rather like a condition of someone’s birth which made them interpret the world in a slightly different way than what most people would or processing their senses with some difficulty. Kind of like being colourblind, but for their entire perception of the world instead of just vision and having certain sensitivities.

Looking back, that described Frisk to a T, especially when the chapter got into non-verbal tendencies and “stimming” as they called it. Like when Frisk bounced in place or flapped their sleeves around, or even when they were humming a solid a-note for a few seconds just “because they like the vibrations”.

Unfortunately, the chapters on divergence also discussed the stigmas and insensitivities that people with such problems face. It even discussed how they’ve been treated as less than humans and burdens on society in the past and gave a brief mention of the horror of “eugenics”, something that not even Flowey could have imagined in his rampages.

Humans were… weird to say the least.

At least he was making progress already. The books discussed things called “triggers” which acted kind of like sticking pins in old injuries when it came to bad memories. Flowey wished he was surprised when all the signs pointed to Frisk having some kind of trauma, but… After seeing those marks on their back, it was just giving his suspicions a name.
Flowey chewed on the pencil in his mouth as he re-read the list he was making for maybe the third time. He was trying to remember all the things that might count as a trigger for Frisk; things that you wouldn’t immediately equate to being scary but made them shake or flinch anyway.

Papyrus’ and Undyne’s yelling was still in the “maybe” category because Frisk already tended to avoid loud noises anyway. Broken glass seemed to be a good candidate since Frisk flinched from so much as seeing it across the street or hearing someone’s feet crunching on it. Even the unbroken bottles in the back of Archie’s truck seemed to make them wary (and looking back, now Flowey feels like even more of an ass for trying to grab them the entire trip into town).

Yelling and Glass. Yelling and glass was all he had, yet he claimed to be their best friend. After dreaming of something new for so long, he can’t even pay enough attention to the most interesting person in his life to know what they’re afraid of?!

He could name Papyrus’ favourite food when he couldn’t even remember himself! He could list off every ingredient in Alphys’ stupid instant ramen cups! He could lip-sync to every single one of Mettaton’s godawful shows from Underground for the love of sugar!

Flowey slammed his head down onto his note pad repeatedly in frustration of himself.

Fortunately, his self-loathing was short lived when Undyne and Papyrus loudly decided to return from repairing the neighbour’s doors. But kicking their own front door in.

“You guys really need to learn to use doors properly or else there’s going to be a shortage in town.” Flowey gave an ineffective glower at them from over his books “And would you mind keeping it down? Frisk is asleep and I’d like to keep it that way.”

The two of them looked outright OFFENDED at the idea that someone was asleep past 10am in this household (completely ignoring that Toriel is exhausted, Alphys is basically nocturnal anyway and… just Sans in general).

“Why would that little punk be asleep? We just got up!” Undyne said with a huff, hands folded over her chest. “Besides, we have a whole day of cool stuff to do! We have like a hundred years worth of anime to get caught up on!”

Papyrus’ face twisted into a look of abject horror and his weird… eye-things bulged out of his head (Flowey still didn’t understand the mechanic of that. Was it like the reverse of Sans’ eyes or something? Part of him didn’t want to know).

“What if Sans infected them with his laziness?! No, we must recue them from the confines of sleep and-” Flowey’s vines shot out as quickly as he could to wrap around Papyrus and Undyne’s ankles and interrupt their rampage up towards Frisk’s bedroom. He didn’t so much as flinch when Undyne shot him a dirty one-eyed glare back at him.

“Oh no, no no no. You are NOT waking them up after what happened this morning.” Flowey glowered firmly, dragging the two away from the stairs “Or did you just forget about their massive panic attack earlier?”

Undyne at least had the awareness to look sheepish at her own realization. She was more used to seeing Alphys in a panic and know how to deal with her. But Flowey guessed that she was still too used to seeing Frisk as the indestructible (after dying a dozen times) kid who taunted and flirted with her while she hunted them down. She needed to realize just how fragile Frisk was.

Papyrus on the other hand just looked confused, until he got distracted by Flowey’s studying.
“WOWIE, WHAT’RE ALL THESE BOOKS FOR, FLOWEY? ARE YOU LOOKING TO BECOME A SCHOLAR?” Papyrus quickly untangled himself from the loose vine to scoot over closer to the table.

With a disinterested shrug of his leaves, Flowey slid the skeleton *Mental Illness in the Modern Age*. Surprisingly, Undyne followed suit and glanced at the pages as Papyrus leafed through with piqued interest.

“Well the *situation* we had this morning made me realize just how little we know about how humans actually work, and I’d like to not be caught by surprise again…” Flowey looked back at his small notepad and closed it with a huff. He could argue that his studying could be for work as well. Politics was always littered with mind games, and psychology tricks could always give him an advantage in that area. He was still frustrated at his lack of progress where it really mattered with Frisk…

“Oh, I SEE WHAT YOU ARE DOING!” Papyrus plonked down onto the floor beside the coffee table with his typical eagerness “YOU ARE TAKING ALEXANDER’S ADVICE ABOUT LOOKING OUT FOR PENELOPE TO HEART AND ARE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO HELP HER!”

Oh right, she needed help too. But why would anyone care about the weirdo from next door? Not that a soulless husk would have any use for that information. Maybe Papyrus feels grateful for that godawful drawing he taped to a shirt…

“Hell yeah!” Undyne grabbed another book right from in front of Flowey greedily and sat down beside Papyrus “When Penn gets home we’ll whip her into shape so Artie never has to worry about her going ballistic like that and scaring the hell out of us ever again!”

Flowey gave a non-committal grunt and turned back to a new book since Undyne STOLE HIS and he didn’t really care enough to try and take it back. He now had assistance in his little side project and he didn’t actually know how he felt about that. As… EAGER as the two of them were known for being, that eagerness didn’t always equate to actual effectiveness. If it did, they would be the best cooks in the world instead of serial arsons.

“Oh, so it says here that one of those happy hormone things, OxyContin-”

“Oxytocin. OxyContin is a type of drug.” Flowey looked up from his own notes to Undyne. She had a disturbingly large grin on her face given the research material. Like she just found out she could punch the depression out of someone and was ready to distribute some positive mental energy with her fists.

“Right right, Oxy-whatever.” She flipped the book over to show Papyrus and Flowey the page she was on. Like they could even read the small text from across the table. “It says here humans can produce more of it from exercise, and that might encourage the other happy-chemicals to come back too! Sooooo all we have to do is whip Penn into shape!”

Flowey had to shove a leaf into his mouth to silence his laughter before it started. The image of a scrawny, already half-dead looking Penn trying to do Undyne’s workout routine was the funniest thing since seeing his family covered in construction dust. 1000 laps around the city, 200 push-ups with boulders on her back, 200 sit-ups while someone axe-kicks her stomach… That chick wouldn’t last two seconds in Undyne’s care.
“WHILE I KNOW YOU CAN TURN ANYONE INTO A MAGNIFICENT SPECIMEN WITH YOUR REGIMENT UNDYNE, I HAVE SOME WORRIES ABOUT PENN-HUMAN’S PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES AT THE MOMENT.” Papyrus’ expression drooped significantly like he was thinking the same as Flowey but having a MUCH different reaction. “SHE WAS SO WEAK AND FRAIL WHEN THE PARAMEDICS TOOK HER AWAY. I THINK OUR EFFORTS WOULD BE BEST PUT INTO ADDRESSING THE ‘EATING DISORDER’ THAT THEY MENTIONED!”

Flowey shoved yet another leaf into his mouth. If Undyne’s training didn’t kill her, Papyrus’ cooking would. This girl would just not catch a break in this life, and he was going to enjoy watching it. Best part is that he wouldn’t even get punished to it this time!

“FLOWEY, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM CHEWING ON YOURSELF. I KNOW GOLDEN FLOWERS ARE TASTY AND I WOULD GLADLY MAKE YOU A CUP OF TEA, BUT SELF-CANNIBALIZATION IS AN AWFUL HABIT”

He was going to lose it. He was going to laugh so hard he loses all his petals and die and he won’t come back. He’ll finally die happy.

“Flowey, Pap…” a tiny hoarse voice came and broke Flowey out of his revelry. The three “study buddies” turned and looked up to find Frisk sitting on the stairs, looking through the stair railing.

Right. Flowey remembered the reason he couldn’t die yet. He had a job to do; keep Frisk safe and happy. Watching this miserable group of moron’s continual failure will have to take back seat for now at least.

Frisk held up their phone, a call already on the line, but muted at the moment.

“Governor McLance.” Frisk muttered, sleep still hanging in their voice. Poor kid was probably woken up by their ringtone. But alas, duty calls.

Papyrus leapt up from his spot on the floor and took a quick moment to pose and monologue about how “the world of the great is never truly done” and blah blah blah. At least he had the decency to pick Flowey up before heading to the stairs. He even tucked Frisk under his arm since his “mighty and long skeleton legs could traverse the house much faster than their stubby flesh legs”. Of course, anyone could get around faster if they were seven feet tall and took stairs three steps at a time (or did his weird floaty thing… Seriously, how did Papyrus work?)

Frisk’s bedroom had to double as their official office space since there was no actual Embassy set up for monsterkind just yet. It suited Flowey just fine; working from home meant they didn’t have to worry about transit, musty office buildings, or face-to-face meetings as often. Besides, the computer Alphys built for the team worked plenty fine for what they needed to do. She even made them a special dock to connect Frisk’s phone up to their video chat function so they could sign to anyone who could read it… not that they’ve met that many so far.

Sure enough, Governor Catherine McLance’s face lit up on the monitor once Frisk plugged their phone into the dock, her oddly childish, round face lit up in an overly cheerful smile for a politician… Oh well, it just made Flowey’s job easier the less professional she acted.

“Howdy there, Miss Governor!” Flowey chirped, putting his best ‘good little flower’ expression on. “Sorry for the delay, we’ve had a very exciting morning over here!”

“WELL, I SUPPOSE SEEING ONE OF OUR HUMAN FRIENDS IN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DISTRESS TO THE POINT OF CALLING EMERGENCY SERVICES COULD BE
“Oh well gee Papyrus, maybe Miss Governor doesn’t want to hear about that right now. Especially when she called us on business.” Flowey gave an innocent glance back to Papyrus, hoping he would GET THE FREAKING HINT. Nobody needed to know about the incident earlier when it could be twisted around to somehow make monsters look like they caused Penn’s freak out. And it’s not like Frisk wanted to be reminded of their own panic either. Fortunately, they seemed a bit more stable now than before.

“Yeah, I heard about that. My nephew Alex is one of the paramedics that responded to the case. Poor girl…” Oh great! She already knows! “Thank whatever’s up there you guys were around to help! I’ve seen too many cases like that go pear-shaped in a hurry…” Oh, actually great. It’s improving their reputation.

“But the daisy is right, we gotta get back to business folks.” McLance took a slightly more professional stance, hiding their smirk poorly behind her steeped fingers. Flowey glared back through the webcam, taking offense to the “daisy” comment. He wasn’t some stupid weed! You couldn’t make tea out of daisies!... Why does he take pride in the fact that he’s a delicious tea ingredient?

“Friends… I come bearing good news!” She spread her hands like it was supposed to be some kind of surprise to anyone. Papyrus still let out a loud obnoxious gasp in shock, only reeling it in with Frisk patting his forearm. With the way McLance has been grinning this entire time, the only question is who the news actually benefits. It could just as easily just help McLance get ahead in the political game while monsterkind eats shit in her wake.

“Ebotton has officially been declared an Amnesty city by Parliament!” Oh god, she even made little jazz hands. Can she please take this seriously- Oh wait that was actually really good news.

While monsters have been making good progress with buying homes and setting up businesses, they’ve only been supported by handshake agreements and had no actual legal backing to them. Really, it would not have taken much for someone to mass evict the monster population of the town on the basis of them being illegal immigrants. But amnesty cities are a bit different in that they are meant to take in masses of refugees so they’re basically exempt from vetting anyway.

Damn, if they had waited on another day to have that schoolboard meeting, things could have gone so much smoother. But then again, knowing the type of people the board consisted of, Flowey felt a lot more comfortable having that bet in place. After all, if things went smoothly, they were going to be getting all of monsterkind citizenship in a couple weeks.

Speaking of which…

“(Thank you so much for making that a priority Ms. McLance. I’m sure everyone will be relieved to hear that our homes are safe for the time being. But we still need to make further strides to assure monsterkind’s future even outside of this city.)” Frisk signed as Flowey read out for them, trying their best to keep a professional air about them (as professional as a little kid could). They had learned a lot from watching and listening to Asgore and Toriel over the past week. They’ve come a long way from just saying how ‘nice’ monsters are, and ‘how they just want to be friends’. Like that could erase centuries of war and prejudice.

“I hear that, which brings me to my second piece of good news,” McLance leaned back in her fancy office chair, shuffling through some papers just off to the side of the camera’s view. Here comes the backstabbing… “Parliament wants to meet with you and your King on Friday to discuss your
citizenship like you wanted!”

Or not?

This was PERFECT! The schoolboard can eat his topsoil! they were getting all of monsterkind those stupid citizenship papers before the weekend. Toriel was getting her school, and Frisk was going to be overjoyed!

Frisk was just about overjoyed right now. Their fists pumped the air in excitement, nearly hitting Papyrus in the face; not that he really minded as he himself was dancing about happily. Flowey had to reel the two of them back in with jabs to their shoulders so they could get more details from McLance.

“The Minister of Immigration is going to send you guys an email later on to give you more details, but he let me be the first to tell you guys the good news because he’s nice like that! It’s going to be a really big shindig too; reporters from all over and some UN reps are going to be sitting in on the meeting, so you’d best be prepared with your A-game and fancy suits.” The Governor’s face turned just the slightest bit serious at that.

While Papyrus was ecstatic at the idea of having an even bigger audience to his ‘greatness’, Frisk turned… pensive? Flowey hazarded a glance over to them as their face tensed in worry at the mention of reporters.

The past week they’d been sat in front of no shortage of flashing cameras, microphones, and far too many loud voices screaming questions to them. If it hadn’t been for Asgore taking over questioning for the most part, and a joint effort between the (unofficially un-disbanded) Royal Guard and local police to keep the noisiest at bay and give the family some modicum of privacy and security. The idea of facing down more of that WHILE making the case for monsterkind’s survival in the sunlight was understandably intimidating to say the least.

“The whole world is going to be watching us?” Flowey finally dropped his cheerful act and let some worry worm its way into his voice. He reached a vine over to Frisk’s forearm, wrapping around it in what was his version of hand holding to try and give them some reassurance. Frisk’s light squeeze back helped convey their appreciation.

“Can you really blame them?” McLance’s demeanor fell further as well “Monsters show up out of nowhere and turn everything onto its head with magic being real, so who knows what else can happen? Now we have governments around the world looking under their own mountains to see if there’s more of you guys hiding away. These are… unsure times.”

Flowey was really starting to hate that word: “unsure”. McLance’s sentiment was mirroring what Archie had said the day before. Humanity’s fear of the unknown was becoming one of the more aggravating obstacles in their lives.

“But, if I can give you guys some advice that might just save your collective hides?” the Governor leaned back in closer to the camera, a more hopeful smile on her face helping to pique Frisk’s curiosity and lighten the mood. “Get a jump on representing yourselves. Don’t just let news stations cherry pick what the population sees of you guys. You have no idea how much help a good social media presence can be for this type of thing!

“You have to, for lack of a better term, show the people your human side. Let them in on the daily lives of monsters and show them your culture so you’re not some big secret. Once they get invested in you guys as people, they’ll be rallying to help you guys. Sympathy is one of the greatest tools to building society.”
That… made a lot of sense. If uncertainty was the greatest threat to their livelihoods, then education was the best way to defeat it. A community-driven social media presence might just be the best means for them to get humans interested in helping monsterkind. They sure did like their internet celebrities after all.

Speaking of celebrities, they were probably going to need the help of a certain tin-can to get the idea off the ground.

Oh joy…

Chapter End Notes

I'M BACK! Sorry for taking so long. I knew this was going to be a sorta "filler" chapter with setting up political bullshit, so it was hard to get motivated to write.
Chapter Summary

The road to stardom is still under construction and needs a lot of asphalt!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Rome wasn’t built in a day, as they say. Until recently, Flowey didn’t know what Rome was so that saying didn’t really mean much to him. Or most monsters for that matter. The saying is supposed to mean that anything good takes a lot of patience and effort to put together.

Apparently, Rome is this really old, used to be important city to humans, but now it’s just a tourist trap for all the stuff they built way back when.

But even at the height of Rome’s construction, Flowey can’t really imagine it being anywhere near this TOTAL CLUSTERFUCK.

Mettaton, the narcissistic Terminator, refused to go to that “Hollywood” place that everyone says movies are made in, claiming that he, “simply cannot shine properly if surrounded by mediocre and dim stars”. So instead he bought up what was supposed to be a bunch of farmland on the outskirts of the city and started building his own movie lot!

The place was total chaos from the get-go. The tiny single-lane country dirt road wasn’t built for regular traffic let alone the MASSIVE cranes and trucks going around. It took the ambassador trio half an hour longer than it should have just to get to the address Mettaton gave them.

Things were even worse once they got out of the car and onto the lot proper. There was a crew right at the entrance to the compound, grinding down slabs of concrete to make the outermost walls, sending clouds of dust into the air and into their faces. And that was just the beginning. Sparks flew every which way from welders putting together the frameworks of what looked like a bunch of warehouses going up. Were those going to be the sound stages once the walls went up?

Flowey would barely hear himself think over the all the chaos, but… if Frisk was bothered by just the smell of wet paint and the sound of hammers from when the family renovated-

He quickly turned to Frisk and saw their face twisted in agony just from the overwhelming noise and crowds. They held their arms up to their ears in a desperate attempt to block out some of the noise. Flowey was beside himself trying to figure out some way to comfort them, but the most he could think of was letting them smell his head again to try and distract from the smell of burning asphalt. He couldn’t even give them any comforting words without just screaming at them over all the other sounds.

Nonetheless, Frisk tried to navigate through the weaving crowds of people… with little success. One lone kid against a sea of caffeine-drone contractors? Even with the power of DETERMINATION on their side, it was a losing battle. They could do little more than practise their immense dodging skills to keep from getting on the bottom of a steel-toed boot, and it was only when the two of them were about to kiss the bumper of a golf cart did Papyrus pluck Frisk off the ground and plonk them
down on his shoulders.

“IT WILL NOT DO TO HAVE THE TWO OF YOU GETTING TRAMPLED BEFORE WE REACH OUR DESTINATION, BUT FEAR NOT LITTLE FRIENDS,” Papyrus shouted over the sound of the construction around them “THE GREAT PAPYRUS IS FAR TOO TALL TO BE UNDERFOOT! IN FACT, I AM VERY MUCH OVERFOOT! NYEHEHEH!”

Flowey couldn’t tell if Frisk could hear the skeleton after everything, if anything there was even more pain written on their face now than before and Flowey could just barely make out a high-pitched whine escaping their tight mouth. Seeing his friend so distraught made the Pulse run cold through him; even while the Underground was naturally claustrophobic, they never had to deal with crowds like this down there, had they? Guess that was one more thing to add to the list; Glass, shouting, and now crowds.

“We’re looking for building A-113, do you see anything?” Flowey craned his stem down so his face was right beside Papyrus’ ear… hole-thing before scanning the horizon. He couldn’t really tell if any of the buildings were habitable, let along signage for them-

Oh of course… Once Flowey looked up a little higher, he saw the MASSIVE neon visage of Mettaton’s box-form looking out over the rest of the lot. If he had any coin on him, he would bet the mechanical narcissist would be there (not that anyone would bet against him).

Papyrus must have figured as well as he pointed it out excitedly like he just found Waldo before springing into the air. The skeleton bounded between the roofs of vehicles (and Flowey swears he jumped on some guy’s hard hat once) as gracefully as a gravity-manipulating bag of bones could. Which is to say Frisk was reasonably screaming from being jostled around on top of their sensory overload.

At least they got to building quickly. Other than having an obnoxious black and pink paint job, it just looked like any other office building rather than some giant warehouse. The sign next to the door read A-113 Upper Management and Pre-Production, huh? Flowey guessed that the building was less for actors and more for stuff on the computer like writing so they wouldn’t need room for cameras and explosions. Thankfully, this also meant that the building was more or less sound-proofed so people could concentrate.

Once Papyrus set the two of them down onto the polished laminate flooring, Flowey could feel just how violently Frisk was still shaking from the endeavour. Their arms were still locked around their head to try and silence the world around them and their face was clenched in a pained grimace.

He was at a loss for what to do; this wasn’t just a problem he could shoot away and he was really wishing he had his new body like Alphys had promised him. Hesitantly, Flowey reached out with his stubby leaves and pressed them to Frisk’s cheeks, stroking gently to at least get their attention.

After a few moments had passed, they finally opened an eye, letting a single tear escape but they were at least giving him and their surroundings their attention.

“Hey, it’s okay,” Flowey whispered, trying to ease Frisk out of their panicked state “We’re safe, we’re away from the noise…”

Well, most of it at least. There was still the hum of the building’s A/C running through the air, but it gave a nice muffled white noise. And there was this odd rattling sound, almost like…

Rattling bones?

Flowey quirked his head back up to the skeleton. While Papyrus was scanning through a nearby
bulletin board with notes, actor headshots, schedules, and other meaningless bullshit, looking as casual and “Papyrus” as normal. But he couldn’t hide how he was jittering in place and the way his eye sockets looked just a little more sunken in.

Had he been affected that badly too? Yikes. You’d think a skeleton with dreams of popularity and being surrounded by adoring fans, he’d be more prepared for crowds. Whatever, they weren’t going to be able to get anything done at this rate.

“Hey, Papyrus, you-” Flowey paused. He couldn’t outright ask him if he was okay. He would just bullshit about feeling GREAT and he’d try even harder to not shake which would only make his shaking worse and Frisk would catch on and… “You think we could take a little break? Frisk’s not feeling so great right now.”

“Oh, OF…Of course.” Papyrus all but whispered (or his version of whispering at least) back down to the two small friends. He gently plucked Frisk up off their feet and onto one of the plush couches a bit further from the entrance.

Flowey quickly ducked into one of the side pockets of his transport-purse and pulled out Frisk’s headphones. Gently, he pried Frisk’s hands off of their ears and eased the device onto their head. Frisk sighed and leaned back in the chair as soft music started playing, helping to ease their breathing. It wasn’t perfect, but at least Flowey was able to do something to help. He could feel the Pulse tingle slightly in the back of his head as he took a look around the room.

Honestly, it could easily be mistaken for the waiting room in a dentist’s office; lightly coloured walls, receptionist desk at the back, plenty of chairs, a coffee table covered in magazines. The only thing that really set it apart was the posters of Mettaton productions plastering most of the walls and the corkboard of postings that had Papyrus’ attention for whatever reason.

Speaking of reception, shouldn’t there have been someone there to greet them/guard the door? Other than mountains of paper and far too many crushed energy drink cans to be safe. Man, this place had lousy security-

BANG

A door off to the side of the waiting room was kicked right open by an orange foot. An orange foot attached to a massive pile of paperwork that swore constantly under his breath until it was dumped on the front desk.

It looked like Mettaton’s burger-flipping slave had moved up in the world. Even though he wasn’t getting actual grease burns anymore, Burgerpants (or “Tabby” as he preferred to be called) looked more burnt-out than ever. Heavy bags laid under his eyes and his oddly malleable face looked almost as droopy as an Amalgamate from exhaustion. He looked like he was about to shotgun another energy drink (appropriately called Monster) before he noticed he wasn’t alone in the room.

“O-oh uh, hey little buddy, what are you doing here-” the cat’s face suddenly morphed into a horrifyingly squashed, buggy-eyed mess “IN THIS HELLHOLE?!!”

Had this been the trio’s first encounter with the man, this would have seemed odd. But Flowey had been around the bend enough times to know this was normal for the overdramatic feline… Well, as normal as he can be. Honestly, Tabby and Papyrus could start a club for doing weird stuff with their faces. Flowey merely rolled his eyes and continued to pet the side of Frisk’s face as they steadied their breathing.

“HELLO THERE, BURGERPANTS-”
“Stop calling me that!”

“IT IS WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU AGAIN! AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOU ARE WELL ON YOUR WAY TO FULFILLING YOUR DREAMS TO STARDOM!”

Looked like it didn’t take long for Papyrus to bounce back from the overload as he strode over and gave Tabby a rousing pat on the back. The cat monster just stared blankly between him and the mountain of papers on the desk beside them for a moment.

“I… Don’t know if I would say that.” Tabby admitted as a few stray folders slid off the pile and onto the ground.

“Oh, but of course!” Papyrus chirped without any hesitation “No doubt many a great production will be made here, and it is obvious that you are putting a great amount of effort into getting this studio up and running as quickly as possible! All of those fine films will have you to thank for their mere existence!”

Flowey could have sworn he saw a small grin creep its way onto the cat’s already distorted face. Only Papyrus would be able to turn whatever BS Mettaton had the poor sap losing sleep over into him being the hero of the industry. Paperwork wasn’t exactly a starring role… but he would admit it probably still beat slinging junk food made of glitter.

“Tabby, darling, I just got out of a call with the insurance guys, have Frisk and Papy shown up yet?” Mettaton’s muffled voice came out of a small intercom half-buried under paperwork. Tabby scrambled to brush the stray sheets away and hit the call button in return.

“Y-yeah boss, they just got here, should I send them in? O-oh, and the guys from the writers’ guild called and they still need you to sign off on that uh… thing.” Obviously, the orange furball was trying to speak with more confidence than normal thanks to Papyrus’ little boost, but he was still a pathetic stammering mess.

“But of course! Don’t keep them waiting! And schedule the guild rep in for a meeting Tuesday at four, right after the community theatre troupe, alright?” Mettaton all but trilled over the intercom. Flowey could just about feel the itch of glitter that was soon to come.

Weird. No “you suck” musicals? No backhanded comments? Who was this guy and what had he done with the real Mettaton? Sure he was working Tabby into the ground, but actually treating him like a decent person? That’s new...

With a gently nudge to the cheek, Flowey broke Frisk out of their music-trance as Tabby buzzed them into the back rooms and lead them to the elevator at the end. The group passed by quite a few office rooms, either still empty or filled with electricians and boxes of computers they were starting to set up. A few even had projectors being put into the ceiling, and one was in the middle of someone gluing sound dampeners to the walls.

Flowey remembered the many times he broke into Mettaton’s old set up back Underground, and he never had anything quite like this. All his “sets” were just mostly cut outs and whatever junk his crew could beg borrow or steal. Not that Flowey knew all that much about professional movie production other than some of the “behind the scenes” clips he watched on some of Frisk’s and Alphys’ movies, but this was looking a lot more like those. Maybe now the metallic narcissist might actually be able to make something halfway decent.

Once the group got into the elevator, it was painfully obvious where they were supposed to go.
There was a massive, glittery pink button at the top simply labeled “MTT”. Frisk gave Tabby a wave goodbye and a thumbs up to show they were rooting for him as the doors closed and the trio started heading up to the top of the building.

When the elevator doors opened, Flowey wasn’t sure what he was expecting with Mettaton’s office, but it certainly wasn’t what he saw. The room before them was just a somewhat extravagant looking apartment; giant TV off to the side with sofas around it, family pictures on the walls, and a doorway to a kitchen and dining room off to the side. There was still a lot of pink around, but it was all toned down quite a bit from the rest of the studio.

Did…. Did Mettaton just LIVE at the studio now? Flowey guessed that was efficient if nothing else.

“And look at this! LOOK AT THIS! Look at how stiff and janky this is! It’s like I’m the robot and he’s the ragdoll!”

Two figures came stepping out of the kitchen, one carrying a floating sandwich on a plate; Napstablook and Mad Mew-Mew. True enough to what she was yelling about, Mad Mew’s movements were far from fluid. She less walked than she did jerk one leg in front of the other. Her cousin gave a small sympathetic smile across their translucent face.

“These things take time, Maddy. You need to be patient…” Blook’s voice, as always, came just above a whisper as they tried to reassure their far louder family.

Maddy did her best to stomp her foot on the floor in irritation, but the light material her body was made of did little to convey her disappointment.

“But I hate hate HATE waiting!” she whined (what was with her and repeating herself?) “Mettaton merged with his new body like-”

She tried snapping her fingers, but her soft cottony digits slid soundlessly against each other. Repeatedly. The gloves probably didn’t help much either.

“I… can’t snap,” Maddy deadpanned and Flowey could see just the tiniest little shit-eating grin growing on Napstablook’s face. The smile actually GREW as the group heard the soft tinkling of bells as Maddy’s slowly fell off her neck and into her awaiting hands.

“AND MY HEAD KEEPS FALLING OFF TOO!” she let out a long, exacerbated groan while she clumsily tried to put herself back together. Unfortunately, her head in her hands was at the right level to stare Frisk and Flowey in the eye from across the room. “FOOLS, FOOLS, FOOLS! How dare you-”

“Ooooh, hi guys…” Blook wandered over, setting their ghost sandwich and headphones off to the side of the dining table. “I heard Mettaton buzzing someone in and he only does that for really important people… I was going to grab some food and hide in my room just in case… but I’m glad it’s you guys…”

“But of course, Blooky dear~” speak the devil’s name and he shall appear wearing Prada… Mettaton strode down a flight of stairs, followed by a (REALLY TALL) human woman surprisingly enough. “I wouldn’t hold a meeting with our dear friends in some drab conference room downstairs. Besides, I have been DYING to show off our new home since we had it finished!”

Sure, Mettaton said “friends” as in plural, but the bot’s eyes were locked with Papyrus’ eye… holes. When he made his way over, he immediately dipped the orange-faced skeleton and kissed him so thoroughly it made Flowey and Maddy gag at the sight.
The freakishly tall human rolled her eyes (either at the display of affection or the COMPLETELY REASONABLE reaction to the display) and nudged the bot to get his attention.

“Sir, while I’m glad you’re having fun with your paramour, I think we should get on with our meeting and fill our guests in on our idea.”

[ACT] *CHECK

Stephanie Spacey

LV 1

ATK 15 DEF 28

HP 60/60

Plus-Sized Lolita Fashionista

Confident Soul

Mettaton straightened him and his bone-friend out, clapping his gloved hands excitedly while Papyrus was still a frozen, blushing mess.

“Oh of course, Steph sweetie! Come on, everyone get comfy! Blooky, Maddy, you can stay if you want!” the robo-star started ushering the small group further into the living room.

Frisk climbed up onto one of the plush couches and bounced a little bit before setting Flowey’s bag in their lap. Mad Mew-Mew started to roll her eyes at the offer of sitting in, but her head rolled right off her shoulders once again, this time Mettaton’s human slave was the one to catch it. The two muttered to each other for a moment before Stephanie pulled a small sewing kit out of the front pocket of her extremely frilly and poofy skirt and had Maddy sit on the floor in front of her so she could start sewing her head back on.

Mettaton meanwhile sat Papyrus down in one of the extravagant armchairs, then sat on his lap with one leg in the air for dramatic effect. Because of course…

Also, Mettaton must weigh a literal ton, how is he not breaking Papyrus’ femurs by sitting on him?

Flowey felt Frisk’s hands move off of his bag before he could follow that trail of thinking any further. He turned and saw Frisk signing over to Napstablook as they sat/hovered on the cushion beside them.

“[You seem to be having a really good day today.]” Frisk beamed over to the spectre.

The tiny smile Napstablook seemed to have plastered on today grew just the smallest bit. Flowey could have swore he saw the ghost blush… somehow.

“Is it that noticeable? Heh… Y-yeah, maybe a little…” Blook wobbled their head back and forth like they were trying to be coy, which only served to make Flowey’s chlorophyll boil. “Well… It’s been nice having the family all together again… Even though with everything going on it can get kind of overwhelming still… But Mettaton and Miss Stephanie found me someone to talk to on really bad days so they don’t get as bad…”

Frisk giggled and nodded eagerly, giving Blook another encouraging thumbs-up. “[I’m proud of you!]”
Blook blushed far more at that encouragement and started to vanish right there on the sofa.

“Now, while I would have absolutely ADORED putting together a historical documentary (slash-musical) on monster culture and life Underground,” Mettaton flipped around on Papyrus’ lap, pulling yet another dramatic ‘oh-woe-is-me’ pose and throwing his head back, “We simply do not have the time or resources to dedicate to a production like that right now!”

“Yeah, poor Tabby is managing staffing, construction, and legal almost single-handedly until we can get those production assistants on board.” Stephanie barely looked up from her stitches on Maddy’s neck as she spoke, her tongue peeking out from her heavily glossed lips. “But we came up with a much more time-slash-cost efficient solution; community sourcing.”

Stephanie pulled away from her work, tying up the string and finally cutting it with the side of one of her ridiculously long fake nails. Maddy cautiously started to shake her head side to side, making the bells on her ears jingle as she went. It eventually broke down to her headbanging like she was at a metal concert before she was satisfied with the strength of the sutures and took a seat next to Stephanie. Without skipping a beat, Stephanie wrapped an arm in behind Maddy’s shoulders and continued on with her little proposal. What is with the ghost family and being two-thirds flirt-hungry weirdos?

“It’s really quite simple; we get monsters from all over the city to email in videos of their day to day lives, whatever they want to share, and we post them for the world to watch! Obviously, we’d have someone looking over the movies before posting just in case someone sends in a joke or a possible virus (or porn), and maybe do a bit of editing tweaks for the best presentation. We need to make it look good, of course.”

So, the plan was to just post whatever home movies they could scrape together and hope that by watching whatever embarrassing moments were captured on film would be enough to stave off humanity’s fear and paranoia? As much as Flowey hated to admit it, it was worth a shot. Even if it didn’t work out as well as they planned, at least it wasn’t too much effort on their part anyway. This way he and Frisk could spent more of their time on important things. Like video games.

Papyrus loved the idea of course because he loves everything. Frisk agreed because it meant they would get to see an even higher concentration of Monsterdom’s weird antics. Flowey could even tell from the sneaky expression on their face that they were planning on contributing something as well. Oh boy.

Soon the conversation devolved from actual business to catching up with what everyone had been up to since surfacing. Mettaton was still bemoaning law enforcement confiscating all of his pyrotechnics until he got proper licences, and even then, he wasn’t allowed to carry them with him wherever he went.

Napstablook was apparently a big hit on a few music sharing sites and they were going to be releasing a physical album soon. They even had a few publishers looking to officially distribute their work, but they were hesitant to stop being indie so early.

And Maddy was… Maddy.

“MISS NOT-ASGORE-TORIEL, WE HAVE RETURNED FROM OUR VERY PRODUCTIVE
AND PROFESSIONAL MEETING!” Papyrus chimed the second the trio got through the front door. Like he wasn’t actually just a silent, orange creamsicle for Mettaton to hang off of throughout the entire ordeal. Not like the meeting was all that intricate to begin with, but it was the principle of the matter!

Frisk yawned and stretched as they and Flowey shuffled in behind the skeleton. While he might be as energetic as the CORE, the two were wiped from spending most of the day in the back of a steamy hot cab and surrounded by noisy people. Weirdly enough, even though they could see the back of Toriel’s head from the front doorway, so she couldn’t have not heard Papyrus’ screeching, she hadn’t acknowledged their presence at all. She just kept staring at the TV.

Concern spread across Frisk’s features (annoyance on Flowey’s) as the three made their way to Toriel’s side. It didn’t take long for them to find what had captured her attention so intently.

“-neighbours saw young Donavan trying to help his brother Mike escape through the window while his mother grabbed him, and immediately called police. Both Mr. And Mrs. Schroeder have been arrested, and the five siblings are currently in hospital with minimal physical injury, but doctors are saying the psychological damage of the event is extensive.”

The reporter was standing in front of a really average looking house surrounded by police tape and a few officers milling about the scene. Flowey unfortunately recognized the neighbourhood on TV; it was dangerously close to one of the lots Toriel planned on building her school on.

“Interviews with the surrounding families said that nobody suspected the parents of being capable of such acts, but unfortunately these practises are becoming less uncommon, and more well-hidden.

“It’s called ‘Min-Maxing’ in certain circles; an extreme parenting tactic that is supposedly meant to teach a child the consequence of dangerous acts in painful but nonlife-threatening ways. The idea is that when a child starts to behave violently, the parent would tie them down and use candle wax, whips and hard covered books on their backs to inflict the pain on them without risk to lives or property, and subsequently deaden their nerves so they would feel less sensation over time.”

Flowey’s stem went ramrod straight at the footage shown over the recorded voice, the Pulse screaming loud and violently throughout his whole body. While the faces of the victims were obviously blurred out, an all-too-familiar image filled the screen; the uniformed scarring that he’d seen on Frisk’s back. It was an example of harshly whipped skin. Even the patches of slightly darker skin that he thought was just natural was on another child as a result of someone pouring candle wax on them.

“No less than five reports of these actions have been reported in the past week alone, and yet all of the parents were claiming it was a response to their children’s sudden erratic and dangerous behavior. One parent even claiming their child of finding and discharging a firearm inside the house, and while bullet holes found in the wall of the home, no gun was ever found at the scene. Another, that their child had attempted to burn their home down.”

A series of stilled photos took over the footage. First was the… odd indent in someone’s wall. Three small, evenly spaced diamond shaped holes without any additional cracks in the drywall were circled with marker on a photograph. Next was the shot of someone’s living room with a few scorched books and papers on a coffee table (but the table itself despite being wood was completely fine), and near-perfect hand-shaped burn marks on the walls.

“Unfortunately, the timeline of these incidents has coincided with the appearance of monsters in the local area, leading some to believe that they are responsible in some way—either the cause of the supposed behaviour in the children, or the irrational response of the parents…"
“Please be advised to keep an eye out for any abusive behavior; mysterious bruises, unusually aggressive, secretive or defensive behaviour, nervousness... You could be the only thing between a child and the next strike on them.”

That’s what happened…

Chapter End Notes

No I'm not dead yet. So sorry about taking so long with everything. Stuff has been... messed up for me recently. But I've graduated from school and I am TRYING to get my shit together. If you've stuck around this long, you have my gratitude my dude and I will FREAKING TRY to get the next chap out sooner. Honestly, I was sitting on this half-finished for so long and I just stared at it for hours.

Here's a fun fact for ya; most of the human characters in the story have/will have their names be references to stuff. Can you spot them all? CAN YOU?! Special thanks to TheConflicted for Beta-ing!
“Frisk?” Flowey slowly turned away from the rather gruesome images on the TV to his friend. He was trying his damnedest to maintain his more aloof façade around the rest of the room, but the Pulse was ravaging his insides in so many directions at once. He wanted to scream, he wanted to hunt down the beasts who hurt his only friend and slowly rip out their entrails, he wanted so desperately to hug Frisk in that moment…

But Frisk’s face didn’t convey anything at all. They were rigid. Stone-faced. They didn’t even look tired like they had a few moments ago when they entered the house. He couldn’t even tell if they were breathing.

“WHILE I CAN SOMEWHAT UNDERSTAND THE THINKING BEHIND IT,” Papyrus startled Flowey and the rest of the room with his interjection, “AFTER ALL, THEY SAY ‘NO PAIN, NO GAIN’, I AM A BIT CONFUSED AS TO WHAT EXACTLY THEY EXPECT TO GAIN FROM THIS. THAT IS NOT HOW YOU EXERCISE BACK MUSCLES.”

Oh, how Flowey really wanted to punch some awareness into Papyrus’ stupid yet charming skull. LEARN TO READ A ROOM, DUMBASS!

Toriel was at least brought back to the waking world with Papyrus’ volume. She quickly turned away from Frisk and Flowey, but he could easily tell she was trying to wipe tears away. Probably to try and hide her own worry from them.

“Oh, I did not hear you come in, my children.” Not like they were all that quiet before… “I’m sorry, I’m afraid I got caught up in something. Nothing for you to concern yourselves with…”

Yeah, no.

“Lady, that was where your school is going. Those kids would probably wind up as your students. Of course, this concerns us.” Flowey glowered back. He hated it when Toriel tried to coddle them on violence. Like Frisk hadn’t squared off with most of the monster population, including herself. A little late to spare them from that loss of innocence.

“EXACTLY! AND WHILE IT IS YOUR DUTY AS A TEACHER TO EDUCATE THE YOUNG MASSES IN READING, WRITING AND ARITHMETIC, AS AMBASSADORS IT IS OUR DUTY TO- FRISK?”

Flowey felt himself jostle around as Frisk removed his carrier bag from off their small shoulders and just dropped him onto the floor. Their face remained stony, but they were oddly hunched over. Their arms were scrunched up on front of them, raptor-style, their head was kept low. They didn’t respond at all to Papyrus or Toriel as they shuffled their way out of the living room and up the stairs.
“MY, THAT WAS ODD. PERHAPS THEY WERE OVERWHELMED BY BEING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE AMAZING METTATON FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME!”
Papyrus mused, concern just barely marring his features for a moment before brushing it off like the oblivious idiot he was!

“I’m not sure about that, but this was hardly an appropriate topic for one so young.” Toriel glanced up towards the stairs, and while Flowey could see some struggle in her eyes, she did not move from her seat.

**JUST LIKE SHE DIDN’T MOVE FROM THE RUINS**

Flowey felt his core boil, the Pulse caught between rage and frantic worry. How could these idiots not see these red flags popping up?!

**LIKE BEFORE**

The flower squirmed until he finally undid the clasp on the outside of his bag, allowing him to slither out like a snake. He ignored the scolding from Toriel, and Papyrus’ continued ‘report’ about how the meeting went and about the social media plan garbage. None of that mattered unless Frisk was okay.

Getting around the house, especially up the stairs was not easy as a plant. Down the stairs was one thing, up was an entirely different beast. Flowey took to grappling onto each post of the banister and hauling himself up one step at a time. It took way too long. Each moment he wasted getting around, the more worries flooded his flowery head of what Frisk could be doing while alone.

They were alone and scared and scarred and-

The bedroom door was closed.

**The bathroom door was locked**

Frisk must have forgotten that he was left outside. They know how hard it is for him to open doors being the way he was. Flowey began cursing the wait time on Alphys’ experiment all the more in that moment. It was a struggle to get a grip on the door knob with just leaves and vines.

*A white paw knocking on the door, asking to be let in.*

“Frisk...?” Flowey slithered into the room.

**Is there blood on the floor?**

Frisk sat curled up on their bed, knees locked tight against their chest. Their fingers curled into their hair so tight, he worried they were going to pull it out by the roots. Their eyes were squeezed shut and oddly enough, their lips were moving like they were muttering to themself, but no sound came out. They were going too fast for him to even read their lips.

He’d never seen anything like this.

*They could still always surprise him.*

He slithered closer, climbing up onto the bed next to them. He could see the beginnings of tears building up in the corners of their eyes and the Pulse shot through him like ice water to his roots.

The hero of monsterkind, reduced... No, they weren’t reduced to anything. They were always a child. But he’d never seen them this fragile before. Not in all the times he’s seen them fought, get
killed, then do it over again. They looked so small.

Smaller than he was. Smaller than THEY were.

“Frisk?” Flowey spoke softly. He did not want to scare them. He so, so desperately wanted to hug them in that moment. To help pull them out of that dark trance they were in.

I don’t want to let go...

Slowly, he reached out a soft, leafy vine to their shoulder. Before he could even make contact, Frisk’s hand shot out and clutched it tight. Somehow, he’d gotten their attention. Frisk’s face was tight, scrunched up and trying to blink the budding tears away. Their lips were pulled back the slightest bit, showing their grit teeth in a fearful snarl.

The two of them locked eyes for a moment and Flowey was not sure how to feel. He’d never seen Frisk like this before. Hell, he didn’t even know what emotion they were displaying, and he was usually great at reading people. Were they afraid? Angry?

But, like a switch going off in their head, their hard expression broke in an instant. They let go of his near-crushed vine and pulled their shaking hands back to hug around themself, their tears finally falling down their cheeks.

“S-Sorry!” Frisk blurted out, curling up more on themself “Sorry, sorry, sorry…”

“Hey, it’s… it’s okay. No harm done, I’m a tough little flower you know.” Flowey pulled out the most genuine smile he could, trying to cheer them up. It wasn’t entirely a lie either, the pain from a squished leaf was nothing to him, especially compared to the pang of worry the Pulse was rattling around in him. “I’m more worried about you. What was that back there?”

Frisk was silent for a few more moments, their eyes were screwed shut once again. Their lips even started to quiver, like they were trying to whisper without opening their mouth all the way.

Had they even heard him to begin with? This really started to worry him. He had no idea what was going on or what to do. AGAIN. Frisk could always surprise him, but this was not the kind of surprise he wanted out of life.

“Worried?” Frisk mumbled, peeking an eye open at him.

Flowey would have been taken aback if he didn’t know himself as well as he did. They had every right to be skeptical after everything he’s done, even after two weeks of good behavior.

“Yes, I’m worried about you. And yes, I know how weird that sounds.” Flowey reached out a fresh leaf to try and wipe away Frisk’s tears. This time they didn’t lash out or pull away, in fact they leaned in to his touch like he’d done so many times before to theirs. “You’re important to me. And all that back there… I can only imagine a few reasons why you’d react like that. I know it’s hypocritical of me to say this, but if someone hurt you Frisk, I want to make them pay. Please tell me who.”

Flowey stopped himself. Frisk was never the kind to wish suffering on anyone, even if they had done them wrong. That’s the entire reason anyone was still around. Frisk wasn’t him; they wouldn’t want revenge…

“What do you need?”

“Worried. Worried, worried, worried…” Frisk kept parroting the word over and over. Flowey had
noticed that it was a habit of theirs when they were mulling something over. “Flowey… Do—-Do you trust me?”

“Of course, I trust you.” Flowey leaned in, the Pulse whispering something slightly hopeful through his stem. “You’re the reason I’m alive. I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t, you can ask anything of me.”

I’ll get the flowers…

“I need… Please trust me.” Frisk swallowed hard, their breathing was harsh for a few moments as their eyes darted between Flowey and basically everything else in the room. “Trust me… to be alone right now.”

The Pulse sent a hard snap through his system. Like a slap to the face or a cold shock of water.

“Frisk,” If he had a heart, Flowey would probably feel heartbroken right then “What do you mean?”

Frisk turned towards the small flower on their bed, their arms finally unwrapping from around their legs. They held a shaking hand out towards him, but they pulled back when they saw his crushed vine again.

“Flowey… I—-I want to tell you. Ev-everything.” They reached back up and… rubbed their neck. The action made Flowey’s entire being run cold. “Just, just not now. Later. I promise.”

Flowey scanned Frisk’s face; taking in every freckle, every hair, every scar and tear stain. They looked so tired. Broken. But they kept pushing forward like they were held together with duct tape.

Laying in bed, pale and sickly

“Please, Flowey?”

Do you trust me Asriel?

Flowey squeezed his eyes shut and thrust his face into Frisk’s, bumping their foreheads together and holding it for a few moments. They felt Frisk’s warmth and heartbeat. They were alive. They were still alive. It was different. This wasn’t like last time

“I’m going to hold you to that promise, Frisk.” Flowey opened his eyes, glaring hard back at his only best friend. “You hear me? This isn’t over.”

They… Smiled. They smiled back at him.

“I know. I trust you.” They lifted a hand, gently stroking the back of Flowey’s petals for a second and breathing a bit more evenly (maybe smelling him again, but he really didn’t mind this time. So long as they were feeling better). “Thank you, Flowey.”

Reluctantly, Flowey pulled back. Frisk was still smiling, but he could tell it was breaking slowly as their eyes started tearing up again.

I always was such a crybaby

If they wanted to cry, he would give them the space they needed. Flowey finally slinked off the bed and out their shared room. Fortunately, closing the door was a lot easier than opening it, though his grip on the door handle lingered for a few moments more.

‘They’re safe. This isn’t like before. They’re not dying. This isn’t—’
“Flowey?”

Flowey whipped his head around, being yanked out of his train of self-reassurance by… Toriel. The woman was just standing in the hallway, holding onto his little flower pot in her paws as Papyrus hovered around glancing past her shoulders.

“Were you spying on us?” he grumbled half heartedly. He really couldn’t blame them; he would be spying if he were them too.

“No, no of course not,” Toriel said as she knelt down, helping him into some fresh soil with surprising gentleness “While I don’t quite understand it, there is no denying you have a special bond with Frisk, and I’ve accepted that there would be some things they would feel more at ease talking to you about than myself…”

Oh, so she wanted him to spy for her?! Well maybe if she had listened instead of being so quick to launch fireballs at him, Dad, Frisk, maybe she wouldn’t be in this mess!

“You need not go into details, but please,” Toriel brought Flowey and his pot up to face-level with her, obvious worry and heartbreak in her eyes “Please tell me they will be alright.”

“Yes, AND NOT THE FAKE-ALRIGHT THAT SANS USES ALL THE TIME, EITHER!” Papyrus chimed in from behind the goat-woman “FRISK IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM SANS, AND I HOPE THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO DODGE THE SLIPPERY SLOPE OF SECRET-KEEPING AND SILENT SUFFERING THAT MY BROTHER HAS ROLLED DOWN. DID THEY MENTION NEEDING ANYTHING; A CAR RIDE? A NEW STUFFED TOY? SPAGHETTI?!”

Flowey coiled in on himself. The Pulse sent a… strangle wobbly feeling through him. Being trusted by people other than Frisk was weird. He thought Toriel knew better than to trust him at least. She probably had some idea of the kind of chaos he could get up to. But she was relying on him to help her ninth only child when they were so vulnerable.

But Papyrus was just Papyrus.

“N-no, no.” Flowey stammered a little, averting his gaze from their oddly affectionate eyes “They just want to be alone for a little bit.”

Flowey pointedly omitted Frisk’s promise to tell him ‘everything’ later on, just in case they still wanted to keep that a secret from the rest of their family. And the fact that he was the sole trustee of one of their secrets made him feel all warm and tingly.

Flowey grumbled and chewed on the end of his pencil. Why was he bothering writing down notes for their big “Monsters are People” Parliament speech when he would have to type it all up later? By that time, he might have even changed his mind on more than a dozen points anyway. But the work computer was in Frisk’s room and it was off limits for now.

He groaned and flailed about in his pot on the windowsill wildly. He was not doing so well trying to distract himself. He needed something to keep himself busy while not thinking about Frisk, but admittedly, he’s kind of focused his entire existence around them.

…He really should get a hobby.
Flowey glanced out the kitchen window at the chaos outside. While Asgore was enjoying ripping through the weeds and brambles in the yard (why he didn’t just set it all on fire was beyond him), Undyne and Papyrus were digging a massive pit for Undyne’s pool with just their hands and a couple shovels. They were making some admittedly impressive progress, but Flowey was just waiting for them to hit a powerline or fall into a sewer.

Maybe he could pick up gardening. But that would be a little weird seeing as how he’s a plant himself… He could always play video games, but without proper hands it was a bit cumbersome, and what would the point in playing be if he couldn’t absolutely dominate his enemies?!

“Heya,” And suddenly the room just got trashier.

Flowey shot back a glare to the smarmy skeleton as he sauntered into the room. He immediately noticed something off about Sans, though. Sans was usually one of the most unreadable people around, and on purpose. But some tells were coming through the cracks; his gait was just a little too stiff, his brow was creased just a bit, his smile was ever so slightly lopsided. Something was definitely wrong.

“What do you want Sans?” Flowey bit back his hostility as warning flags went up in his head.

“I was wondering if could spare a moment to talk is all.” Sans quickly closed the gap between the two of them, staring down the little flower on the low window.

“Actually,” Flowey broke eye contact, staring back down at his notes to try and break the odd stranglehold Sans’ stare had on him. “I’m in the middle of-”

“Great, let’s talk!” Sans quickly grabbed the base of Flowey’s stem and the two of them fell into the nauseating vertigo of one of Sans’ shortcuts. How he could feel nausea without a stomach or ears to begin with was beyond him, especially seeing as how Sans was able to teleport with such ease despite being in the same organ-less boat.

Flowey was in a panic from the split-second outside of reality. His roots gripped at his soil just a little tighter and he felt that he’d been ripped from his pot in transport. Not only that, but despite him knowing they were back in liminal space, it was still pitch black where they were.

“Whoops, sorry about that. Forgot I hit the lights on the way out.” Sans chuckled darkly before lights flickered to light around them.

They were in the basement lab. Specifically, what was once a laundry room, that Sans was in the middle of converting into an office. They’d only been there for a few days, and he had already made his space an absolute mess; coffee cups and ketchup bottles all over his desk, whiteboard-walls covered in equations and sticky notes, a pile of even more charred file boxes and dirty clothes off to the side. Papyrus would be both impressed and terrified.

Sans unceremoniously plonked the flower onto his desk, dirt and all before he himself flopped back into his large cushy desk chair across from him. The two shared a little stare-down for a few moments, and Flowey knew they were back in liminal space, it was still pitch black where they were.

“Whoops, sorry about that. Forgot I hit the lights on the way out.” Sans chuckled darkly before lights flickered to light around them.

They were in the basement lab. Specifically, what was once a laundry room, that Sans was in the middle of converting into an office. They’d only been there for a few days, and he had already made his space an absolute mess; coffee cups and ketchup bottles all over his desk, whiteboard-walls covered in equations and sticky notes, a pile of even more charred file boxes and dirty clothes off to the side. Papyrus would be both impressed and terrified.

Sans unceremoniously plonked the flower onto his desk, dirt and all before he himself flopped back into his large cushy desk chair across from him. The two shared a little stare-down for a few moments, and Flowey knew it was all to make him more nervous. What really pissed him off was how it worked. Slightly. Just a bit.

“So,” Sans finally broke the silence, leaning back and resting his slipper-clad feet on the desk, almost kicking Flowey right in the face. “I found some grass stains on my old research notes. Taking an interest in our research, are you?”

Curse Alphys for not keeping her trap shut-
Actually, did he even threaten her to keep this a secret? Maybe he forgot to in all the excitement. And it would have been pretty hard to work around using Sans’ notes when he was keeping the cipher to himself anyway…

It still sucked that Flowey had to explain himself to the sack of calcium. He could never tell just how much Sans knew about any given subject, but he always pretended like he knew everything just to trip people up. There was always the possibility Sans knew who what Flowey… was.

This might be a good chance for Flowey to do some probing too. Or just get under Sans’ skin.

“So, what if I am?” Flowey feigned innocence, batting his eyelashes and trying to get a reaction from the stoic skeleton “It’s not like you’re up to anything super secret or bad, right?”

“Well you’d know all about those kinds of experiments, wouldn’t you?” Sans retorted without his expression shifting a bit. “Bet it makes you feel all nostalgic.”

Dammit, that didn’t give Flowey anything to go off of. Sans could be talking about him, or the Amalgamates with that kind of phrasing…

“Alright, fine.” Flowey relented “Let’s not beat around the bush-”

“Hey, good one!” Sans gave a smirk back.

What? Oh… unintentional pun. God dammit! This conversation was hard enough already!

Flowey glared back harder to the unperturbed skeleton. Oh, how he wished he could just wipe that stupid smirk off his face… And break his bottom jaw off.

“YES, I AM INTERESTED IN YOUR DAMN RESEARCH!” Flowery growled out before Sans could get another joke in at his expense “Is it so wrong that I’m sick of living like this?! With this stupid… inefficient body.”

Flowey turned his glower down onto himself; his stringy vines, flimsy leaves, scraggly roots… he hated it. He hated looking at himself. It only reminded him that he wasn’t good enough. He wasn’t him, no matter how hard he tried. Flowey wanted out, but more importantly he wanted to be able to give comfort back to someone…

I don’t want to let go

“Welp, makes my job a lot easier.” Sans said, leaning back further in his chair and grabbing a cup of probably cold coffee from his desk. “And here I thought I would have to come up with some plan to convince you to be our lab rat.”

“What?”

“Well having a test subject that can give us feedback will make things go a lot smoother. Especially since my rat-ese is a bit rusty.” Sans glanced back over to Flowey, a smug wink and a smirk once again on his stupid face “Besides, you’re a tough little flower, aren’t you?”

Had… Had Sans been listening in on his talk with Frisk?! How dare he!!!

Flowey felt his entire being boil! He was so close to ripping-

Sans reached into his jacket and pulled out several small, colourful vials… PR, BV, KN, JS… TRAIT ESSENCE, drawn straight from a human soul and bottled up. How did he…?
“So, are you in or out, bud?” Sans held the little vials up to the light, examining them as though to taunt Flowey… He had what Flowey wanted right in his hands.

“How… How did you get those?!” Flowey leaned in closer to the vials, his mouth was watering for some odd reason… Maybe his instincts as a vessel were kicking in. “Alphys said we wouldn’t get samples for at least a week. After she hired the intern and got the new equipment.”

“I… expedited the process a little.” The skeleton withdrew his hand back into his jacket and glanced away, his smile finally dropping. “Alphys let me pick the intern since she would have been a nervous wreck with interviews. And the equipment we have now will suffice for the time being since… time is at a premium after all.”

What did he mean? It wasn’t like the trip into the capital was the deadline for the experiment. He could stand before the government with or without a body that could stand on its own. He could probably just wrap himself around Frisk’s shoulder again, or sit in a pot for the proceedings.

“Tell me,” Sans still looked perturbed, his eyes were directed at his walls of notes but he had a million-yard stare “Do you…. Do you like how this timeline is going so far?”

“Uh, it’s great.” Flowey stared back up at him quizically “We’re free, so we’re not locked in a limited cycle of—What do you mean by so far? Frisk isn’t going to RESET on us! Why would they?”

“I can think of a few reasons…”

Sans still kept that faraway look in his eyes, staring through his whiteboard scribblings and who knows what else. Flowey felt like he was being left out on the punchline of one of the skeleton’s stupid jokes, and for once he hated it. Stupid cagey skeleton.

“Listen, we both want this timeline to keep going, right?” Sans suddenly turned and locked eyes with the flower, his expression unusually tense for him “Our best bet for doing that right now is to keep the kid focused on moving forward. If they think they can solve a problem—you for example—by going back, they’ll do it.”

“What?! I’m not—”

…He was a problem, and he’s admitted it. Frisk knows what he’s supposed to be. In a way, he’s like the one person they couldn’t SAVE…

But would they really go all the way back? All the way to when everyone they cared for wanted them dead. They would be killed over and over again, in some vain attempt to fix him? Flowey knew he wasn’t worth all that, but then again, Frisk had already done all that for the rest of the monster population. Twice.

But he couldn’t go through that all again. He already got enough visions of Frisk’s many deaths in his nightmares. And Flowey wasn’t sure he’d be able to break the Barrier the way he did again. Regaining his true form and feelings again, just to give it all up… It would rip him apart.

But he won’t let that happen. Flowey felt the Pulse tingle with renewed DETERMINATION all the way up his roots to his petals. He was going to fix himself so Frisk could keep looking ahead. So they’d both have HOPE for the future.

Flowey held a vine out, Sans immediately taking it in his own hand, and (ignoring the WHOOPEE CUSHION) the two shook out a deal.
“I’m in, Skeleton.”

Chapter End Notes

Holy crap, sorry this took so long to pump out. I knew this was going to be a bit of a heavy chapter to write, but it needed to be done before I could get to some of the more "fun" stuff down the line. So, thanks for everyone who's stuck with me this long. I'll try to make updating a bit more consistent from now on, maybe aiming for at least once a month if not more. Hard to believe I used to do this once a week when I started out... yeesh.
Volatile Reactions

Chapter Summary

HE BLINDED ME WITH SCIENCE! Which is why you always wear your safety goggles kids!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Flowey was not scared. He was… pensive. He still wasn’t sure how on the level Sans was about this experiment, and the condition of his notes didn’t fill him with the most confidence.

Yeah, that was why he was shaking on the exam table.

Sans was hurrying about the room with surprising vigor. The skeleton remained as stony faced as ever, but Flowey could swear he saw a spark of… something in his eye sockets. Something he hadn’t seen since maybe the beginning of his run of RESETs and even then, it was on its way out even before Flowey got there.

The skeleton was setting up dozens of specialized cameras all around the exam table to record the experiment in different spectrums; magic chromatics, thermal, electro-magnetic, you name it. Sans was pretty DETERMINED not to let any piece of data slip through his grasp. But thankfully he was also taking some safety precautions along with them; quickly setting up an IV drip of concentrated healing magic nearby to keep Flowey stable just in case.

Every so often, Sans would duck back to his desk and rifle through more of those charred encrypted files. The way he was able to skim over them like they were written in plain old English was a bit jarring if Flowey was honest with himself.

Where had those files come from? What was Sans’ connection to them? Why were they pertinent to what they were doing now and why did Alphys know nothing about that project despite being the ex-Royal Scientist?

Sans’ enigmatic nature always frustrated the flower most of all. He and Papyrus both just didn’t… fit with the rest of the world. No matter how hard Flowey pried, he only came up with more questions than answers.

…And now he had to put faith into Sans’ cryptic bullshit. Flowey was literally putting his life in the hands of someone he’s tried to kill more times than he can count. This was shooting up all the red flags in the world, and Flowey only had the reassurance of M.A.D; if something bad happened to him, they both knew Frisk would RESET to get him back. Two weeks of progress was not a lot all things considered, but it wasn’t something either of them wanted to face.

“Alright, so,” Sans came waddling over, sweat dripping from his skull like he just ran a marathon instead of circling a twenty-foot room a few times at walking speed. This was probably the hardest he’d actually worked in a long while. “Just about everything is set up, but I’m going to need a few physical samples to establish a baseline.”
The skeleton snipped a pair of surgical scissors and set out a few petri dishes with a slight sadistic tinge to his grin. At least he had the decency to try to hide how much he was enjoying the flower’s suffering. With a hard glare, Flowey, outreached a long, leafy vine for Sans to cut into bits for the petri dishes. After about a dozen or so cuts, Sans hurried away to a part of the room separated by a glass wall and Flowey was left suckling on the chlorophyll bleeding appendage.

It was kind of gross just how sweet Flowey found himself to be. He suddenly had a craving for some of Dad’s Asgore’s tea.

Flowey watched Sans through the glass as the skeleton started examining the fresh samples under a high-tech microscope. He kept flicking between settings on the sides of the device and scribbling notes down without even glancing up from the eyepiece. Flowey felt a chill go up his stem from seeing just how excited Sans was to examine his biology.

Just how long had the skeleton fantasized about dissecting him? Flowey wasn’t sure he wanted to know.

Flowey continued to watch Sans watch the bits of floral gore under the scope for what felt like an hour. He knew that science required precision and a lot of it was boring math and the like… but Flowey couldn’t help fight the tension that kept building with each passing moment. Especially when Sans started introducing the TRAIT samples.

Sparks flew. Small puffs of smoke poured out. He swore he saw one petri dish explode into a goopy green mess. And Sans’ grin only stretched wider on his face as it went. Flowey was playing with fire and he knew it! He made a deal with the devil, and the devil was wearing ratty pink slippers!

Eventually, Sans felt satisfied enough to come hobbling back over, armed with a large needle filled with orange. BV. Bravery. Flowey couldn’t remember if orange was the one that caused the goo-explosion or not and he started flailing on the table, trying to get away… but he felt the familiar weight of blue gravity magic pinning him down.

“Okay, so because the actual point of this is to see if your size and shape will change, we can’t exactly strap you down the normal way, but I’m sure you don’t mind a bit of blue, right?” Sans gave a wink back down to Flowey as he prepped the shot, flicking the side of the needle to shake any air bubbles out. “We’ll start you out with just ten cc’s and see where it goes from there. How’s that sound?”

Like Flowey could give a response to that!

He wanted to scream! He wanted to run! He wanted to dust the smug bastard staring him down!

But he steeled himself. Flowey tensed as the healing IV needle was pierced into the base of his stem and wires were hooked up along his leaves. This was going to be worth it. It had to be.

“Wow, you’re being a surprisingly good patient there, bud.” Sans chuckled “I might have to give you a lollipop after this if you keep it up.”

Flowey felt the pinch as the needle went in just below his head. Immediately, it felt like fire was spreading out down his system from the injection point. He writhed on the table violently, numb to the pain of thrashing against the hard table.

Everything around him blurred into shapes and colours, both too bright and too dull at the same time. Noise around him melded together into a single, ear-piercing tone-

Wait. That was a scream. That was his scream. It felt so far away…
There were other noises muffled underneath the scream. A voice? Voices? He couldn’t tell. Everything was becoming so indistinct…

“There were other noises muffled underneath the scream. A voice? Voices? He couldn’t tell. Everything was becoming so indistinct…

“No, no, no, dear god, no! Not this nightmare again!

Flowey watched as Frisk braced their arms before their face, flames licking across their sleeves. He could hear them screaming out in pain, Toriel’s steeled expression numb to their obvious suffering.

NO! Flowey refused to sit by again. The iron bonds that were once his roots coiled in the earth began to break away. He was moving.

He threw himself into the fray, ready to-

This wasn’t his FIGHT. He had no OPTIONs. No MENU. He had no way to attack, and neither Frisk nor Toriel even acknowledged him being there. That didn’t stop the embers scattering around the room from scorching him though. All he could do was imitate Frisk’s ducks and weaves between the complex bullet patterns.

The one-sided FIGHT dragged on, Flowey watching in abject horror as Frisk’s HP started to dwindle. He wanted to scream for Toriel to stop, or for Frisk to fight back, but nothing came of his voice.

Frustrated, angry… Scared. Flowey admitted he was afraid. Afraid of never seeing the sky, afraid of being burned to a crisp, afraid of never being himself again. But one fear overrode everything else: the fear of losing Frisk.

A massive blue-hued ember flew straight at the small child’s face as they stumbled. This would have been it for them, but Flowey threw himself in the way of the attack without even thinking about it.

It wasn’t an unfamiliar pain as he’d fought Toriel countless times before in his RESETs, but this… this was different. There was a strange exhilaration buried under the pain and fear. Looking back, he saw Frisk none the worse for wear, but still alive. Even as-

Even as bones, spears, lasers and bombs barraged the pair. He’d been through countless FIGHTs of his own during his string of RESETs. FIGHTs he won, FIGHTs he lost, it didn’t matter. None of it really made a difference in the end as they had no end; no real meaning to them. But these FIGHTs between a child that refused to hurt a soul, and an entire country frothing at the mouth for their demise so they can reach their own selfish goals? These meant everything to him.

Frisk’s soul shown brightly before him, their eyes no longer seeing through him as the fights went on. Their silent gratitude was felt in every small gesture they sent to him; splitting a bicycle or a cinnabunny, crying out directions for them both to dodge, stroking his petals like they’d done so many times before.

Flowey willingly hurled himself between Frisk and their would-be killers. Every hit was worth it.
Every ounce of pain he felt was one less strike against the innocent pacifist.

This was the journey Frisk should have had. He might not have given it to them then, but… Flowey could take whatever the world could throw at them. He was strong. He wanted to get stronger. For them. For their hopes and dreams and a brighter future.

The thought of being able to protect Frisk filled him with BRAVERY.

Oh god, everything hurt.

Flowey didn’t want to open his eyes, but he could already tell he was in rough shape. He was probably bruised to hell and back from all the thrashing he did earlier. He felt like a tenderized salad… His voice probably wasn’t much better with all that screaming he did either. It felt like he swallowed a cactus.

And his freaking nose was itchy dammit!

Lifting up his arm was a pain as-

ARM?!

Flowey’s eyes shot open, taking the oncoming headache from the bright lights above him with (almost) glee as he craned his head up. He hadn’t felt this weighed down since he went into dirt-withdrawal the other day, but it shouldn’t have surprised him. What did surprise him as his vision started to refocus was the shape that burning pain took.

It… kind of looked like a cactus? Though the lack of thorns made him think succulent would be more accurate—especially with the short, red, rounded protrusions at the end making his pseudo-fingers. But the fact he had ANY kind of fingers at all was absolutely amazing!

Flowey flexed his stubby appendages, testing his new form’s grip and responsiveness. While they didn’t look to be the most dexterous hands around and he would definitely need to re-learn how to write, it was a sure step up from leaves and vines.

And!

He could scratch his nose to boot!

Flowey slowly sat up on the exam bench, despite his new body screaming at him in pain. There was probably still an MTT-brand glamirror still packed away with Alphys’ crap somewhere, and he was eager to check out his new goods even if he had to wipe away a bunch of glitter first.

When he tried to get up, he felt a slight tug on his mid-section. Oh right, the IV drip. Instead of being jabbed into the largest section of roots he had, it was now firmly impaled into his stomach area. Thankfully, it wasn’t completely fused with him either. Flowey’s gaze drifted up the line to the IV bag hanging off the pole, only about a quarter of its glowing green contents were gone at this point. Hopefully that was a sign that either his transformation hadn’t caused as much physical damage as he initially thought, or he hadn’t been out for too long. Either was comforting.

Still, being impaled in the belly wasn’t a comforting thought. He half-wanted to move it into the back
of his new hand, but he knew how dangerous it was to remove something like that. Come to think of it, where were the electrode patches that Sans had taped to his stem earlier? Flowey prayed they weren’t INSIDE him now.

Hoping they had just fallen off, Flowey looked around the exam table for them, but instead found what he could only describe as “floral-gore”. Bits of fibrous plant matter and sticky chlorophyll littered the table and the floor around it, like his old body had exploded. Three times over. That was not comforting to think about. Flowey wasn’t sure whether to lay back down in the remnants of his own guts to at least prevent further injury, or to run and scream at the top of his voice.

Thankfully, he didn’t have long to wait.

“O-oh, thank the suh-stars!” a nervous squeak came into the room as the automatic doors opened. Alphys hurried over to Flowey’s side as fast as her stubby legs would allow her “Y-you finally woke up. N-not tha-that you were out for too long at all, b-but it’s a miracle you w-woke up at all!”

Alphys really needed to work on her bedside manners. That is the last thing he needed to hear right now. It did put his pain into perspective though, and all things considered he felt like a million bucks for a someone who should be dead… again.

Alphys fumbled with a scanner, giving him an excruciatingly slow once-over with it. Flowey swallowed hard, the tension was not helping.

“…Amazing…” Alphys muttered to herself, her beady eyes darting between him and the device “Your HP is just a few points off max, and… H-how do you feel, Flowey?”

“Really store. And sticky.” Flowey lifted a hand off the table, watching strings of syrup run between it and the surface. He was going to need a bath so badly after this and for once he was glad for it.

“H-how, uh, how about emotionally?” Alphys glanced back over to him, concern in her eyes as she worried her bottom lip with her teeth.

“Emotionally? I…” Flowey paused. His gazed lowered back to his new hands. She knew what he was; a soulless husk pretending to be a real monster that latched onto anything that gave him some semblance of amusement or purpose. This experiment was a huge risk for her and everyone. One wrong step and she could give unspeakable power to a beast that could wipe out everything and piss him off all in the same go. But still…

“I’m… happy… And more excited than I’ve ever been!” Flowey looked back up, feeling the smile pull at his face. A genuine smile. “I’d hate to sound like Papyrus right now, but I just want to get out there and do… anything! Everything! All at once! Why do you ask?”

Alphys hid her mouth behind a hand, but he could tell she was smiling too. And for once he didn’t feel the need to ruin it for her.

“W-well it’s just that, uh, st-stat-wise your DEF went up more than your ATK which is a little odd…” Alphys turned from him, grabbing a pen off her tool bench and starting to scribble away once again. “S-something to make a note of.”

Flowey pushed himself to the edge of the exam table and slid off as quickly as he could… and immediately regretted it. Alphys reacted surprisingly quickly in steadying him so he didn’t fall face-first.

“Ea-Easy now,” Alphys muttered, supporting him on her shoulder “You’re still learning how to walk
on two legs, remember?"

Well, more like re-learning, but he wasn’t going to correct her on that.

Surprisingly enough, Flowey stood almost the same height as Alphys. Maybe he was even a bit taller as he was slouching a bit trying to keep his balance. She slowly helped him walk a full circuit around the small room while dragging the IV pole around with them. Having to manually feel out his center of gravity, adjusting his posture, even the mere concept of toes was incredibly weird for him. But he would take all the weirdness over nothing any day.

After a few minutes, Alphys slowly pulled away, letting Flowey take a few baby-steps on his own. He stumbled a bit the first few times, leaning against the IV pole and the wall for balance. But he eventually got it, even if he still felt like he went through Undyne’s training regiment a hundred times and his body was screaming at him to lay back down.

“C’mon doc, I need a mirror! I want to see the new me!” Flowey was practically giddy at this point. He could walk! And without clay pants—CLAY POT. Not pants. He really needs to stop calling it that.

Alphys shuffled in place before hobbling off to grab a new mirror. She was possibly even more excitement than Flowey himself had. He hadn’t seen her like this since maybe the beginning of his new life and first few timelines; before the Amalgamate incident. It was like she was showing off a new upgrade to Mettaton, or some new invention.

Flowey felt… odd seeing it. More so because he was the focus of it.

“Okay, are you ready?” Alphys said with a giggle as she wheeled over a full-length mirror, its back still to Flowey so he couldn’t see himself. She was just milking his anticipation. Alphys was spending too much time with Mettaton. With a bit of a flourish, she spun the mirror around to him.

Flowey didn’t really know how to feel seeing himself at first. It didn’t really feel like him, but at the same time it did… He was still recognizable as a flower, but much bigger. His face was no longer a flat disc, but had a but of a snout protruding out. His petals were tipped with a deeper red-orange instead of bright gold-yellow throughout and his top-most petals were elongated, almost like ears—they even moved independently like them! His stem acted more like a neck, gradually swelling into a bulbous belly area, even the shoulders that his massive arms were attached to was still pretty thin comparatively. And his legs were… really stubby. He wouldn’t be going very fast with them, but they were solid. They even took on more of a wood-like appearance, and his “toes” being very clearly roots. He feared he would still be dependent on soil for a while longer…

Flowey admitted new body was admittedly kind of cute, and it was perfectly serviceable for what he wanted to do for the time being… And completely alien to him. Anything was better than what he had to begin with, but he was having a hard time connecting the figure he saw copying his movements in the mirror as himself; new or otherwise.

It almost seemed like it was trying to look like he did, and coming up short. Flowey shook his head, trying to bite back his frustrations and look towards the future again! This was a downright miracle he achieved on the first try, and he was grateful to have this kind of a chance!

“I can’t wait to show Frisk!” Flowey beamed back at his reflection, seeing his new sharp teeth smile back at him. From over his reflection’s shoulder, he saw Alphys visibly pale.

“O-oh boy, uh, maybe you could wait. J-just a little.” Alphys muttered, rubbing the back of her neck. “You don’t want to go upstairs right now; trust me.”
“Why, what’s going on?” Flowey felt coldness run through his stem as his mind went over the myriad of possibilities that could be going on in the house while he was out, and the dangers they could mean for Frisk.

Alphys’ face surprisingly turned into a small angry sneer as she glanced off to the side. The fact that she was more angry than afraid gave Flowey some comfort in a weird way.

“S-sans broke so many rules with this experiment he ran on you! N-not that I’m blaming you, of course, Flowey.” Alphys quickly added that last part to try not to incur the flower’s wrath. But he was honestly more confused than angry.

“But I thought he said he ‘expedited’ our timetable for running experiments.” Flowey turned to face her properly before glancing back over at the encrypted notes and cart of tools and samples Sans had gathered nearby. Just what had the skeleton been up to?

“He did a little bit, b-but we still had WEEKS before we would be ready!” Alphys started pacing, angrily punctuating her words with hand gestures as she started to rant “We were supposed to submit proposals, get approval and oversight! But he ignored all that and just about every single safety pro-protocol we have in place! N-not only was he putting your life in danger, but this flagrant disregard for our agreement with the scientific b-board could put so much of our work at risk! Not to men-mention, I have no idea where he got those ESSENCE samples because they certainly weren’t from the RMCSE Labs!”

Alphys’ angry flailing threatened to knock over a few beakers and some smaller pieces of equipment on the desk next to her, bringing her out of her tirade long enough to at least straighten them out. She stared at her own distorted reflection in a test tube for a moment before setting it back down in its rack with a dejected sigh.

“A-anyway,” Alphys turned back to Flowey, looking emotionally drained “When I told everyone about the damage Sans could have caused, everyone was understandably angry. B-but things kind of snowballed from just lecturing him…”

Apparently, a grumpy sleep-deprived Toriel was even more dangerous than a normal one. The second she heard about Sans’ fuck-up, she threatened to fire him on the spot like she did with Alphys. When Asgore and Papyrus tried to mollify her and defend Sans, she went off on them too. Her blaming Asgore for things not even his fault is nothing new, but doing so and picking on Papyrus while Undyne was present was dangerous. One thing lead to another, and now the whole house was basically at each others’ throats.

Flowey really couldn’t blame Alphys for using taking care of him as an excuse to not be a part of that mess. He really, really hoped that Frisk couldn’t hear the shouting from their room. The fight on top of everything else would be just too much for the little human.

He needed to get up there to see them.

Ignoring both Alphys’ warnings and his own body’s protest, Flowey broke into a run for the stairs as fast as his new stubby legs would legs him. As soon as he left the sound-proofed doors to the basement labs, he could hear that his housemates were still going strong in their bout of mutual verbal abuse. He had plenty of time to listen as his short legs would only let him go up one step at a time…

“-WELL WHAT WERE YOU DOING THE WHOLE TIME?! NOT LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT!” Flowey could just about feel the venom in Undyne’s voice directed at the former Queen. It sounded like a lot of pent-up resentment being unleashed.
“Our freedom could not have come at the expense of innocent human children’s lives!” Toriel bit back.

“Oh yeah? What about OUR children, huh?! How many of US would have fallen down from sheer hopelessness if we didn’t have SOME kind of a plan?!”

“Please Undyne, it is not worth it. She is right-” Asgore attempted to interject, his usually strong voice weak and on the verge of tears.

“NO! I’m sick of her high-horse attitude!” Flowey heard and felt a loud bang reverberate through the floor as Undyne most likely struck something. “She’s always acting like you’re the worst scum and she could do no wrong. Well here’s a newsflash lady: YOU AIN’T PERFECT EITHER!”

Flowey really wanted to stay and watch the fireworks; everything they were saying about each other was what he had been thinking of for the past two weeks (or longer). And while he would have loved to listen to all their grievances come out at each other at once, he had far, far more important matters to attend to. The other didn’t even notice his clumsy meander up to the ground floor and as he was about to start the arduous trek up to the second, he heard the front doorbell ring.

Thinking it might have been a neighbour hearing the screaming and wanting to know if they should call the cops, Flowey quickly shuffled over to the front door to answer. The last thing they needed right now was the police to show up and see the extended royal family arguing on the ethics of child murder and illegal experimentation.

Standing at the door were indeed two humans; a stern looking young woman with a large binder tucked under her arm and a softer looking back with a large tote bag slung over his shoulder.

“Hello, my name is Jackie O’Boyle, and this is my colleague Dr Marcus Ippliere. I’m here on behalf of Child Protective Services.” The woman spoke with a firm and practised voice.

Flowey just paused, the shouting still obvious from behind him.

“Lady, I’m going to be real with you; you could not have come at a worse time.”

Chapter End Notes

heyo I'm back again! And yes, we are leaving off with a cliffhanger. You're welcome.

Also, don't forget to check out my other work; Itty Bitty Odd for more of my manic babbling!

End Notes

Hey Folks, this is my first work here on AO3. Bit of a slow start I admit, but things'll pick up I promise. Rate, review, whatever.
My Tumblr is Killer-Squirtle if you wanna contact me there.
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!