The humans that fell into the Underground, for the most part, were easy prey for Sans. Tiny, gullible, desperate. They were easy prey because they just didn't fit into the twisted, dark world that had taken shape under Mt. Ebott.

But what happens when a human falls that just fits so... seamlessly into the Underground's growing madness? When he not only knows what's going on, but knows exactly how to survive?

And, most importantly... when he's more than happy to play along?
The Handshake (A Prologue)

Chapter Summary

Sans meets a new human - and he isn't what he expected.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sans had to admit that he was a little surprised when the door to the ruins slid open quietly. Toriel had told him that a new human had come to her home, but whoever it was had gotten out fast. It normally took a week or more for her to inevitably slip up with their ‘medication.’ She must not even be awake, and the kid snuck out.

Sans got a look at the new human as the door shut quietly. Huh. Maybe not a kid; he was at least a head taller than Sans (at least, it looked like a he). Well, there were ways of fixing that, but Sans was getting ahead of himself.

The human made some vague grunt voicing his displeasure with the temperature; he crossed his arms, attempting to conserve his body heat. He glanced around at the bare trees enveloping the path he trudged through, forcing himself to take long, deep breaths. Nervous already? Sans chuckled to himself. He bet this one would be a screaming, sobbing mess. The human wore a pair of dark blue jeans and brown boots that were just a little too small for him, and a plain white tee-shirt that was just a little too large. The edges of it looked… singed? He smelled just a little like smoke, Sans realized. He hadn’t fought Toriel, surely. There was no way he could have…

No. Sans had been there all day, and he would have heard a battle if there was one. The singe marks were small, anyway, and the smoke smell was faded. It must have already been there. Mmm… smoke smell. He’d never smoked a human before. They smelled good grilled, sure, but maybe with a little…

Sans shook his head. He was letting his mind wander again. It seemed to be happening more and more frequently recently. The human turned around, and Sans blinked away. At least he was building the proper atmosphere.

The human’s eyes were bloodshot, he noticed. Was he still under the influence of the drugs? The whole situation was starting to feel weird. He’d have to ask Toriel about the human later, but for now, the skeleton teleported directly behind the human and extinguished the lights in his eyes.

The human immediately turned around and took a step backwards, only to trip over his own feet and tumble to the ground. He looked up at Sans; yep, his eyes were definitely bloodshot from the drugs. Interesting.

“heheh… the old sneaking up and scaring them shitless trick. it’s always funny,” Sans started his spiel. The human just watched him intently, breathing steadily. “anyways, you’re a human right? that’s hilarious. i’m sans. sans the skeleton.” He put on his best friendly smile; he really didn’t feel like chasing the human down or fighting him. Sure, all the little noises they made when they were terrified were hilarious, but you had to be careful when playing with them. Broken toys are no fun.
“ya need a hand, pal?” He reached out, offering him a hand up. It was so difficult to keep his grin from widening, but he managed well enough. The human tilted his head and reached his hand up slowly. Sans closed the distance and clasped their fingers together before yanking the human to his feet.

A satisfying buzzing began to sound from the handshake, along with the familiar sensation of warm liquid seeping through his metacarpals. He finally let the manic grin he had been holding back pop onto his skull as the human grunted in pain and tried to pull away; unfortunately for him, Sans had an iron grip. Being a magic skeleton had its perks.

The human clenched his jaw and tried to pry Sans’ fingers away with his other hand. “aw, what’s the matter, buddy? you want me to let go?”

“Yes!” the human shouted, yanking on the hand once again.

“suit yourself,” Sans said as he pulled his hand away. The human stumbled backwards, but he didn’t fall over. Sans chuckled and looked down at his bloodied hand, tapping the pressure button to the drill a few times and sending drops of scarlet spattering onto the snow.

“aw, c’mon. it’s just a lil’...” Sans stopped as the human tried to stifle a giggle, and failed. He started laughing uncontrollably, covering his mouth with his good hand and clutching the other to his chest, staining the fabric that covered his heart crimson. Sans chuckled a little at the irony, before remembering that the human had just laughed off his drill-in-the-hand trick. “prank,” he finished, grin fading.

The human took a deep breath and looked down at Sans, fighting back another fit of laughter. “Sorry. I really need to get a grip,” he said. Did he just steal Sans’ pun? “I gotta admit, you got me good there,” he chuckled. “It’s nice to meet you, Sans. You can call me Lucifer.” Sans just stared at him, dumbfounded. “Something wrong, Sans?”

Sans blinked. “nah. just uh… well. i haven’t met a human that gets my sense of humor before.”

Lucifer smiled, and curled his injured hand into a fist a few times. Blood squirted out from between his fingers, making a mess in the snow. “Well, you didn’t cut through any tendons, so I don’t exactly have a reason to be mad. You’ve gotta be either really petty or really dull not to appreciate a well-crafted prank like that when you get to see it first hand.”

Sans chuckled and raised a metaphorical eyebrow as he regained his composure, trying to figure out what had gone wrong. The drugs must have given him giggle fits or something. Yeah, that was it. “so, uh… lucifer, huh? that’s a pretty weird name.”

Lucifer smirked at him. “And ‘Sans’ isn’t? Don’t bother telling me that name isn’t a pun on comic sans.”

“that is my real name, buddy. i don’t know what to tell ya.”

“Yeah, well my real name’s boring. So you can call me Lucifer.”

“i guess you’re right. ‘boring’ is an even weirder name.”

Lucifer blinked, and then laughed again. “You’re good.”

Sans felt… weird. It had been a long, long time since a human had actually laughed at his jokes. Or even groaned in displeasure. “well, lucifer… i’m supposed to be on watch for humans right now. but, uh…” he went back to playing with the hand drill, deciding that was a lot easier than looking at
the human’s genuinely amused facial expressions. It was disconcerting. “I don’t really have the *appetite* for it.”

Lucifer tilted his head curiously, but didn’t react otherwise. “Now my brother, Papyrus… well. He usually drops by about this time. We might wanna hide you before then.” Sans gave him a light shove and pushed him down the path towards his station. Sans hadn’t had a challenge in a while.

This might actually turn out to be fun.

Chapter End Notes

Undertale is the brainchild of Toby Fox.

Horrortale was created by Sour-Apple-Studios. If you haven’t read the Horrortale comics, I highly recommend you check them out on Deviantart! They are amazing.

Also, uh… I made a Tumblr? Go check that out, my name’s phantomdreamshade over there too. Or don’t. I’m not the boss of you.
Clearing One's Head

Chapter Summary

Lucifer proves to be very good at subverting Sans' 'pranks'. Sans has second thoughts about how fun this is going to be.

“why don’cha hide behind that corpse over there?” Sans asked, gesturing to the body hanging upside-down from a nearby tree. “the shape’s, heh… pretty convenient, right?” Lucifer just stared at it blankly and cocked his head to the side.

“SANS! SANS, WHERE ARE YOU?” Papyrus called from the path heading towards snowdin.

“c’mon, kid, don’t be a deadbeat. we don’t have all day.” Sans gave him a shove towards the body. Lucifer raised an eyebrow at him but continued forward and disappeared behind the dead human.

“SANS! THERE YOU ARE, YOU LAZYBONES! IT'S BEEN ALMOST TWO YEARS AND YOU STILL HAVEN’T--”

“there’s a human hiding behind that body.”

“WAIT. REALLY?!”

“uh huh.”

Papyrus scampered off towards the hanging corpse excitedly and peeked behind it. He was silent for a moment, and Sans turned to him. Normally this was the part where Papyrus excitedly screamed that there was a human and carried them off to his puzzles.

“DON’T BE SILLY, SANS. THERE’S NO HUMAN BEHIND THE CORPSE, THERE’S JUST ANOTHER CORPSE!”

Sans walked over to him, confused. “huh?”

Lucifer had locked his ankles into the tree branch above and was hanging from the tree right behind the corpse. His hands dragged on the ground a little bit, and his mouth and eyes hung slack. It was actually a fairly good impression of a dead person.

“paps, that’s the human,” Sans said.

“SANS, SANS, SANS. WE ARE LOOKING FOR HUMANS, NOT HUMAN CORPSES. HUMAN CORPSES ARE LOVELY, BUT ONLY HUMANS CAN ATTEMPT PUZZLES, NOT HUMAN CORPSES. YOU SEE, THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT HUMANS ARE ALIVE, AND HUMAN CORPSES ARE DEAD! NYEH HEH HEH!” Papyrus sauntered off back down the road. “NOW, WHAT WAS I GOING TO LECTURE YOU ABOUT? EH, I’LL THINK OF IT LATER. I’LL SEE YOU LATER, BROTHER!”

Sans watched him go, dumbfounded, and then turned back to the ‘corpse’ with a wicked grin. “you little shit,” he said, voice dark.
Lucifer unhooked his ankles from the tree branch and rolled to his feet, brushing off snow with his hands. He crossed his arms and smirked at Sans. “What? You told me to hide. He’d have seen my feet if I just stood there.”

Sans’ grin faded a little, and his frustration turned to amusement. “touché,” he conceded. Maybe this human would actually last for a while.

Lucifer’s smirk widened. “If you wanted me to meet him, you should have just said so. He seems like a nice little frog.” Lucifer started walking after Papyrus, and Sans followed him.

“a what?” Sans asked. Was that supposed to be an insult?

Lucifer paused for a moment. “He’s probably a skeleton like you, isn’t he?”

Sans blinked. “yes…? was that not obvious?”

Lucifer rubbed his eyes. “I’m still hallucinating,” he said, more to himself than to Sans. “Ugh. When are these infernal drugs going to wear off?”

“tsk tsk. shouldn’t let someone know when you’re not at your best. you never know who’s gonna try and take advantage of you.” Sans made a point of showing off his sharpened phalanges. Lucifer just chuckled at him.

“Well, there’s just something so trustworthy about your face, I couldn’t help but spill my guts to you. What can I say?”

Sans couldn’t help but join in with his own chuckle. “you should be careful with that kind of humor around here, kid. someone might take you literally.” He put on one of his creepy grins, but it didn’t seem to have an effect. The drugs must have seriously been screwing with his brain.

“Why do you keep calling me kid?” Lucifer asked. That had bothered him more than what Sans was implying? He was starting to get impatient for the drugs to wear off so that he could actually scare this human.

“old habit, i guess. we get more of them around here than you might think.” Sans picked at his teeth with his pinky finger. Still no reaction.

“I guess that makes sense,” Lucifer said, nodding. Then, suddenly, he paused, bringing his hand up to his stomach. He winced.

“something the matter, buddy?”

Lucifer shuffled off towards the woods. “Damn drugs… I’m gonna be sick,” he said, bending over behind a tree. Sans heard the sounds of him wretching as he emptied his stomach. Sans waited patiently until Lucifer returned, slightly paler than he had been before, and glaring at the ground as if it had personally insulted him. “There. Hopefully my whole system’ll be clear soon enough.”

“Well, you’re eyes ain’t looking as red,” Sans commented. It was true; the color had receded just a little. “tell me something, though. from what i’ve heard, tori bakes one hell of a pie. how’re you not a loony, comatose pile of flesh right now?” This human seemed oddly open. Maybe he’d actually get an answer.

“She didn’t dose me strong enough, I guess. Maybe she’s used to it working on smaller people.”

Sans squinted at him. He caught on fast. “It’s a shame, really. She seems like such a sweetheart. At least she was trying to help.”
Sans was starting to get confused. This couldn’t all be the drugs. Or maybe this human was more clever than Sans had taken him for, and he was playing Sans for a fool. His mood soured a little; he’d like a pranking challenge, maybe, but not an actual challenge. That would be way too much work. Papyrus’ puzzles had better be working this time - he didn’t want to have to deal with Lucifer anymore. Well, with his head still attached, anyway.

To Sans’ displeasure, Lucifer decided to sit down on the side of the road. His eyesocket twitched. “whaddaya doin’, pal?”

“I think a good thirty-minute rest’ll clear the rest of the gunk outta my system. I heard something about puzzles, right? I wouldn’t want to disappoint your brother with my performance, now would I?”

Sans forced a chuckle. “nah, don’t worry about it. papyrus’ puzzles are easy, you can do ‘em with your eyes closed. we should just keep goin’.”

Lucifer gave him a sly smile. “That almost sounds like a trap, pal. But that’s ridiculous, you and I are such great friends! Still, I am feeling a little tired from puking my guts out, so I think I’ll sit a little while.”

Oh, there were definitely going to be guts. Right after Sans made a head dog out of the sassy little shit - he’d had enough. Where was his axe?

“SANS!” Sans nearly fell over as Papyrus’ voice hit him like a freight train as the tall skeleton bounded towards him from the path up ahead. “I REMEMBERED WHAT I WAS GOING TO LECTURE YOU ABOUT! YOU HAVEN’T RECALIBRATED YOUR--” Papyrus skidded to a stop and turned to look at Lucifer, who just sighed and waved a little.

“HUMAN!” Papyrus shouted excitedly, rushing over and picking him up by the shoulders. He swung him around in a circle, practically giddy with his prize. “I DID IT SANS, I FOUND ONE!” Lucifer started to look a little queasy, but seemed otherwise fine.

“Looks like you did, bro,” Sans glared at the human. Great, this one was lucky, too. Today was not Sans’ day.

Papyrus began jabbering to the human as he tucked him under his arm and began jogging towards Snowdin and his puzzles. “COME ALONG, SANS! THERE ARE PUZZLES TO BE HAD! NYEH HEH HEH!”

Sans grumbled to himself. Looks like he had some work to do.
Lucifer attempted the first of Papyrus’ puzzles.

Lucifer focused on keeping his stomach from churning too violently as Papyrus carried him around like some oversized ragdoll. The skeleton had to have been at least seven feet tall, and Lucifer wasn’t very tall to begin with. He’d already felt like a dwarf around Toriel, and Papyrus wasn’t making things better. Of course, the other skeleton didn’t even crest five feet - so that was a plus.

The human tried to regain his bearings as Papyrus plopped him down into the snow once more, shoved something into his hands, and dashed away. He was surrounded by trees - and probably was the entire time, he realized. A forest made a lot more sense than the field of giant candy-canes he’d been seeing. Hopefully those damned drugs were nearly through messing with his head, because Lucifer had work to do. He focused on the throbbing in his wounded hand, hoping it would help him focus. The voices hadn’t gone away yet.

Sans was already on the other side of the clearing, he noticed, hands woven together behind his cracked skull as he leaned against a tree. He looked pissed off about something - it was interesting just how much emotion a skinless skull could actually show. Just how was he alive, Lucifer wondered, with such a large hole in his head? Maybe he wasn’t alive, and was actually undead or something of that sort. Or maybe he’d just survived by the skin of his teeth. Either way, Lucifer had to admit he was curious; Sans probably wouldn’t like him asking, though, so he held the question for now.

“NYEH HEH HEH! HUMAN! I HOPE YOU ARE PREPARED - MY BROTHER AND I HAVE CREATED SOME PUZZLES THAT YOU MUST SOLVE IF YOU WANT TO STAY ALIVE!” Papyrus laughed giddily and danced in place, and then turned to Sans. “SANS! EXPLAIN THE RULES!”

Sans ducked away from the volume, wincing as he covered where his ears would have been. “i’m right here, you don’t have to shout!”

“SANS, YOU’RE WASTING TIME AGAIN! EXPLAIN THE RULES!”

Sans winced again, but shuffled forward anyway, practically steaming with annoyance. He glared at Lucifer as if he was the source of all the skeleton’s problems, but began to speak anyway. “you got five puzzles to deal with, and one freebie. if you’re stumped, hold up one finger and me or my bro will help you out. if you fail one, well… you won’t be around to see the rest of ‘em.”

Lucifer didn’t react much; he’d guessed the “puzzles” were deadly from the beginning, and the rules seemed fair enough. Sans’ mood seemed to worsen even more, though.

“WAIT… WHERE ARE WE SUPPOSED TO FIND A FRISBEE?” Papyrus asked. Sans turned around and looked at him, confused. “no frisbee. free-bee. a clue.”
“BUT I DO NOT HAVE ANY GLUE HANDY, SANS! WHAT IF THE HUMAN WANTS TO USE IT ON THE FIRST PUZZLE?”

Sans blinked his eye-sockets, trying to follow Papyrus’ logic. “he... no, pap. the human gets one CLUE. a hint. got it?”

“BUT WHY SHOULD HE GET A CLUE IF HE ALREADY HAS A FRISBEE AND GLUE?”

“Wh… AARGH! he doesn’t get a goddamn frisbee, papyrus! or glue! he just gets one hint. no more arguin’!”

Papyrus just shook his head. “SANS IS NOT MAKING ANY SENSE TODAY. SO JUST IGNORE HIM. ANYWAY, FOR THIS PARTICULAR PUZZLE, YOU MUST MAKE IT ACROSS THIS CLEARING. THE MAGIC ORB I JUST GAVE YOU WILL PROTECT YOU!”

Sans muttered a bunch of half-formed words, trying to counter the dismissal, but eventually settled for boring holes into Lucifer with his eyelights. That one red eye really gave him an intense stare when he used it like that.

“GO AHEAD, HUMAN!” Papyrus shook Lucifer from his transfiction with the other skeleton, and he took a look around the clearing. There wasn’t anything overtly dangerous about it, that he could see. He squatted down and began examining the ground closely.

“UH… HUMAN? WHAT ARE YOU DOING? JUST TAKE A STEP!”

Lucifer chuckled. Papyrus’ eagerness was rather adorable, actually. “I like to think my puzzles through before I try them,” he said, resuming his examination. There was a little lump in the snow right in front of him.

The solution struck him, and Lucifer took a step backwards. Then, he tossed the orb onto the small disturbance. A giant-sized bear trap snapped shut in front of his nose - it likely would have decapitated him. Smiling, Lucifer ducked under the trap’s jaws and kicked the orb forward, revealing that the rest of the clearing was safe. He handed Papyrus the orb, only slightly smug.

“INCREDIBLY DEVIOUS! YOU ARE MORE CLEVER THAN I THOUGHT!” Papyrus shouted into Lucifer’s face at point-blank range. Clearly, he had no concept of personal space. Or volume control. “THIS MAY PROVE TO BE CHALLENGING… TO THE NEXT PUZZLE!”

Papyrus walked eagerly towards the next trap, leaving Lucifer alone with Sans.

Luckily, Sans’ mood seemed to have shifted from frustration to curiosity. “how’d you know how to solve that one?” he asked, starting to follow his brother.

“Papyrus said the orb would protect me - so most people would try to hold it close, like a lifeline. If you guys were clever - and I figured you would be - it would make sense that the solution would be to toss the orb away.”

“huh. you’re smart, i’ll give you that. i guess we’ll see how you do on the rest of ‘em.”

Lucifer just smiled. “I look forward to it.”

Sans stopped him with an arm as he continued walking towards Papyrus. “what’s your deal, anyway? you’re not fazed at all by the fact we just tried to kill you?”

“Hmph. I’ve had worse acquaintances. At least you’re honest. Besides - I’m kind of an adrenaline
junkie. No fun unless there’s a little risk involved, right?”

Sans just squinted his eye-sockets at Lucifer as they continued down the path.

Alright, so maybe Sans had mood swings; sue him. There were side effects to having a large piece of your head missing. Still, he was actually impressed with Lucifer’s performance. Maybe he was just some bizarre thrill-seeker; it’d be a perfect reason to climb a mountain that people supposedly never return from. As for Sans’ inability to scare him, maybe the human just had a dark sense of humor and didn’t think Sans would actually kill him outside of the traps. It was a faulty assumption, but an understandable one.

As for the hand drill, maybe he was just trying to avoid appearing weak. Yeah, that was probably it. There was no way that little trick hadn’t freaked him out, even if it was just on an internal level.

For now, Sans was content with letting Lucifer go through the puzzles. It was actually sort of interesting to see him last. Now, Sans just needed a way to convince Lucifer that his jokes weren’t just playful. He’d give this kid a scare yet - and then he’d satisfy himself with the human’s dying screams.

That thought gave him pause. He did what he had to do to keep everyone alive, sure, but he didn’t always think like that. Did he?

*I’m probably a sadist at this point*, Sans realized. That realization would have disturbed him greatly a long time ago. Now, Sans just shrugged mentally and continued towards the second puzzle. There wasn’t really a point trying to separate right from wrong anymore.
Sticky Situations

Chapter Summary

Lucifer attempts the second puzzle, and then has a choice to make.

Lucifer reached a second clearing with a pit of what appeared to be blue snow in the middle. Sans and Papyrus already stood on the other side, which Lucifer found disconcerting. Sans had been two steps behind him just a moment ago, and now he was clear across the field. Either his eyes were still playing tricks on him (which Lucifer felt wasn’t the case anymore), or Sans had some sort of teleportation ability. That was something to watch out for.

“HUMAN! I CHALLENGE YOU TO CROSS THIS EMPTY SPACE OF SNOW!” Papyrus shouted from across the field. His voice definitely carried well.

Lucifer stared at the clearing and the strange blue snow in front of him. Obviously, it couldn’t be that easy. The skeletons just stood there patiently, allowing him to think it through this time. They were rather considerate; it had been a long, long time since he had met someone with some actual integrity. It actually made him smile a little bit.

He snapped a twig off of one of the nearby trees and gave the blue snow an experimental poke. It gave him a lot more resistance than he expected, and when he tried to pull the twig back, the snow tried to suck it back in - it was sticky and viscous, like tar. So that was the trick. Clearly, it would have to be deep enough to drown someone in, or it wouldn’t actually be lethal.

The blue stuff didn’t reach all the way to the edge of the clearing; perhaps this was a trick question and he could just walk around, as anticlimactic as that would be. He began to do just that, turning to the skeletons to make sure this wasn’t considered cheating. Papyrus just bounced on his heels, waiting patiently. Sans, though - something felt off. This wasn’t right.

Sans frowned a little (inasmuch as his permanent smile would allow him to) as Lucifer retreated to the front of the clearing again. The human smirked slightly; Sans had definitely been planning something. It looked like across the tar was the only way to go. He took a deep breath and took a long step out.

This was the delicate part. The liquid was thick enough that he sunk in extremely slowly; he would be able to walk across, at least for part of the way. If he tried to move too fast, the pressure of his steps would drive him in further, but if he went too slowly, he would sink. He took another step, trying to get as much distance out of his stride as he could. Then, he yanked the first foot out of the muck and took another step.

The key was being both fast and light, which was much easier said than done on the surface of a pool of frigid blue tar. He got a quarter of the way through before wriggling out of his shoes, leaving them to sink. A little way further, and he pulled out of his long socks as well. It was only about halfway through where he really started to sink.

He tried to trudge through, but each movement was harder and harder to take. There had to be a way out of this - something to grab onto, something to stand on…
Lucifer felt his foot hit something cold and stiff. It wasn’t the ground, because whatever it was sank with the pressure he put on it. He calmly investigated it with his bare toes. It was difficult to make out what it was - maybe some kind of log, or…

Oh. It was a face.

The realization hit him as his toes dipped into the corpse’s mouth accidentally, reaching a frozen tongue and teeth. He moved his feet forward to stand on the person’s chest and springboarded off of them, hard.

The motion bought him a little more time and distance, and he continued forward. He reached another body - jump. A third - jump. He finally reached the other edge of the pit and grasped at the edge with his hands, up to his chest in tar. There wasn’t anything in the snow to grab onto, though, and he felt himself sinking further. He wasn’t going to fail now, right at the very end. There had to be something he could use to pull himself up. Looking around, he made a decision he hoped he wouldn’t come to regret.

He grabbed onto Sans’ leg.

The skeleton’s head immediately snapped to look directly at him, pupils shrunk and manic grin wide across his skull. Lucifer ignored the glare and slowly pulled himself out of the trap, Sans not even budging an inch the entire time. He was pretty strong for not having any muscle.

Lucifer eventually got to his feet, most of his lower body now numb from cold. Luckily, the tar seemed like it liked sticking to itself, and most of it snapped back into the pool as he pulled his body free. He looked up at Papyrus expectantly.

The taller skeleton looked on the verge of bursting with excitement, and he promptly picked Lucifer up in a twirling, rib-crushing hug. “YOU ARE INCREDIBLY RESOURCEFUL, HUMAN! I AM THOROUGHLY IMPRESSED WITH YOUR PERFORMANCE! SANS, THIS IS EXCITING, ISN’T IT?”

Sans never let up on his murderous glare. “yup. real exciting, bro.”

Lucifer’s stomach growled embarrassingly, and Papyrus stared at him. “OF COURSE! YOU MUST BE HUNGRY FROM YOUR LONG JOURNEY. I BELIEVE YOU DESERVE A REWARD FOR YOUR EXEMPLARY PROGRESS SO FAR!” He set Lucifer on the ground and ran towards a fork in the road. “THIS WAY, HUMAN! I WILL SERVE YOU SOME OF MY UNDERGROUND-FAMOUS SPAGHETTI!”

Lucifer smiled and turned to Sans to find the skeleton barely an inch from his face, looking up with a death stare. “that was a pretty bold move there, pal.” His tone was eerily even.

Lucifer didn’t miss a beat. “If you weren’t part of the puzzle, you shouldn’t have been standing within arm’s reach. To patella the truth, I didn’t think you would mind.”

Sans’ stare faltered, and the manic mood coming off of him passed. He snickered. “alright, i’ll give you that one. you really are pretty special, huh?” Lucifer just shrugged and smiled. “you’re good for a laugh if nothing else, so let me give you some advice. they say my bro’s cooking has the human touch. i wouldn’t eat his spaghetti if i were you, kid.” The creepy grin that crossed Sans’ features was enough to convince Lucifer that he was being honest. “come by my station up thataways,” he said, pointing to the path Papyrus hadn’t taken. “i’ll make ya a nice hotdog instead.”

Sans disappeared from view, and Lucifer was left alone with a fork in the road. That is, alone until a
one-eyed flower popped up from the ground.

“Hiya, friend!” he said, looking up at Lucifer. “You’ve really made it quite a ways, huh? That’s pretty impressive!” Lucifer put on a fake smile, pretending to be happy to see the little weed.

“It’s good to see you, Flowey,” he lied. “So, what’s up?”

“I just thought I’d give you a little friendly advice of my own,” Flowey said. “Everyone down here is a freak, but those two skeletons are the alpha freaks in this area. Papyrus is crazy, but also a total goofball - everyone in Snowdin loves him to pieces. If you can get him on your side, he could be your greatest ally.” Flowey gestured to the path Papyrus had taken with a leaf.

“Sans, on the other hand, is wildly unpredictable. I’d stay the hell away from him if I were you. And whatever you do, don’t let him find out anything about you - you’ll regret it later, I promise.” Lucifer just nodded in agreement.

“This is an important choice. I’ll be seeing you, friend.”
The Meal

Chapter Summary

Lucifer decides what to have for lunch, and Sans has a chat with Toriel.

Sans could barely see Lucifer from his sentry post as he lazily looked down the road, fingers drumming rhythmically against the countertop. He really didn’t know where he picked up the habit - it was probably just something for his subconscious to focus on instead of the damned itching all around the hole in his skull, or gnawing feeling of hunger, or how there was food right in front of him that he just couldn’t eat—

He sighed as the human walked toward Papyrus and disappeared from view. Did he really not believe Sans about the human food? There had to be some way to crack Lucifer’s cool - but everything he’d tried so far had amounted to nothing. Sans was torn halfway between extremely irritated and excited - really, anything that kept him from being alone in the dark with his thoughts was welcome. Even if that thing was a little snarky, more than a little frustrating, and constantly reminded him how hungry he was.

Then again, just about everything reminded him how hungry he was.

Sans stared down at the hotdog on the counter - one of the few pieces of actual magic food left in his personal stash. He might have the only real food left in Snowdin, in fact, and his supply was becoming dangerously thin. Some part of him wished he’d shared it with the town a long time ago and just eat human like the rest of them - whatever sanity he had left was a curse, not a blessing. It’d probably be easier once it happened; he wouldn’t have to worry about that annoyingly clingy last piece of conscience he had left. Papyrus might be a psychotic serial killer now, but at least he was happy.

His head, of course, told him not to eat the hot dog. It was a good human trap, and he only needed to save this one piece - monster food didn’t spoil. His metaphorical gut, however, told him that he hadn’t eaten in a week and that he should just scarf the thing down whole. Sans decided to listen to his head one more time as Papyrus skipped by, overjoyed and ready for the next puzzle. He put the hotdog back in his inventory and waited for Lucifer to come by.

“hey, there’s the humanitarian,” Sans chuckled. Oh, there was no disputing that fact now. Sans usually watched Papyrus cook, and today’s batch of Crooked Spaghetti definitely included eyeballs. His smile widened - he finally had the human. “even after i warned ya, huh? guess you don’t trust me as much as you said you did.” He put a hand on his sternum, feigning offense. “can’t say i really encourage what you did there - you’re a pretty sick person. i guess you couldn’t really help it though, right? you are what you eat, after all.”

“I don’t think you’ve really got room to talk, unless those are ketchup stains,” Lucifer countered. He still wasn’t shaken.

Sans laughed internally at the irony of the statement. A long time ago, those would have been ketchup stains. “i ain’t a human, in case you haven’t noticed, bucko. i could eat as many of you as i want and it still wouldn’t be cannibalism.”
Lucifer smiled and leaned on the counter, right into Sans’ face. Sans leaned back a little, caught off guard. “That’s like telling me it’s wrong to eat beef while you chew on a pork chop. But sure, have your technicality.” Then, the human started licking sauce off of his own fingertips, mixed with the blood from his hand wound. The bleeding had mostly stopped by now, but a thin trickle still made its way down his arm. “Puzzle’s this way, right? I need some exercise to work off all that good food.”

Lucifer walked away, leaving a dumbfounded Sans at the station. Black drool was leaking from the corner of his mouth, Sans noticed absently. Probably at the mention of ‘beef’ and ‘pork chop’. Then, the realization struck him that the human had been within easy reach of his axe, and Sans had been too stupefied to do anything but stare.

He teleported to Lucifer’s side, finally waking up from the daze he’d fallen under. “…you seriously don’t have any problem with the fact your just ate a human?” he asked.

“I was hungry, and they were already dead. I don’t get why you’re making such a fuss.”

“You really just don’t care, huh?”

Lucifer stopped and looked at him. “That’s the way things are down here, isn’t it? Wouldn’t you eat another monster if you were hungry?”

Sans’ confusion grew. “hell no. besides, monsters turn to dust when you kill ‘em, anyway.”

Lucifer raised his eyebrows at the information, but didn’t react otherwise. “Then why would you eat humans? Are we really that different? We seem pretty much the same in all the ways that matter, from what I’ve seen.”

It took a while for Sans to answer him. “i guess we’re not. all that different, i mean. as far as the killing - it’s cause we have to.” Lucifer tilted his head. Apparently, this was new information. What, did he think they just ate people for fun? ...Well, he did hunt people for fun, but that was just a side benefit.

And why the hell was Sans telling him any of this?


Sans blinked back to reality. “uh, sure.”

“EXCELLENT! THIS WAY, HUMAN!” Papyrus locked an arm around Lucifer’s shoulders and led him into town, leaving Sans alone.

The realization finally struck him - Lucifer was just as insane as the rest of them. That’s why he never got scared, was fine with being a cannibal; there had been a lot more wrong with him than just the drugs from the very beginning.

A long time ago, Sans would have incinerated Lucifer with a gaster blaster by now. In the current state of things, however, he couldn’t help but feel drawn to the human - the monsters were crazy because they had to be, but Lucifer was already that way. Sans had to admit, he was curious.

Lucifer would probably end up on the grill soon enough though; just after Sans decided he was
interesting enough to keep around. Wasn’t that just his luck?

Regardless, Sans decided it was high time he paid Toriel a visit. He’d been meaning to ask her about the Underground’s mysterious new visitor, and now seemed like the perfect opportunity to do so.

With a flash of his magic - and an unfortunate strain in his skull - Sans arrived at the Ruins door. He could still see the bloodstains in the snow from Lucifer’s hand as he gave the door a knock.

“Who is there?” the door answered.

“be,” Sans said.

“Be who?”

“your voice sounds bea-utiful today.”

Toriel laughed heartily from behind the massive door. “Oh, you old charmer. It is good to hear your voice as well, my friend.” Sans wished he could give her a wink through the door. She deserved a good laugh.

“so, uh… ya had a new visitor recently, huh?” Sans hated being serious, but he couldn’t spend too long here. Papyrus would be really upset if he found out Sans wasn’t in position for the current puzzle.

“You have met him already?” Toriel asked. “He was a strange young man. He refused to answer to anything except for ‘Lucifer.’” She sounded mildly perturbed, which wasn’t a surprise. She always felt guilty after letting someone escape the Ruins.

“yeah, the kid’s strange, for sure. got a real pain tolerance - and a gift for puzzles.”

“I… see.”

Sans cursed at himself mentally. That wasn’t something he should have brought up. “so, uh… anything else you noticed about him?”

“Many things. He claimed he was not hungry when I offered him pie, but ate some anyway just to be polite. As soon as the symptoms began to appear, he immediately suspected me and I was forced to incapacitate him. I have never seen anyone catch on so quickly. And when I… administered the medication, his expression was… disconcerting. I have seen children fear me, or become angry before. That is not unusual. The only thing I could see in Lucifer’s eyes, however, was disappointment. It felt… very strange. I would be lying if I claimed it did not make me uncomfortable.”

“how’d he get out?” Sans asked. He filed all the new information away for later, but it was this part he was most interested in.

“I do not know. I left him alone to rest for just a moment, and before I knew it, he was gone. I was completely awake the entire time as well - he was somehow quiet enough to escape my notice. I realize that the medication might not have as strong an effect on someone who is not a child, but… it still baffles me.”

It baffled Sans, as well. There was definitely something different about Lucifer. “hey, uh… it’s been nice talkin’ to ya, tori, but i got some stuff i gotta get done. I’ll catch ya later, k?”

He could hear Toriel sigh through the door. “Very well. Until next time, my friend.”
Sans blinked back to the outside of Grillby’s, putting one hand on the wall to steady himself as a wave of pain rolled over him. He really needed to stop using his magic so much and conserve his energy; unfortunately, laziness was a difficult habit to break. He listened to the conversation going on inside - it sounded like it would be mealtime soon.
An Impromptu Date

Chapter Summary

Sans and Lucifer go on a 'date' at Grillby's.

“It really was a miracle that those two brothers managed to keep everyone alive. Sans and Papyrus convinced all of us that some good company and some bad laughs were enough to keep us all going.” Lucifer listened to the large bear-like monster intently, hanging on every word he said.

“Which is why I followed Sans to New Home that day. I could hear them arguing through the throne room doors - Undyne chastising him for failing to find a way to solve our current problems, and Sans defending himself with all that he had done to keep Snowdin alive. Eventually, it quieted down, and I hoped they had resolved their dispute.

“But then - something terrible happened.” Lucifer leaned in, eyes wide, completely transfixed.

“'Guards. Pin him,' the queen said. She said that Sans had failed, and that she had to do what was best for everyone. She talked about him being some sort of power source - which Sans tried to play off - and Sans pleaded with her not to do whatever she was about to do. He told her that he wouldn’t sleep, that his brother still needed him - but it all fell on deaf ears.

“The sound that came next was ungodly. The shrieking was probably the worst part. And then - then the cloud of dust blew out from the doors. I ran back to Snowdin to tell everyone the terrible news, that Sans was dead; but when I arrived, he was there. He had a huge hole in his skull, covered head to toe in red, and told us all to start eating the humans that fell into the Underground - all without breathing a word of it to the queen. It was completely unthinkable.”

The bear leaned back in his seat, story done. “But in the end, it seems he was right. Wasn’t he, friends?” Lucifer sat back in his chair as well, his hypnotism with the story done. Instinct kicked in, and his eyes darted between the monsters that had gathered close to him. Their smiles all began to widen; so did Lucifer’s.

All at once, they grabbed at him, and Lucifer leaped off of the chair into the air. A well-placed kick to the head sent one resembling a horse sprawling onto the ground, and he used the head of a dog-monster to springboard behind the group and land with the grace of an acrobat. Before the monsters knew what had happened, he sprinted out of the door and turned the corner.

His mind immediately went into survival mode as he considered his options. The snow would leave tracks wherever he chose to run, so a straight escape was impossible. He had to confuse them. He turned the corner and ran behind the building, listening as the crowd of hungry monsters inside finished stumbling over each other and gave chase. There was a back door - excellent. He kept running, looping back around to the front of the building and following the trail of trampled snow from his pursuers as they disappeared behind the restaurant. Soon, he came back to the rear door, opened it (it was unlocked, thankfully), and quietly slipped inside. He listened; the monsters outside seemed confused. He’d escaped.

Taking a moment to catch his breath, Lucifer took in his surroundings. This was clearly some sort of storeroom - there were spare chairs, glasses, and crates that he supposed were for food, though they were rather bare. In the middle of the room, amongst the clutter, was a table illuminated by a single candle - and Sans sat on the opposite side, skull resting on one hand while he tapped the table with
the other’s fingers rhythmically.

“I never took you for the romantic type,” Lucifer said mischievously, taking a seat opposite the skeleton. He kept his voice low to keep anyone else from hearing.

“anything brighter an’ grillby’ll notice. he’s kinda gotta thing for flames.”

The human crossed his arms on the table and rested his chin on them, staring up at Sans. “just can’t stump ya, huh?” Sans asked, staring right back with his unblinking gaze. It didn’t seem to unnerve Lucifer at all, because of course it wouldn’t. Though, Sans had mostly gotten over that at this point.

“I guess it’s a gift,” Lucifer smiled. “You know, if you wanted a date, you just had to ask. No reason for all the cloak and dagger.” He threw in a wink, but Sans stood his ground. He wasn’t going to lose this game.

“who says it’s a date? we’re just laying low in here ‘till things quiet down. pap’s gonna be real excited when i get you to that last puzzle.” He didn’t let up his stare. Not that it really seemed to have an effect.

“If you say so, handsome.” A strange silence fell on the room, punctuated only by the flickering of the candle flame. Sans kept up his creepy stare and finger-tapping, but Lucifer kept staring as well.

Sans started to sweat a little; he felt like he was being studied, as if he were a puzzle the human was trying to figure out.

Sans couldn’t tell how much time passed. Ten minutes, maybe? Thirty? Had it been hours? His perception of time had always been screwy, and the gaping hole in his skull wasn’t helping. Eventually, though, even he got tired of the silence and decided to break it.

“look, i know i’m drop-dead gorgeous, but you really don’t have to stare so hard.” Lucifer snorted, and once again Sans got that half-pleased-half-weirded-out feeling. “or is it something else about me you’re so fascinated with?”

Lucifer finally averted his gaze. “I don’t think you’ve got any room to talk, considering the way you’ve been boring holes into me.”

“hehe, maybe. but i do this all the time. haven’t seen you looking at papyrus like that - or me, for that matter, ‘till now. mind filling me in on what changed?”

Lucifer looked straight into Sans’ eyesockets, and Sans tensed up. The human had a stare almost as piercing as his own. “You really do care about them, don’t you?”

Sans blinked. “huh? who?”

“Everyone. Especially Papyrus. You really do care about them.”

Sans wasn’t sure how to answer. “well, i mean… he’s my bro. ‘course i do. an’ everyone else used - are - good friends of mine. i don’t get what you’re getting at.”

It was at that point that Sans realized Lucifer looked just as confused as Sans was. “You say that like it explains everything. Just because you’re friends, just because you’re family, doesn’t mean you care about each other.”

“uh... that’s kinda the definition of friends and family, kid.”
“So that’s it? That’s how it works down here? You all just… just love each other - no questions asked, no reason at all?”

The conversation had quickly spiraled out of Sans’ control. “it’s - no, it’s not that black-and-white, but… i don’t understand.”

“We really are different,” Lucifer said, and something seemed to click in his head. He looked almost… disappointed. “Anyway, the coast should be clear by now, don’t you think?”

“uh… right. don’t wanna keep paps waitin’.” Sans shook himself from his thoughts and grabbed Lucifer’s hand. The human blushed a little, and Sans rolled his eyelights. “don’t look at me like that. we’re taking a shortcut.”

One shortcut later, and the two were back in the Snowdin cold. Lucifer staggered a little and Sans resisted the urge to clutch at his head in pain. Papyrus stood in front of them, holding back a squeal of excitement.

“BRILLIANT STRATEGY, HUMAN! I SAW THE ENTIRE THING, AND I AM VERY IMPRESSED! CONGRATULATIONS ON SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING THE FOURTH PUZZLE!” Papyrus danced giddily in place, resisting his urge to tackle-hug the human. “THE FIFTH PUZZLE IS RIGHT UP AHEAD, IF YOU WILL JUST--”

Papyrus paused as Lucifer held up a single finger. “WHAT… WHAT ARE YOU DOING, HUMAN?”

Lucifer kept his finger in the air. “This is the last puzzle, right? And I still haven’t used my freebie. It’s not good business sense to waste it.”

“W-WELL, TECHNICALLY YES, BUT… AWWW. I WANTED TO TEST OUT MY LAST PUZZLE.” The taller skeleton looked despondent, and Lucifer walked up to give him a pat on the back.

“Sorry, Papyrus, but they were your rules. I’d love to see the puzzle, though. You can tell me how it works - how about that? I’m always interested to see your work. It’s very clever.”

“YOU REALLY THINK SO?” Papyrus bent down to look right into Lucifer’s face, eyelights practically sparkling.

“Of course! C’mon, let’s go.” The three began walking, and Sans realized that Lucifer had actually beaten all the puzzles. He never expected that to happen - he couldn’t just let the human leave.

There were mouths to feed.

“so… guess you’re heading home after this, huh?” Sans asked.

“Back to the Ruins? No. I just escaped from there.” Lucifer looked at him with a raised eyebrow.

Sans gave him a glare. “the surface, smart-ass.”

Lucifer tilted his head. “I was just going to stay here. Maybe camp out in the woods somewhere.”

Sans swore he’d found himself speechless more often in the past twenty-four hours than he had in the last several years. “you don’t wanna get out of here?”

Lucifer looked at him as if he’d just grown a tail. “Why would I ever leave this place? This has to be the most amazing thing that’s ever happened to me.”
“sure, except for the fact that everyone here wants to *eat you*.”

Lucifer just shrugged. “That I can deal with. It’s still better company than what’s waiting for me back home.”

Just as Sans remembered that Lucifer was crazy, Papyrus picked Lucifer up off of the ground, one hand supporting his legs and one supporting his chest as the skeleton hoisted him above his head. “THERE SHALL BE NO CAMPING, HUMAN! YOU SHALL STAY IN OUR GUEST ROOM! IT HAS BEEN SO LONG SINCE I’VE HAD A NEW FRIEND! COME ON, I WILL SHOW YOU TO YOUR NEW HOME!” Papyrus began sprinting back towards the eastern edge of Snowdin, before making a U-turn and running the other way. “RIGHT AFTER I SHOW YOU THE LAST PUZZLE!”

Sans was left in the snow, completely stunned. What on earth had just happened?
“STAY HERE WHILE I PREPARE THE GUEST ROOM, HUMAN!” Papyrus plopped Lucifer down onto the couch and ran up the stairs of the house, Sans lazily walking in the front door as he did so. Lucifer looked around, staying put as he was told - the living room was immaculately clean of dust, but the furniture was all placed haphazardly and what he could see of the kitchen was covered floor to ceiling in dark stains. So was the carpet leading from the front door to the kitchen. The stairs seemed ancient, the wood chipped in many places.

“Sorry it’s a bit of a mess,” Sans said sarcastically. “We don’t really get guests anymore.”

Lucifer just smirked. “It just looks lived in to me. It’s not a home if it’s all sterile and perfect.”

Sans flopped down onto the couch next to him and rested his hands behind his head. “Guess you’re our houseguest now, huh?”

Lucifer looked to the room Papyrus had waltzed into - it was covered with faded signs and stickers. “Apparently. There’s only two rooms up there, though - where’s the guest room?”

Sans shrugged. “I got no idea. We didn’t have one, last I checked. Paps must’ve had some grand idea.” He glared at the door. “If he thinks you’re taking one of our rooms, that ain’t gonna fly.”

Papyrus burst out of the room he had entered and excitedly beckoned for Lucifer to join him. Both the human and Sans followed him, stairs creaking horribly under their weight. Papyrus’ room (Lucifer decided it must be Papyrus’ room by the decor) was so neat it could’ve been part of a dollhouse - the racecar-shaped bed was perfectly made, action figures were placed in ruler-straight rows on a small table, and Lucifer was almost certain that the books on the bookshelf had been thoroughly alphabetised. It was a stark contrast to the rest of the house, and suddenly Lucifer felt very uncomfortable.

Sans definitely noticed the change - he could practically see the human’s entire body go rigid as he shrank away from everything in the room as if it had burned him. Papyrus, completely oblivious, swung open the closet door to reveal that his spare clothes had been moved somewhere else, and a pillow and blankets had been laid on the floor inside. So that was the ‘guest room.’ It was cramped, sure, but big enough that Lucifer could actually lie down. He wasn’t all that tall.

“Well, go on, human! Try it out!” Papyrus skipped over and shoved Lucifer into the closet. Reluctantly, he laid down on the floor - he just fit. He gave Papyrus a thumbs-up and a weak smile, and Papyrus immediately picked him up and hugged him. “I’m so excited to have a new friend! Aren’t you excited, Sans?”

A sadistic smile crept onto Sans’ face as he watched Lucifer glance around the room in paranoia. “Ecstatic, bro. I think we’re gonna have a lot of fun together.”

The human glared at him defiantly, but Sans saw through the façade. For the first time since Sans
had met him, Lucifer had lost his confident bravado. “WELL, HUMAN, I AM SURE MY PUZZLES HAVE THOROUGHLY EXHAUSTED YOU! TAKE A NAP HERE AND WHEN YOU AWAKEN, WE WILL DO… SOMETHING.” Papyrus practically tossed the human into the closet and slammed the door, before giddily dancing out of the room and dragging Sans with him.

Sans filed the new information away for later and stopped Papyrus from leaving as he attempted to descend the stairs. “bro, i think we need to have a family discussion. couch, now.” Papyrus looked a little confused, but moved to sit on the couch. Sans hopped up beside him.

“What would you like to talk about, brother?”

“I wanna know what the hell you think you’re doing,” Sans snapped at him. Papyrus shrunk away a little. “we can’t keep a human in your closet. people are hungry, paps - i know you make your puzzles to pass the time, but we can’t just let this kid live here because he beat your game.”

Papyrus put his hands on his hips. “Brother, I am appalled! I am a skeleton of my word, and I will not be made a liar! The human beat us fair and square, sans - we will just have to make the puzzles even deadlier next time so that the next human does not escape.”

“uh uh. that kid’s dying tonight, no argument. if you’re that squeamish about it, you don’t have to be in the house when i do it.”

“No.” Papyrus grabbed Sans’ shoulder as he attempted to stand up.

“Let go of me, papyrus,” Sans warned.

“I think not. If i do, you are going to harm our houseguest.”

“Hell yes i’m gonna harm our houseguest. or are you so selfish that you’re gonna deprive the whole town of a decent meal?”

Papyrus pulled his hand back, more than a little hurt. “we have enough reserves to last for a while yet. if another human does not fall by the time that runs out, you may kill him - but not a moment sooner.” Papyrus got up and walked towards the door. “I mean it sans - if i find the human dead when i return, i will be very cross with you.”

Sans sulked on the couch for a little while before standing up, grabbing his axe, and teleporting into the closet.

Just as Sans’ slippers hit the floor of the dark room, he was knocked over and pinned to the wall by his neck. One couldn’t choke a skeleton, but it caught him off guard enough that he dropped his axe - which Lucifer promptly snatched away from him.

No one had ever been able to hit him like that. For the first time, Sans was actually afraid for his life. One hit and he’d be dust - Papyrus would be alone, Undyne would have free reign over Snowdin…

And just like that, the pressure let up and he was released. Sans looked to Lucifer, his face illuminated only by the dim red glow from Sans’ eye. He looked like a cornered animal, breathing heavily, but eventually began to relax.

“Next time you sneak up on me like that, I might break your neck. So, for future reference, don’t do that. I’m a pretty light sleeper.” Sans just stared at him for a while. “Is there a reason you appeared right over my head with an axe?”
Sans was incredibly confused. “I thought that would be obvious.”

Lucifer snorted. “If you wanted me dead, you’d have killed me a long time ago.”

Sans pinned the human’s wrist to the wall, picked up his axe, and held it to his throat. “You sure about that?” He dug his thumb into the wound on Lucifer’s palm.

Lucifer kept his expression neutral, and the pain didn’t seem to faze him. In fact, he wasn’t resisting at all. He brought his hand up to the flat side of the axe and pushed it a little closer to his skin. “You’re hungry, aren’t you? Go ahead and do it.”

Sans’ arm wouldn’t move, as much as he was willing it to. Lucifer was right - he was starving. He didn’t have a stomach, but his spine was twisting in knots from hunger, his skull was throbbing with pain, and his whole body was starting to shake. And of course, there was food right in front of him - soft, warm, juicy meat that he so desperately just wanted to tear into with his teeth. And he had a feeling the screaming might help him ignore his headache.

Except that last, damn sliver of conscience was screaming above everything else that this was wrong, that everything was wrong, that none of the humans he’d hacked apart deserved what they’d gotten from him. It wouldn’t let him move.

“Sans?” Lucifer was looking at him - he sounded concerned. Why, why would he be concerned about someone like him? “Sans.” The voice snapped him back to reality. Sans was hyperventilating, and Lucifer’s jeans were stained with the black drool dripping from Sans’ mouth. His grin was so wide he could practically feel his cheekbones cracking - he didn’t even remember smiling.

Sans did the only thing that came to mind; he teleported away.

He felt like his skull might explode - his magic was running on fumes, and his body was sick of it. He slammed open the lid to his stash of food - a handful of monster candy. He popped one into his mouth, not bothering to undo the wrapper, and then closed the box again before he could devour the whole lot. Then he slammed the injured side of his skull into the wall, scraping it back and forth to relieve the burning itch around the wound. He ignored the wetness seeping down the side of his head and onto his shoulder.

Eventually, he slid down onto the floor, exhausted. He was still hungry, but at least the sensation that something was eating him alive from the inside out had gone away. Unfortunately, that left him space to think.

Why couldn’t he do it? He must have killed a dozen other humans by now. Human children no less - what made Lucifer so special? Maybe his conscience made him nauseous every time he thought about eating a human, but it hadn’t kept him from killing someone before. Maybe it was the point Papyrus had made - he didn’t need to kill Lucifer right now for everyone’s sake, so he didn’t want to.

All Sans knew for sure was that he was exhausted. Surely he’d earned an actual nap.
It's dinnertime, and Sans finally finds a way to rile Lucifer up.

“HUUUUUMAAAAN!” Papyrus called from the kitchen. “WAKE UP! IT’S TIME FOR DINNER!” A few moments later, Lucifer appeared from Papyrus’ bedroom, trying to smooth out his hair. If it was easy to hear Papyrus’s voice from the other side of the house through several walls, then surely people outside would be able to hear him. Everyone knew Papyrus wasn’t entirely sane, but it would probably be best if Sans got him to start calling Lucifer by his name instead of ‘human.’

Sans was already on the couch, red stains running from the hole in his skull and onto the shoulder of his jacket. Papyrus didn’t seem concerned, so Lucifer didn’t say anything - but a small piece of his skull had definitely chipped off. He was good at memorizing details, like the shape of all the cracks on the skeleton’s head. Or the shape and position of all of Papyrus’ jagged teeth.

Papyrus left the kitchen with a handful of adorably tiny bowls and a steaming pot. He handed one bowl to Lucifer and one to Sans, and then put a forkful of pasta into each one. Then, he headed towards the door.

“Where are you going?” Lucifer asked.

“GRILLBY’S! IT’S DINNERTIME FOR THE TOWNSFOLK AS WELL, AND I AM THE BEST CHEF IN TOWN. NYEH HEH HEH!” The door slammed, and Lucifer looked towards the kitchen.

“Do you guys have forks somewhere?” He gestured to the bowl. It was small enough to fit in the palm of his hand.

Sans chuckled and set his bowl on the arm of the couch. “second drawer on the left.”

Lucifer returned with a pair of forks and sat down next to Sans and offered him one; he took it and stuck it into the bowl, but didn’t move to eat any of the spaghetti. The human twirled the fork around and put a bite into his mouth, glancing curiously at Sans as he did so. “Not hungry?” The question was sarcastic.

“this is for paps,” he answered, crossing his arms behind his head. “not a big fan of spaghetti, anyway.”

Lucifer finished his tiny meal and set the bowl aside, adjusting himself on the couch so he could stare right at Sans. “You’ve never eaten a human before,” he observed. It was a statement, not a question. The skeleton glanced away.

“so? what’s that got to do with anything?”

Lucifer snickered. “everyone else down here does, so why not you? You’ve got no problem with killing or inflicting pain, clearly, so what’s the issue with a little cannibalism?”

“it’s not can--”
“Humanitarianism,” then,” Lucifer cut him off, rolling his eyes.

“why are you so casual about this, huh?” Sans asked. “Have you eaten a human before you came down here?”

Lucifer shrugged. “No. But I’ve definitely killed one before - so what’s all that different from eating one? It’s just a dead hunk of flesh after it stops breathing.”

“you’re a special kinda heartless, huh?”

Lucifer put his fingers to his neck to feel his own pulse; something Sans didn’t understand. “Nah, I’m not heartless. It’s still beating, as far as I can tell.” He smirked, and Sans just gazed at him.

“And i thought i was insane.” Sans leaned back against the couch, closing his eyesockets for a nap.

“I never said you were insane,” Lucifer said. It sounded as if he was worried he’d insulted Sans in some way, and the sense of confusion the skeleton had become so familiar with lately returned.

“You know i am though,” Sans said, half-opening one socket. “Hell, i know i’m insane. I’m about as sadistic as they come and i chop people’s heads off and serve ‘em to my friends. All i’m sayin’ is that you give me a run for my money.”

The fork clanked against Lucifer’s empty bowl as it dropped onto the couch. “I’m not crazy,” he said defensively. Sans’ full attention returned to the human.

“Yeah, right. a, you’re a cannibal. b, you actually wanna live in a town filled with psychopaths and serial killers. c, you’re worried about the feelings of people who are actively trying to give you a gruesome death - and d, i’m 90% sure you’re a masochist.” Sans poked and the exposed flesh on Lucifer’s hand wound to accentuate his point, and the human barely even flinched.

Lucifer looked angry now; he stood up and glared back at Sans. “There is nothing wrong with me,” he growled slowly, emphasizing every word. He stalked into the kitchen to return his bowl to the sink, pausing in surprise when he realized that said sink was taller than he was. “And yes, I am a bit of a masochist,” he said, pulling himself up with his injured hand so he could actually reach the sink. “Sadomasochism’s not a disorder. And I’m not that much of a masochist anyway.” He returned from the kitchen. “What’s your excuse?”

Sans grinned, incredibly pleased with himself for finally getting a reaction out of the human. It wasn’t fear, sure, but he could work with anger. “Head trauma,” he answered, pointing to the hole in his skull. “And fine, i’ll give you that last one. But what about freaking out when you enter a clean room?”

Lucifer glanced away. “I don’t have a problem with it. It just caught me off guard is all. Brought back some unpleasant memories.” Sans leaned forward expectantly, and Lucifer rolled his eyes. “If you think you’re going to scare me by making my bed super-tidy, you’re completely wrong.”

“Whatever you say, luce.” Sans’ grin stayed wide.

“Luce?”

“Eh. Three syllables is too long.”

Lucifer gave a small chuckle. “Lazy ass,” he said, and just like that, he was back to content. At least Sans had figured out something to torture him about.
Papyrus returned at that moment, swinging the door open and returning the now-empty pot of spaghetti to the kitchen. "ALRIGHT," he said, clapping his hands together, "SANS! HUMAN! DO YOU FEEL UP FOR A BOARD GAME?"

"his name is lucifer, pap," Sans said. "it’s not very nice to keep calling him ‘human.’” He wanted to get that out of the way before people started asking questions. Despite all his earlier reservations, Sans was actually alright with keeping the human around - for a while, at least. It still confused him why.

Actually, it didn’t, the more he thought about it. He was curious - he hadn’t been curious about anyone or anything for a very long time. Probably since his years as a scientist, and that had been forever ago. It felt nice to be curious again, to have something to do; so he’d keep Lucifer around until he got bored.

"OH, HOW RUDE OF ME! I AM VERY SORRY, HU-- I MEAN, LUCIFER. ANYWAY, WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY A BOARD GAME?"

"I’d love to, Papyrus," Lucifer said, sitting down cross-legged on the floor. "Do you have something picked out?"

"I HAVE THE PERFECT GAME!" Papyrus answered, giddily hopping up the stairs and to his room. He returned with a weathered old box. "WE FOUND THIS AT THE GARBAGE DUMP A FEW YEARS AGO - IT’S CALLED ‘MOUSETRAP.’ I HAD TO CARVE A FEW REPLACEMENT PIECES, BUT IT STILL WORKS."

Lucifer nodded his head approvingly. "A classic. You have good taste, Papyrus."

"YES, I KNOW. SANS! GET DOWN HERE AND PLAY WITH US."

Sans slithered off of the couch lazily to half-lay on the floor, and Papyrus narrowed his eyes at him before deciding the argument he was about to make was probably moot. He began setting up the board game.

"so why don’cha tell us a bit about yourself, luce?" Sans said. "if we’re all gonna be living together, we should know more about each other, yeah?"

Lucifer shrugged. "I’m not all that interesting. I’m twenty-two as of a few weeks ago, come from a pretty well-off family, lived in the woods up until I came here, and consider myself a professional arsonist."

"that’s not interesting?" Sans asked, raising his metaphorical eyebrows.

"alright, maybe the arsonist part is," Lucifer chuckled. "I like the heat. I don’t know you guys can stand living in a place as cold as this."

"WE HAVE NO SKIN," Papyrus commented as he carefully set up the contraption on the board.

Lucifer nodded. "Ah, that makes sense. I guess most of the other people around here have fur, don’t they? What I’d give to have some," he laughed.

"I AM SURE WE CAN FIND YOU SOME WARMER CLOTHING, LUCIFER. MONSTER CLOTHING STORES ARE VERY ACCOMMODATING TO DIFFERENT SHAPES AND SIZES."

"I suppose they would be," Lucifer said. "And I would be very thankful for that."
Papyrus nodded, and put the last piece into place. “OKAY, WE ARE READY TO BEGIN! WHO WOULD LIKE TO GO FIRST?”
A Change in Wardrobe

Chapter Summary

Lucifer gets a change of clothes.

“here we are,” Sans said, stepping out of the woods. “this is about the only place in snowdin that sells clothes. i’ll sneak you in the back room to try some stuff on.”

“We’re going through the front door?” Lucifer asked, following quietly.

“i’ll distract her. shopkeep’s a nice lady, always up for a chat. i’ll leave the money for whatever you grab.”

“Well, aren’t you an upstanding citizen?” Lucifer chuckled. “But this place probably has a back entrance, right? Why not go in there?”

“she’s got it padlocked and i can’t teleport us in without having seen the room before.”

Lucifer nodded to himself. “Bring me around back. You have a hairpin on you?… or a needle or something?”

Curious, Sans brought him to the back of the shop, double-checking that no one was out and about. “do i look like someone that uses hairpins? but yeah, i’ve got a needle somewhere.” Sans dug around in his jacket pockets until he found the needle-and-thread he used for sewing up Papyrus’ battle body so long ago. There was so much junk in there (half of it was probably empty ketchup bottles) - he really needed to clean out his jacket sometime.

Meh. Not worth the effort.

He handed Lucifer the needle, and the human stuck it into the lock and began to work it around until it clicked open. Lucifer handed the needle back as he pulled the door open slowly.

“where’d you learn to do that?” Sans asked, following him into the dark room.

“Self-taught,” he smirked. “I don’t suppose there’s a light switch around here somewhere?”

Sans felt around on the back wall until the lights flickered on. They seemed dim from lack of use. “make sure to keep it down, kay? i’d rather her not know we’re sneaking around back here.”

Lucifer nodded and started looking around the room. It was somewhat bare, for a store’s storage room - he had a feeling she used to sell food of some sort. In fact, there was a disused pastry oven. The other things seemed like fairly standard general supplies; hygiene products (most of which were for body parts Lucifer didn’t even have), a handful of childrens’ toys, a small shelf with books on it - and a few racks of clothes in wildly different shapes and sizes.

“she caters to the people here in snowdin pretty specifically. small town and all - everybody knows everybody.”

“True,” the human answered, pulling something off the rack. It was a polo shirt, but it was large
enough that it would’ve been a dress on him. “For one of the bears, I’m guessing?” Sans shrugged, and Lucifer returned it to the rack before pulling out a much smaller grey shirt. It was about the right length, but it was extremely skinny.

Lucifer pulled his bloodied, ragged shirt over his head to replace it with the grey one - it was long sleeved and made of thicker material than the plain tee he was currently wearing.

Sans hadn’t noticed before because of the baggy t-shirt he wore, but Lucifer was actually… kinda attractive. Even though the monsters in Snowdin were a lot skinnier than they used to be, you couldn’t really see their skeletal structure beneath the thick fur most of them had; but on Lucifer, it was easy to make out his shoulder blades and his collarbones beneath his skin, and the curve of his spine was rather nice.

He was what would probably be considered wiry - he was pretty thin (at least, compared to a lot of the humans Sans had met), but what was there was lean and muscular. Sans never understood why someone would be attracted to muscles, for obvious reasons, but Lucifer probably would be considered handsome by a lot of other people, too.

To say the shirt was form-fitting would have been an understatement. The fabric was stretched taught against his skin - it was probably made for one of the town’s desiccated rabbit monsters. “It’s a little tight,” Lucifer said, “but… I think this’ll work. I’m probably going to lose some weight on this new diet, anyway.”

It took a moment for Sans to chuckle, because he’d caught himself staring - and not his usual stare-straight-into-your-soul stare, either. Lucifer glanced at him curiously before grabbing a big fur cloak - dark chocolate brown - and draping it over his shoulders.

“Now this is more like it,” he said, pulling the fabric in close to his body. “I’m warm for the first time since I came to this damn winter wonderland.”

“this is a pretty magical place,” Sans snickered, trying to pull himself out of his strange fixation with the human.

The other entrance to the room swung open as the shopkeeper entered the room. Before Sans had a chance to react, Lucifer shoved him behind a stack of crates and took off running.

“Hey! Get back here!” She shouted after him, running to catch up with the human. It wasn’t any use - she was not an athletic woman and Lucifer had gotten a head start.

“You goddamn thief! Go to hell, you coward!” She slowed to a stop, the short pursuit having exhausted her. It was evident she was malnourished. She kicked at the snow angrily, on the verge of tears, before stomping back inside. By the time she’d reached the door, Sans was gone, and there was a stack of coins on the front counter.

“why’d you do that?” Sans asked after finding Lucifer out in the woods. They were taking the scenic route back to the skeletons’ house.

“Do what?”

“hide me and take off running so she’d follow you.”

“You said you didn’t want her to know you were stealing from her. Well, sort of stealing. You said
you paid for the clothes.” Lucifer pulled his new cloak a little tighter, grateful for the warmth.

“sure, but that’s my problem, not yours.”

Lucifer just gave him a sly smile. “Where’s the whole ‘unconditional love’ thing that’s so normal down here? You didn’t want her to know, so I made sure she didn’t. Simple.” Sans tilted his head, confused at first, before breaking out in a fit of laughter. Real laughter, not his typical demonic chuckles. “What’s so funny?”

“the rest of us haven’t tried to kill each other. yet, anyway,” Sans laughed. “but i guess you’re catching on. sort of.”

“I’m a quick learner,” Lucifer said, smiling.

“maybe. you should be careful, though, throwing around those words - ‘unconditional love.’ you wouldn’t want me to think you’re…” Sans tripped Lucifer with the blunt side of his axe, making him sprawl out face-first into the snow, “falling for me.”

Lucifer rolled onto his back, and Sans put a foot on his stomach, pinning him down. “I dunno. You’re pretty easy on the eyes,” Lucifer chuckled, wiping snow from his face and blinking.

“like hell i am. you’ve got some pretty weird tastes, kid.” Sans stepped off of him and continued walking.

“In what? Food or men?” Lucifer stood up and brushed the rest of the snow off of himself before following.

Sans raised a bone-brow and looked back at him. “both,” he answered.

“Aww, come on,” Lucifer teased, slinging an arm around the skeleton’s shoulders. Sans tensed up at the foreign contact, but Lucifer either didn’t notice or pretended not to. “What’s not to like? You’re funny, charming, mysterious, and a complete badass.” Lucifer pointed to the hole in Sans’ skull with the hand he’d slung around his shoulder.

Sans picked up the human’s arm delicately and dragged it off of himself. “sure. i’m also a sadist, a psycho, and an asshole. even if I do make some killer puns.”

Lucifer shrugged. “Nobody’s perfect.” He gave Sans a wink and started walking ahead; the house was in sight. Sans let the distance grow as he lagged behind.

The flirting was fine. It was funny. It was the genuine compliments that were disconcerting - and Sans could tell they were genuine. With certain things, the human wore his heart on his sleeve, as secretive he might be about others. Sure, Lucifer was crazy and Sans was likable as far as the townsfolk were concerned, but after everything Sans had done to him he would have thought there’d be at least a hint of resentment.

Or was he well liked? He didn’t really know anymore. People listened to him, talked with him, let him know what was going on, but they’d been giving him a wider and wider berth lately - and they always watched their wording, as if afraid they were going to offend him. Sans had never been a sensitive guy. He let everything roll right off his spine or deflected it with a joke.

His memory was also failing him, in certain regards. Sans was halfway meticulous with certain things, like keeping tabs on Papyrus or the Queen’s goons, making sure the food supply was rationed correctly, or luring a human to their demise. Other things, though - what he did day-to-day, the last time he ate - just blurred together into some meaningless grey mirage. Maybe he’d done something to
scare them during that time.

It wouldn’t really surprise him.

Whatever was going on, Sans was going to figure it out. He hadn’t put his metaphorical brain to use for something as baffling as this in a very, very long time.
“Here?” Lucifer asked, placing the tip of a metal stake against a tree. The top had a loop onto which barbed wire had been tied.

“JUST A LITTLE LOWER,” Papyrus called from the other side of the road leading out of Snowdin. “IT HAS TO BE BURIED UNDER THE SNOW.” Lucifer nodded and moved the stake a little lower before hammering it into the tree with the mallet he’d been given. Papyrus gave him a thumbs-up and began shoveling snow across the wire.

“Say, Papyrus,” Lucifer asked, walking towards him, “mind if I ask you a few things?”

“OF COURSE, LUCIFER!” Papyrus nodded excitedly as he continued his work. “I WOULD BE HAPPY TO FILL YOUR MIND WITH INFORMATION. I AM PRACTICALLY AN ENCYCLOPEDIA.”

“I don’t doubt it,” Lucifer laughed, pulling his new cloak tighter around his shoulders. It felt so nice to be warm. He took a look around before continuing - Sans wasn’t anywhere in sight. “When did you start eating humans?”

“TWO YEARS, SEVEN MONTHS, FOURTEEN DAYS, AND FIVE HOURS AGO.”

Lucifer blinked. “Oh. That’s… very specific. What made you decide to do it though? From what the townsfolk have told me, you told Sans ‘no’ when he brought the topic up the first time. Very vehemently, in fact.”

“WELL, YES, I DID OBJECT. BUT AFTER TRYING IT THE FIRST TIME, IT WAS JUST SO DELICIOUS THAT I COULDN’T STOP EATING! AND OF COURSE, I COULDN’T JUST KEEP IT ALL TO MYSELF - I HAD TO SHARE IT WITH EVERYBODY. LIKE YOU! YOU LIKE HUMAN, DON’T YOU?”

“I do. You’re an excellent chef, Papyrus.” Lucifer smiled at Papyrus’ elated puppy-dog face. He really was such a sweetheart. “But why did you try it in the first place?”

“OH. THAT.” Papyrus’ mood soured. “IT WAS WHEN THE FOOD SUPPLIES HAD REALLY BEGUN TO DRY UP. SANS HAD THIS PIECE OF MEAT WITH HIM - HE SAID I SHOULD COOK ONE LAST, BIG FEAST FOR EVERYONE. I DIDN’T KNOW WHAT IT WAS, SO I COOKED IT - AND AS THE CHEF, I HAD TO TASTE IT, OF COURSE. AFTER THAT, I REALLY DIDN’T HAVE AN APPETITE FOR ANYTHING ELSE. I DIDN’T FIND OUT WHAT THE MEAT WAS UNTIL AFTERWARD.”

Lucifer nodded to himself. “Did you… feel different after?”
Papyrus thought for a moment. “I… THINK SO? I DON’T REALLY REMEMBER WHAT I WAS LIKE BEFORE.”

“how’s the trap comin’, pap?” Sans appeared from seemingly nowhere, giving Lucifer a long stare with his blood-red eye.

“YOU DO NOT NEED TO CHECK ON ME EVERY MINUTE OF EVERY DAY, SANS,” Papyrus huffed, completing his burial of the tripwire.

“just making sure you didn’t trip up or anything.”

Papyrus groaned and turned back towards Snowdin. “I AM GOING TO GET MORE PUZZLE SUPPLIES. STAY HERE, LUCIFER.” He marched away.

“snoopin’s kinda rude, pal,” Sans said, staring directly at the human. “especially when you steal my baby brother out from under me to interrogate him.”

Lucifer rolled his eyes. “That was hardly an interrogation. Besides, I was just confirming my suspicions.”

“of what?” Sans was halfway between pissed off and amused. It was a weird feeling.

“You tricked everyone into eating human,” Lucifer said.

Sans glanced away. “i... yeah, so what if i did?” He seemed ashamed.

Lucifer shrugged. “I just wanted to know. I think you did the right thing.” Sans gave him a skeptical look. “Really,” Lucifer said. “Clearly they all objected morally and you just did what was best for them. That makes you a good person, doesn’t it?”

“you’ve got one weird definition of ‘good,’ kid,” Sans said. Lucifer had the most bizarre train of thought.

“It’s a subjective term,” Lucifer countered, crossing his arms in mock offense. “It means whatever I want it to.”

“touché,” Sans conceded. “you really are a sucker, though. you just ignore everything bad about people. y’know - like them trying to kill you repeatedly. you and your poor bleeding heart.” Sans poked Lucifer in the chest. He’d stopped expecting a reaction other than a smile, and a smile was all he got.

“I don’t just ignore the bad things. That’s an understandable flaw. There’s some humans on the surface I would gladly rant to you about for hours on end,” Lucifer said.

“you’re really not a fan of the surface, huh? kinda funny, considering how that’s all us monsters have wanted for hundreds of years.”

“The surface is fine. It’s the people I hate.” He looked away.

Sans didn’t break the silence for a little while. “well, since you’ve been prying information about me from papyrus, it’s only fair i get to learn something about you.”

“Fine. One question. I have to keep up the mystery for a little while longer,” Lucifer said with a wink. Sans knew deflection when he saw it.

“why’d you pick lucifer to go by?”
Lucifer’s eyes widened. “I guess that’s fair,” he said. “Two reasons. My parents used to call me ‘devil child,’ so I guess I enjoyed the irony.”

“yeah, devil child doesn’t seem to suit you at all. what’s the other reason?”

Lucifer looked… sad. That was certainly a new emotion on him. “I had a sister. Her name was Lucy. So it was sort of for her.”

“past tense. what happened to her?”

Lucifer avoided eye contact. “That’s a story for another day.” Sans’ interest was definitely piqued now, but he let the matter drop. He had time.

Sans froze in place as he heard something in the distance; the sound of metal scraping against metal and crunching on snow. “come with me,” he whispered, heading for the woods. “don’t argue, just do it.”

Lucifer followed silently as he crept further away from town, towards the sounds. Lucifer picked them up easily, but he didn’t ask what they were. Within a few minutes, he could see who was making them - a pair of tall, burly monsters in dark armor.

Sans dug his fingers into the bark of a nearby tree, and his grin grew manically wide. He began to chuckle involuntarily; luckily, it was a quiet laughter, and the guards had already moved beyond earshot.

“They’re the guards that pinned you down when the queen… hurt you, aren’t they?” Lucifer asked quietly. “Sans?” He put a hand on the skeleton’s shoulder, and Sans’ head immediately snapped to look at him with crazed eyes.

His expression softened a little upon looking at Lucifer, but the insane smile was still plastered onto his skull. “yup. i really gotta bone ta pick with ‘em. by which i mean i’d really like ta drive a bone into their guts, gouge out their eyes, and peel every ounce of flesh off their bones one piece at a time.”

Lucifer’s eyes widened. “Sounds like some quality entertainment. What are you waiting for?”

Sans dug his fingers deeper into the wood. “i can’t take both of ‘em on at once. besides, i’m already on thin ice with the queen and i don’t want to piss her off. even though i’d really love to chop off her head and make fish stew out of her.”

“Undyne’s a fish?” Lucifer laughed.

“fish monster. she’s got arms and legs.”

Lucifer tried to stifle his laughter. “I just can’t see it.” Lucifer pulled off his cloak and set it aside.

“what the hell are you doing?”

“Cut me.”

Sans narrowed his eyesockets. “look, i know you’re a kinky bastard, but i’m really not in the mood right now.”

Lucifer rolled his eyes. “I’m trying to help you out here. You might get a little leeway with the queen when her guards find a human raving about a terrifying skeleton that’s trying to take his soul for her.
I just need a little makeup to make it convincing.”

Sans raised a bone-brow. “you’re just gonna give yourself up?”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Lucifer scoffed. “I’m gonna make them chase me. You won’t look weak if one of the Royal Guards were to tragically disappear while chasing after said human.”

Sans summoned his axe and shoved Lucifer against the tree he’d been clawing. “you really are somethin’ else, luce.” Then, he slowly dragged the blade down Lucifer’s leg, leaving a deep gash. The human didn’t budge. Smiling even wider, Sans gave him a slash across the side, one across the cheek, and then stepped back to watch the blood drip down Lucifer’s skin and clothes.

Lucifer held out his hand. “Mind taking me back to town so I can ‘escape?’”

Normally, Sans was conservative with his teleportation, but this was definitely something he was willing to spend a little magic on. With a flash (and a significant amount of pain that Sans managed to hide), they were back at the edge of Snowdin, and Sans returned to the trees to watch the show.

Lucifer immediately took off running, and the guards froze as they saw him approach. “Oh, thank God! Please help me!” Sans was impressed; he sounded absolutely hysterical. If Sans wasn’t in on the gag, he would’ve sworn the kid was completely terrified.

“Please, you have to help me, there’s this freaky skeleton after me with this giant blood red eye and he says he wants my soul for some queen and I don’t know what’s going on, please, help…” Lucifer slid to a stop as the guards pulled their swords from their scabbards.

“N-No, please no…” he backed away slowly before dashing into the woods opposite Sans; the guards gave chase.

Lucifer was much more suited to the terrain considering his lithe body compared to the guards’ clunky armor, so he slowed down significantly to make sure he didn’t lose them. Even though they were slow, they were coordinated, and the roots and tree branches didn’t seem to trip them up.

Eventually, Lucifer crossed the trap he and Papyrus had set, measuring his steps carefully to make sure that he didn’t trigger it or tip the guards off that there was something there. The guard with the rabbit ears reached it first, and the barbed wire snapped up and coiled around him tightly, catching in the seams of his armor and on his exposed ears. He fell to the ground with a shout as the dragon-frilled one continued the chase. Lucifer gave Sans a wink though the trees as he crossed back into the woods.

After a few more minutes of running - both Lucifer and the guard had plenty of stamina - the guard hit the ground with a thud as Sans tripped him with his axe. Before the guard could react, Sans had him bound with chains.

“heya, buddy. remember me? it’s your old pal sans.” Sans slammed the blunt end of the axe into the guard’s head and knocked him out cold.

Chapter End Notes

I felt it was about time I got this story moving somewhere. Also, I promised torture. I'll be having a field day next time you see me, so prepare yourself.
Red Looks Good on You

Chapter Summary

Sans and Lucifer have a little fun.

Chapter Notes

There's torture in this chapter - you've been warned.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“welp. the other one’s off in waterfall searchin’ for ya, luce. should keep queen undick off my tailbone for a while. i’ll give ya credit, kid, you’re pretty smart.” Sans tested the chains binding the Royal Guard, making sure they wouldn’t break loose from the two trees they’d been tied to. His armor had already been removed, leaving him in his underclothes and helmet - the thing wouldn’t come off no matter how hard Sans tried to remove it.

Lucifer gave an overdramatic bow and chuckled. “What are friends for?”

“Oh, so we’re friends now?” Sans slapped the guard with the flat of his axe, earning a groan as he began to wake up. Lucifer just shrugged. “i guess you are pretty fun to be around. alright, sure - you wanna have some fun with me, friend?” He gestured to the knight, who was tugging weakly at the chains.

Lucifer grinned. “I thought you’d never ask.” Sans pulled a kitchen knife out of his jacket and tossed it through the air to him, and then planted his axe in the ground in front of the guard to use as a chin rest.

“mornin’, pal,” Sans said cheerily, smirking as the guard raised his eyes to look at him. “it’s been a while, huh? i haven’t seen you since… well. when was the last time i saw you?” The guard just stared defiantly as Sans drummed his fingers along the top of the axe. The skeleton’s smile grew wider as his fingers suddenly gripped the axe blade, making a squealing sound as the bone scraped against metal. “oh, that’s right. you had me pinned to the ground while our good ol’ queen blew my skull open.” He leaned in closer.

“I did as I was ordered,” the guard said. His voice was deep and quiet.

“yeah, and that makes me feel all better,” Sans growled, reaching up and scratching at the hole in his skull. A piece of bone chipped off and a fresh stream of red began to trickle down the side of his head.

“You’re working with a human,” the guard stated. Clearly he was the blunt man-of-few-words type.

“pfft. the kid’s hardly human - sometimes i doubt that he even has a soul for us to take.” Lucifer’s expression changed at those words; it was hard for Sans to place. Surely he hadn’t offended Lucifer with that comment.
“You’re a traitor,” the guard said. Sans snapped back to focus.

“nah. you and your fish-bitch of a queen are the traitors. you’re supposed to protect us, not crack us open like eggs and watch us all starve to death. how’s the food in the military, by the way? i’ve heard it’s pretty nice having three square meals a day. me? i haven’t had a decent meal in months.”

“That’s not our problem,” the guard said. Sans picked up his axe and sliced off one of the guard’s fingers, earning him a shout of pain.

“is it your problem now?” Sans held the finger in front of the guard’s face as it crumbled into grey dust. Blood poured out of the man’s hand as the severed artery emptied its contents out into the snow.

“What do you want?” the guard growled, tightening his fists as he pulled against the chains. Sans leaned back against a nearby tree.

“why don’cha tell me what the queen’s been up to lately? we haven’t really talked recently and i’ve been meanin’ to catch up with her.”

The guard stayed silent, and Sans nodded to Lucifer, who wedged his knife under one of the dark green scales covering the guard’s back. He pulled the scale free with a tug and earned a grunt of pain - the root of the scale was sticky with blood and left behind a space of raw flesh. Then, using the gap he’d made, Lucifer began to tear the scales out of his skin one by one.

Red began to stain the clothes the guard still had on as dark blood began to run down his back. The monster was strong enough to resist crying out, but he did begin to squirm against the pain as Lucifer continued.

“he’ll stop any time i ask him to, y’know. you gonna give me a reason to ask him?” Having cleared a large patch of scales below the guard’s shoulders, Lucifer began dragging the tip of the knife down the exposed flesh in agonizingly slow lines.


“That’s not really new information,” Sans said. Another swing of his axe, and the guard’s next finger hit the ground with another spray of blood. His shout of pain was louder this time. “i want to know about her plans for the rest of the underground. hotland, waterfall, snowdin. start talking.”

The guard took a few deep breaths. “Hotland’s… abandoned. When the Core finally gave out, the reactors started to decay. The whole region’s toxic. The Queen is trying to make a permanent outpost in Waterfall so she can put someone in charge to oversee that region… and Snowdin.”

“thanks but no thanks. we need your supplies, not your supervision.” Slice . Another finger, more blood, another shout.

“She doesn’t trust Snowdin,” the guard wheezed. “She knows you’re up to something. She’s convinced you’re harboring humans to spite her.” He turned his head, trying to look at Lucifer. “It looks like she was right.”

“eh. that’s a pretty recent development. it’s kinda funny, though - wasn’t it a human that got you and 01 together?” Sans leaned in closer to look through the helmet and into 02’s eyes. “it really is a shame that you’re gonna die alone out here without him.”

Sans’ grin grew so wide that he thought his skull might start to crack. He saw plain, naked fear in the
guard’s eyes - and Sans was almost disgusted with himself for enjoying it so, so much. Almost.

“you get his feet and i’ll take the hands,” Sans said. The guard immediately began wrestling against the chains as Lucifer slammed his knife down into his ankle and began to hack away at the joint. He howled freely as the human brought his heel down onto the now-exposed bone, making it split with a sickening snapping sound. Then, with a twist, the foot came free with a splash of dark fluid. The next foot followed.

Then, with two clean swings of his axe, the guard was free of the chains - and his hands below the wrist. He collapsed to the ground, trying vainly to get up as what remained of his lifeblood poured out into the snow in a macabre fountain.

“01’s gonna be missing you soon,” Sans chuckled. “it’s just gonna kill his mood when he finds out you’re dead.” The guard’s breath grew more and more shallow. “don’t worry about ’im. i’ll send him your way next time i run into him.” Sans felt a rush of cruel pleasure as the guard tried to say something, but ended up choking on his own words. “maybe i can convince him to give us a hand or two.”

02 crumbled into dust, leaving a grisly painting of red and grey to stain the snow. Sans barely heard the short little tune in the back of his head as his LV increased over the sound of his own manic laughter.

He stood there grinning for a while before coming back to reality. He looked at Lucifer. “welp. i gotta admit, it’s kinda fun having another person around for this kinda stuff.” Lucifer smiled and gave him a shrug. “it’s a shame about your clothes, though. you just got them, and they’re already ruined.”

Lucifer looked down at his shirt; it was ripped on one side from the axe slash he’d taken and it was coated in blood. “I have no idea what you’re talking about. They’re just about perfect now.” He walked closer to Sans through the desecrated snow. “Besides, I don’t know how it looks on me, but red looks pretty good on you. You’re actually pretty damn hot when you’re covered head to toe in someone else’s blood.”

So they were back to the flirting, then. “you still have weird tastes,” Sans chuckled, “but you’re not too bad yourself. i’m gonna go find where you dropped your cloak. be back in a few.” Sans teleported away, leaving Lucifer alone in the woods.

It was only a few seconds before Flowey popped up from the snow in front of the human. “Wow. I’ll admit, I’m impressed - you actually managed to get on Sans’ good side. I didn’t even know he had one.” The flower chuckled as Lucifer struggled to keep a smile on his face.

“It looks like you might actually have a chance at getting out of here,” Flowey mused. “Well, since you’re doing so well, how about I let you in on a little plan of mine?”

“Of course,” Lucifer smiled. He felt like throwing up. “What did you have in mind?”

“I’ve been dreaming up ways of getting rid of that smiley trashbag for years, now,” Flowey grinned, jagged teeth taking form in his mouth. “I think I have the perfect way to be rid of him once and for all - then neither you nor I have to worry about him looking over our shoulders. I just need the right distraction, and it looks like you’re pretty good at distracting him. How about it?”

“It would be my pleasure, friend,” Lucifer said.

“Good. I’ll talk to you later - I better get out of here before Sans comes back. I’ll see you around,
friend.”

Chapter End Notes

If you think I'm a terrible person for doing this to poor, sweet O2 and that I should feel terrible, I am and I do. Alas, we all knew someone had to die a grisly death eventually. This is Horrortale, after all.
Chapter Summary

Flowey springs his trap.

Lucifer, in general, was very good at staying calm. He rarely got nervous or felt like he needed to rush. Today, though, he was on edge - mostly because he was trying so very hard to appear that he wasn’t on edge.

Twenty-four hours - Flowey wanted Lucifer to keep Sans occupied for twenty-four hours. More specifically, he was supposed to keep Sans away from one particular stretch of path leading out of Snowdin that the skeleton passed by every single day. The task itself wasn’t so difficult; it was the decisions that came alongside it.

There was the obvious choice of telling Sans about the trap in advance and getting his help with disposing of the little weed. Of course, Lucifer would be remiss to not consider the reverse of that situation - he knew Sans was a ticking time bomb. Lucifer’s appeals to his ‘humanity’ had worked so far, but sooner or later, when the skeleton got either bored or desperate, Lucifer was going to find himself on the wrong side of Sans’ axe. Lucifer wasn’t the type to lay down and die - as much as he liked Sans and Papyrus, he had to face the fact that they were dangerous at some point.

Lucifer had spent his time in the Underground playing other people’s games - Toriel’s, Flowey’s, Papyrus’, and now Sans’. And while he would be lying if he said he wasn’t enjoying himself, he thought it was about time he started playing his own game.

They key was making sure that neither Flowey nor Sans knew where he was for the next hour or so, and that Sans didn’t show up at the trap site before he was supposed to. It was easier said than done, but luckily Papyrus was all too eager to be helpful.

“YOU ARE RIGHT,” Papyrus gasped. “SANS MUST STOP PICKING AT THAT HEAD WOUND, OR IT WILL NEVER HEAL PROPERLY! I AM GOING TO FETCH HIM RIGHT NOW AND SEE THAT HE IS TENDED TO!” Papyrus jogged out of the door to find his brother, and Lucifer smiled. Such a sweetheart.

Within a few minutes, Papyrus had (literally) dragged Sans into the house and tied him down to a chair. The poor skeleton wore an expression similar to that of a cat being forced to take a bath, and it took every ounce of control Lucifer had to not laugh out loud as he slunk away into the woods.

An hour later, Sans found Lucifer leaning against the wall outside the front door. Upon seeing him, the human burst out into hysterical laughter.

“help me get this thing off. now,” Sans said. Papyrus had put a dog cone onto his neck and then stuffed it full of pillows. He’d also tied several pairs of mittens onto his hands to make sure he couldn’t scratch at his head wound. Why Papyrus had decided now of all times to ‘help’ Sans break the habit, he had no idea, but he was not happy.
It was difficult for Sans to see or hear, but he was fairly certain Lucifer had fallen to the ground laughing. Sans probably would have been laughing along if he wasn’t so pissed off.

“i can and will still kill you with this thing on,” Sans threatened through a mouthful of cotton. Lucifer picked himself up and walked over to him.

“Sorry, sorry. Hold still.” Making sure Papyrus wasn’t still around to see, Lucifer began pulling the cone off, followed by the mittens. Papyrus had also evidently wrapped Sans’ head up in several layers of gauze, which Lucifer didn’t bother removing. Sans started to unwind the cloth himself.

“Heading out for your rounds?” Lucifer asked as Sans threw the last of Papyrus’s handiwork onto the ground.

“yup. you wanna join me or something?” Sans hefted his axe onto his shoulder and started walking. Lucifer nodded. “fine. we’ll take the scenic route - just keep your head down. as far as everyone else is concerned, you escaped to waterfall.”

Luckily, Sans’ patrol was uneventful. No new humans, and no Royal Guards sniffing around the place. It gave Lucifer plenty of time to prepare himself for what was coming.

“so, uh, about yesterday… i didn’t mean to offend you or anything. i was just joking around,” Sans said awkwardly. Lucifer gave him a confused glance.

“I don’t know what you’re referring to.”

“when i said you were hardly human. or that you didn’t have a soul, or whatever.”

Lucifer chuckled. “Oh, I wasn’t offended. It just got me thinking was all.”

“How nice it would be to actually not be human,” Lucifer answered. “I seem to fit in a lot better down here than I ever did on the surface. If I was a monster, I could just… stay down here, without having to hide. Wishful thinking, huh?”

“you’ve gotta work on your priorities, kid,” Sans chuckled. “we’re all depraved and starving.”

Lucifer shrugged. “Every place has problems.” Lucifer found a question of his own to ask. “What human were you talking about with the guard before?”

Sans’ expression shifted. “that was… a long time ago,” he sighed. “before everything went to hell. there was this human child that fell down here - it was the first human paps had ever met - and for the most part, they were a good kid. back then asgore was the king, and the food shortage didn’t exist; we were killing humans for their souls so we could use them to break the barrier and escape this hellhole.

“but things weren’t really that desperate; the kid convinced most monsters to leave ‘em alone just by being nice; and when that didn’t work, they ran. they dusted a few monsters in self-defense, but all things considered, they didn’t have very much blood on their hands. it really was a shame.”

“Did they die?” Lucifer asked. He glanced back towards the road; they were almost there.

“nah. to leave the underground, a monster needs a human’s soul - and a human needs a monster’s soul. The only souls humans can take are from boss monsters, though - and king asgore just happened to be one. the kid killed him and left through the exit in the castle, and then undyne took
over. Her and Asgore were really close, and she became obsessed with breaking the barrier and hunting the kid down. She ended up funneling all our resources into the military, and before any of us knew it… this happened.” Sans gestured vaguely to the entire Underground.

“It was you,” Lucifer realized something.

“What was—” Sans was cut off by his own shout of pain as an array of wires sprung up from the ground, entangling him and digging into the fissure in his skull. They pulled themselves taught, pinning him to the ground in a contorted mess. His body flashed blue as he tried to teleport out of the trap, but the metal sucked up the glow. He was still stuck.

Flowey appeared from the ground, grinning impossibly wide and holding some sort of remote with a set of thorny vines. “Well, well, well. Lookee what I caught!” He laughed maniacally.

“Praecantium’s nasty stuff, huh? It’s what they used to use in the Core to transfer the heat into magical energy, y’know. Of course, the stuff’s kinda unstable - when you don’t pump energy into it, it sucks the magic out of everything around it. No wonder all the crops started failing when the Core ran out of juice, huh?” Sans tried to twist his head to look at Flowey, only to grunt in pain as the wires dug deeper into his skull. Lucifer began to slink off to the side.

“I bet you already knew that, though, right trashbag? You’re smart.” Flowey giggled. “You have no idea how long it took to collect this much of it. I’ve spent years planning this. But listen to me ramble - I think you’ve actually seen this stuff before, haven’t you? Wasn’t that what the queen used to keep you from escaping?” Sans’ pupils shrank, like a cornered animal. “And also what she used when she tried to drain your magic?”

“Who the hell are you?” Sans growled, struggling against the bonds. Whatever Flowey had done to get them to coil around him, it only made the wires tighter as he moved.

“Oh, that’s not important,” Flowey said. “All you need to know is that I really, really, really hate you. Which is why…” he raised the remote, “I’m going to make this as slow and painful as possible.” Sans struggled harder, only succeeding in making the wires grow tighter.

Sans looked around for Lucifer, but he could barely see anything from the way he’d been tied down. What the hell was that human doing? The kid should have been able to help him by now, unless he’d been caught too - but he didn’t hear anything that would have suggested that.

Then it dawned on him that Sans was expecting Lucifer to help him. He had no idea when he’d developed that mentality, but clearly he’d gravely misjudged his new houseguest. Lucifer was probably half a mile away by now, well on his way to escaping - right after Sans had conveniently told him exactly how to leave the Underground. Or worse, he was still here watching, smirking at him and his gullible, trusting, soon-to-be-dusted body.

“Ready, comedian? We’ll start in three… two… one!”
Lucifer finishes out his plan.

Sans was painfully aware of his situation as Flowey counted down. He remembered what this felt like all too well - like having your body dissolved from the inside out. Last time, he had enough magic left to fight back. That wasn’t the case now. Flowey pressed the button, and a feral scream pierced the air.

It wasn’t from Sans.

Sans felt nothing but the praecantium wires scraping against his bones as all of Flowey’s vines suddenly went limp. He turned the device off, gasping.

“Well, that’s very unfortunate, isn’t it?” It was Lucifer’s voice. “It’s almost like someone sabotaged the machine and rerouted the flow from the generator into you somehow.”

“What are you doing?!” Flowey screamed at him.

“It’s called a double-cross,” Lucifer chuckled, pulling out his own remote. He turned the machine back on, and Flowey resumed his screaming.

“H-How?” Flowey managed to choke out.

“You’ve got roots all over the place. I just found one of your underground vines and hitched a wire to it - you didn’t even notice.” Lucifer walked over and smashed Flowey’s remote under his heel.

Then, Lucifer pulled out a lighter and a can of hairspray. “That general store really does have everything,” he said. Flowey’s eyes widened.

“I’ve… done nothing but… urk! Help you leave!... why?” Flowey fought against the drain of his magic, lashing out at Lucifer with his vines. The human dodged to the side and then rolled under one of the vines before hopping to his feet.

“I just really hate your face,” Lucifer said. “Or faces, to be accurate. I’d call you a snake oil salesman if that wasn’t doing a disservice to snakes. I never wanted your help,” Lucifer flicked the lighter on, “and I am going to enjoy this so, so much.”

The snow lit up with orange and red as Lucifer created a flamethrower, burning some of Flowey’s vines to a crisp. One attack made its way through the torrent of flames, spearing Lucifer in the side before he ripped it away. He redirected the flames toward Flowey’s face, and after a piercing scream, all his vines fell limp, smoldering in the snow.

Sans had stopped moving entirely, trying to watch the scene from his awkward position on the ground. Lucifer shuffled over to him and pulled out a knife. He hesitated for a second. Then he knelt down and started to pry at the wires.

“what are you doing?” Sans asked, trying to twist around and look at him.
“Stop moving, you’re making it worse,” Lucifer told him. He sounded distant.

“you didn’t answer my question,” Sans said, though he did stop squirming like Lucifer asked.

“I’m getting you out of the trap, what does it look like I’m doing?” Lucifer slid his knife under one of the wires and pushed against it until it snapped. The other wires seemed to loosen a little.

“i thought you left me with that flower freak for a second,” Sans said.

“Well, I wouldn’t be a very good guest if I left my host to die, now would I?” Lucifer chuckled. It was strained.

“no. if you left me to die, that would’ve been the first thing you’ve done that makes a lick of sense,” Sans said. Lucifer grabbed his arm and started twisting it around to get it free of the wires.

“I’m not stupid,” Lucifer said. “I know the situation that you’re in. I know that I’m more of a liability than anything else - while I’m alive, anyway.” Lucifer got his arm free and started working on his shoulder. “But you guys are the first people that made me believe the world isn’t completely crazy. I don’t want to mess that up right now.” He started messing with the wires around Sans’ head. “Try and get your skull free.”

Sans twisted his neck and pulled his upper body out of the trap. He could finally see Lucifer. “why’d you lead me into this thing in the first place, then?” He started to writhe his legs out of the rest of the wires.

“I second-guessed myself,” Lucifer admitted. “But I also thought it would be a good idea to ruin a few years of hard work so he couldn’t use this thing in the future. Plus, this praecantium stuff seems pretty rare - I thought you might be able to use it for something.”

Sans stood up shakily, free from the trap. The metal had sapped so much of his magic. He looked over at Lucifer’s side. “you’re bleeding,” he noticed. “a lot.”

Lucifer looked away. “I think he broke one of my ribs,” he said.

Sans grimaced. Broken bones were kind of terrifying to a skeleton. It usually meant they had lost a limb. “c’mon, let’s get you home. i gotta have something that can help patch you up.”

“Not gonna chop my head off?” Lucifer chuckled, following Sans.

“i’m tired. too much work.”

Flowey popped up next to a stagnant pool in Waterfall. Water. Water was good, he thought, soaking his singed petals in it. To say he’d barely escaped was an understatement - he was just clinging to life. It was ironic - lifetimes ago, he could’ve made his own fire. Who knew how quickly it could consume a person’s body when they were a plant. He considered dreaming up plans to peel the skin off of Lucifer inch by inch, but he was just exhausted. A nap sounded really nice right about now.

Lucifer sat down on the couch, dribbling red onto the cushions, as Sans went to the kitchen and turned the stove on.

“I thought you were going to fix me up,” Lucifer chuckled. He was trying to stay lighthearted, but it
was easy to tell that his voice was strained. If he was being honest, the wound hurt like hell and he was starting to feel lightheaded from the blood loss.

“i am,” Sans said. There was something mischievous about his tone, but Lucifer just sank further into the couch and closed his eyes. He was tired.

A few minutes later, Sans returned with an empty skillet. “lift your shirt up,” he said.

Lucifer opened his eyes and looked at the pan. “Oh, hell no,” he said, realizing what Sans was planning.

Sans just grinned at him. “c’mon, this thing’s getting cold. i don’t have all day.”

“Like I said: hell no.”

“isn’t this what you fleshy types do to stop bleeding on everything?” Sans chuckled.

“In medieval times, maybe,” Lucifer said. He was not letting Sans cauterize him with a frying pan.

“well this is all you’re getting from me. so unless you want me to chop you up and put you in the skillet after you bleed out, you’d better lift up your shirt.” Sans threatened.

Lucifer sighed and pulled the sticky fabric away from his skin. The hole was pretty deep - and one could definitely see splintered bone inside. Sans looked away in disgust and slammed the pan onto the wound.

Lucifer screamed with his jaw clenched shut tightly, gripping the couch’s armrest so hard that the old fabric tore a little. After a few seconds - maybe a few seconds more than he really needed to - Sans pulled the pan away.

“mmm. you actually smelled pretty good there for a second,” Sans said.

“Fuck you,” Lucifer growled, laying down on the couch. He started coughing violently, looking even more tired than he had been.

“consider it payback for leading me into a trap,” Sans countered.

“You enjoyed that way too much,” Lucifer said, though he was smiling this time.

“and you’re telling me you didn’t enjoy seeing me tied up and pinned to the ground?” Sans raised a bone-brow.

“Well. Maybe in some ways,” the human chuckled.

“hey, you got a scratch on your forehead. this thing’s still hot,” Sans said, pointing to the pan.

Lucifer raised his hands placatingly. “Alright, alright. Thanks for the medical care,” Lucifer said. He sounded like he was nodding off.

“papyrus’ll be home for dinner in a few. take a load off. i’ll see you later.”

Sans walked back to the trap and put on some mittens before yanking the wires out of the ground. Lucifer was right - this stuff was rare. He’d rather have it with him than let the queen have access to it anyway; he just needed to find a way to store it that didn’t poison everyone in Snowdin like it did in Hotland. He’d figure something out.
Sans didn’t even bother with a shortcut to the Ruins - his magic was dangerously low, and he really needed to conserve his food supply.

“hey, tori,” he said through the door.

“Hello, Sans. How has your day been?” Toriel sounded contemplative today.

“well, a psychotic flower tried to torture me to death. other than that it’s been fine.”

“My goodness! Are you alright?” Sans could hear her press her ear to the door.

“m’fine. lucifer got me out of it.” He said the words without really thinking about it.

“Lucifer? He is… alive?” Toriel sounded surprised.

“yup. beat all of pap’s puzzles, fair and square. he’s, uh… living at our house for the moment,” Sans told her.

“Truly? I… I do not know what to say,” Toriel said. She sounded halfway between excited and confused.

“me neither. the kid’s a weird one, for sure. the living arrangement might be a temporary one,” Sans said darkly, “but for now i’m actually alright with it. he’s helped me out a few times already.”

“I am… glad to hear that, Sans. Perhaps together you can find a solution to your current problems,” Toriel suggested. Sans just snorted. Then he smiled a little and rapped his knuckles on the door.

“knock knock.”
Chapter Summary

Lucifer's wound is more serious than he first thought.

“so, what were you about to say yesterday?” Sans asked, handing Lucifer a bowl of spaghetti. The human had been resting all day, and Sans had been gone finding a hiding place for the praecantum.

“Hmm?”

“y’know, before you led me into a trap,” Sans said menacingly. Lucifer didn’t seem fazed by it.

“Oh, that. I just… knew the human that you were talking about, I think.”

Sans blinked, hopping onto the couch next to him. “seriously?”

“Yeah, my cousin Frisk. Well, adopted cousin. They stayed over at our house every once in a while, and our rooms were adjacent. Sometimes I’d hear them on the phone in there - or listening to a phone call, anyway. The voices reminded me of you and Papyrus.”

“so they did get my calls,” Sans said. “i, uh… left ‘em a couple of messages once they left. they never called me back, though.”

“They probably just didn’t know what to say,” Lucifer told him. “Frisk was always kind of quiet. They had a great sense of humor sometimes, though. And they were a great storyteller.”

“yeah, that sounds like the kid. what are the odds, right?” Sans took the empty bowl from Lucifer and brought it back into the kitchen. “were they… alright the last time you saw them?”

“Yeah, they were fine. They seemed happy enough.” Lucifer adjusted himself on the couch, wincing a little at the wound on his side.

“Well. at least it wasn’t all for nothing,” Sans sighed, sitting back down on the couch. “how are you holding up?”

“It hurts like hell,” Lucifer replied, gesturing to the wound Flowey had given him. Then he started another violent coughing fit. “Especially when that happens.” His voice sounded raw.

Sans took a moment to really look at him; his face was flushed red, almost like he was blushing. Sans stood up and put his hand on Lucifer’s face and found that it was very, very warm.

“What are you doing?” Lucifer asked, peering through his phalanges.

“you’re not normally this hot, are you?” Sans asked.

“I’ve always looked this good,” Lucifer winked.

Sans rolled his eyes, smiling slightly. “you know what i meant.”

Lucifer sighed. “I probably have a fever.”
“a what now?” Sans asked.

Lucifer looked up at him quizzically. “You know, a fever? Do monsters not get sick or something?”

“yeah, we get sick. a skeleton’s gonna have different symptoms than a fleshbag like you, though. i
don’t have all these soft, gooey parts you gotta take care of.” Sans pulled his hand away and wiped it
on his jacket. It had come back slick with Lucifer’s sweat. He reached down and pulled the human’s
shirt up.

“Well. I guess it’s okay, since you already treated me to dinner,” Lucifer chuckled.

Sans ignored him. “the skin around this isn’t supposed to be all red and swollen, is it? not counting
the burns.”

Lucifer looked away. “It must be infected.”

That probably wasn’t good. “what do you need from me?” Sans asked.

Lucifer smiled at him. “So concerned about my health. If you guys are low on food, I doubt you
have antibiotics handy,” Lucifer said. Sans just shrugged. “That’s what I thought. Rest, and a
blanket,” the human told him.

Sans brought him a blanket, but when Papyrus came home and learned the human was sick, he took
over caring for him. Which meant that Lucifer was sewn into a blanket cocoon. Literally sewn in -
Papyrus stitched the blankets together himself. Then he tore the stuffing out of a pillow, put it in a
pillowcase, and put it over Lucifer’s head.

“Papyrus, this is a little excessive,” Lucifer mumbled through the cotton.

“NONSENSE!” Papyrus scoffed. “WE CANNOT RISK YOU GETTING INJURED ANY
FURTHER!” Papyrus taped the pillowcase around his neck. “I STILL DO NOT KNOW HOW
YOU MANAGED TO ACCIDENTALLY GOUGE OUT A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF
YOUR TORSO WITH A SPOON.”

“Spoon?” Lucifer murmured. He could hear Sans chuckling somewhere behind him. “Papyrus, you
know that humans have to be able to breathe, right?”

Papyrus paused for a moment. “OH. RIGHT. THAT.” Papyrus returned with a kitchen knife,
gashed open the pillowcase, and stuck his fingers in the hole, moving the stuffing away from
Lucifer’s mouth. “THERE. NOW, DO NOT MOVE. I WILL RETURN WITH AN EXTRA
HELPING OF SPAGHETTI FOR YOU. YOU CAN HAVE MY PORTION TONIGHT.”

“no , papyrus,” Sans warned. Papyrus came before everyone else, especially the human. Sans saw
to that personally.

“Really, Papyrus, you don’t have to do that,” Lucifer told him.

Papyrus rolled his eye-lights. “YOU SKIP MEALS SIX TIMES A WEEK, SANS. I CAN
HANDLE ONE OR TWO. BESIDES, LUCIFER IS OUR GUEST AND I AM GOING TO
SHOW HIM SOME PROPER HOSPITALITY.”

He returned with another bowl of pasta. “OPEN WIDE!” Lucifer opened his mouth and Papyrus
jabbed a forkful of noodles into his mouth so forcefully that the human gagged on it. He still
managed to choke it down somehow.
Sans stepped up to the two of them. “here, let me feed ‘im, paps. you’ve done enough.”

“WHY ARE YOU SO INTERESTED IN FEEDING THE HUMAN, SANS?” Papyrus leaned in so close to Sans’ face that their foreheads tapped together. Sans leaned backwards.

“i just wanna turn feeding the baby. c’mon paps, please?” Papyrus of course didn’t register Sans’ sly grin, instead shoving the bowl into his hands.

“AWWW. HOW ADORABLE! HERE YOU GO, BROTHER.” Papyrus then skipped up the stairs to his room.

“heewe comes the aiwplane,” Sans cooed. He could feel Lucifer glaring daggers at him through the pillowcase.

“Maybe I should have left you with the flower,” Lucifer grumbled, opening his mouth anyway. Sans just chuckled and gave him the rest of the pasta.

“anything else you need before i put baby down fow his nap?” He brought the bowl back to the kitchen.

“Water. I need to stay hydrated,” Lucifer told him, choosing to ignore the skeleton’s derogatory tone. Sans nodded and pulled a glass out of the cabinet. After pausing for a moment, he pulled something else out, too.

His close call with Flowey brought him back to reality. He was stupid for not offing Lucifer before he finished Papyrus’ puzzles - the human had to die sometime, and getting attached was a terrible idea. It had already started to happen, he realized. Better to cut his losses here and now while Lucifer was more or less at his mercy. Clearly Sans kept underestimating him, and he might not even be able to give Lucifer the axe if he waited until the human recovered. If he recovered - he wasn’t exactly an expert on human biology, but deep, infected wounds were probably pretty serious.

The poison in the bottle he’d taken from the cabinet wasn’t all that strong. Usually he just used it to make the Royal Guards miserable whenever they visited Snowdin - it was easy to blame on the praecantium in Hotland. But, in Lucifer’s weakened state…

It was simple, easy. Papyrus wouldn’t suspect a thing. He unscrewed the lid to the tiny bottle and dumped its contents into the glass after filling it with water. He lingered in the kitchen for a while, second guessing himself. Sans honestly didn’t want to do this.

Which is why he had to. He walked back to the couch.
The Truce

Chapter Summary

Sans makes a mistake, and Lucifer wants to make a deal.

“You sure are taking your sweet time,” Lucifer called from the living room.

Sans focused on keeping his tone even. “if you wanted thyme-flavored water, you should have told me before i got it. pap’s got a cabinet full of spices.”

Sans could practically feel Lucifer rolling his eyes. “That was a stretch.”

Papyrus’ head burst out of his room. “DID I HEAR SOMETHING ABOUT SPICES?” he asked excitedly, looking at Sans with his glass of water. “WAIT. WAS IT A PUN?”

“yup,” Sans said, causing Papyrus to facepalm.

He looked back to the glass of water. “OH, IS THAT FOR LUCIFER?” Papyrus asked. “ALLOW ME!” He waltzed down the stairs and stuck out his hand to take the glass.

“uh, no,” Sans said without thinking, retracting his hand.

Papyrus tilted his head. “OKAY… IS IT FOR ME, THEN?”

“no!” Sans realized that he was acting extremely suspicious, but luckily Papyrus wasn’t catching on. At least, Sans thought he wasn't.

“THEN WHO IS IT FOR? YOU? YOU NEVER DRINK WATER.” Papyrus stared at his brother intently, waiting for an answer. Lucifer had gone strangely silent.

“uh... i-it’s for me,” Sans said before he realized what was happening. No, it wasn't for him, it was for the human. What the hell was he doing? “can't a guy have a glass of water in his own house?”

“HMMMM…” Papyrus leaned in until their foreheads were touching again. His invasions of Sans’ personal space seemed to be getting more and more frequent. Normally he didn't mind, but Papyrus’ lack of an indoor voice left Sans’ non-existent ears ringing when they were this close. “YOU ARE ACTING… STRANGER THAN USUAL.”

What was that supposed to mean? “uh, no. no i’m not.” Sans mentally slapped himself. He could bluff the pants off of anyone; so why was he floundering like this? The only way he was getting Lucifer to drink this now was if Sans force-fed him. Which… actually sounded slightly entertaining, considering that Lucifer was a little tied up at the moment. Ah, there it was - god-awful puns, his best defense.

“i mean, if anyone in here was up to something, it would be the stairs,” Sans shrugged, moving away from Papyrus. There was a delay before the taller skeleton screamed in frustration, needing time to process the joke.

“WHERE ARE YOU GOING?” Papyrus asked. Sans was moving toward the sink.
“eh. decided i’m not thirsty after all,” Sans said, about to pour the poisoned drink down the drain.

“UGH, YOU ARE IMPOSSIBLE! DON’T YOU DARE DUMP THAT - GIVE IT HERE. WE’RE NOT GOING TO WASTE A PERFECTLY GOOD GLASS OF WATER.” Papyrus marched over to him and tried to snatch the glass. Sans ducked out of the way, but now Papyrus was between him and the sink. Of course this would be difficult. “SANS, THIS IS COMPLETELY UNREASONABLE!”

“nope. totally reasonable,” Sans grunted, sliding his own arm under Papyrus’ to get to the sink. Papyrus grappled him from behind and lifted him into the air, trying to wrestle the water from him with his free hand.

Sans wasn’t in good enough shape to win a wrestling match with Papyrus or teleport away. He was going to regret this so, so much - but Papyrus came first.

He raised the glass to his mouth and chugged it down in one go.

“WHY DIDN’T YOU JUST DRINK IT IN THE FIRST PLACE?!” Papyrus said, dropping Sans to the floor. He marched back to his room, exasperated, and slammed the door.

For the first time in his life, Sans wished he had a stomach so that he could vomit the poison back up. Unfortunately for him, the liquid instantly absorbed into his body as soon as it went past his teeth - he could already feel it taking effect. Reluctantly, he teleported to his candy stash; the sharp burst of pain in his skull was enough to send him reeling to the floor. He needed some kind of magic in his system if he wanted to get through the next few hours. He threw a piece in his mouth as soon as he got his bearings and teleported back to the house.

Sans was fairly certain he screamed in pain this time; he was back on the floor again. He was vaguely aware of Papyrus running down the stairs and picking him up. He reached up to his skull - his left eye socket was leaking something red. That’s what he got for teleporting twice in a row.

When Sans came to, he found himself sewn into a blanket cocoon, half-laying on the couch right next to Lucifer. Papyrus better not have stitched his jacket into this thing, or he was going to be pissed. Ugh, his bones ached. It felt like there was too much marrow in them and it wanted to split him apart every which way to relieve the pressure. If it had made any of the Royal Guards feel half this awful, the poison was well worth the money Sans had spent on it. Too bad he’d used it on himself instead of the human. He still had no idea what had possessed him not to poison Lucifer.

Sans groaned as he tried to sit up - he could see Lucifer was awake. Apparently he had convinced Papyrus to take the pillowcase off. His face was even more flushed and slick with sweat, and his breathing was ragged.

“‘Morning, sleeping beauty,’” Lucifer chuckled. His voice was strained. Sans shot him a death glare, not answering. He was in about as bad of a mood as he could be in right now. “‘Are you alright?’” It sounded like Lucifer was actually concerned, because of course he would be. He couldn’t have been that stupid or naive. He had to have some idea of what Sans was about to do.

“i feel like i might explode at any given moment. other than that, i’m just peachy,” Sans growled.

Lucifer just smiled weakly and twisted around a little in his blanket prison. “Well, it’s better than being dead. Papyrus said he would be right back. He wanted to go give everyone dinner.” He glanced away, almost shyly. “‘Why didn’t you do it?’”

Sans didn’t feel like indulging him with an answer, so he decided to play coy even though it was
pointless. Hell, *he* didn’t even know why he’d taken the poison for Lucifer. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“You were going to poison me, and you backpedaled and gulped it down yourself. At least, that’s what I could tell from the living room.”

Ugh, couldn’t he just play along this time? Sans wracked his skull for some sort of answer to give. “Yeah, well - you had the opportunity to kill me, and you didn’t. So we’re even now.” That seemed reasonable. Actually, that was probably the reason he’d done it. Yeah - that was definitely it. Sans didn’t want to even consider the possibility of it being anything else.

Lucifer nodded, satisfied. Sans decided that he wanted to ask his own question. “You knew I was going to try and kill you eventually. So why didn’t you kill me when you had the chance?”

Lucifer looked straight into Sans’ eye sockets, and the skeleton was a little unnerved by the intensity of the stare. “If and when I kill you, it’s going to be fair. We’re both going to be at our best, and I’m not getting help from some fucking flower. I respect you too much for that.”

Sans didn’t really know how to respond to that. Lucifer responded for him. “How about we make a deal?”

“What kind of deal?” Sans asked.

“You’re running out of food supplies, right? The day they run out, it’s open season. You give me a headstart, and we’ll see who’s still alive in the end. I promise to make it fun,” he winked. “Until then - no more traps, no more poison, nothing. No more hurting each other. Unless it’s in good humor,” the human chuckled. “Sound fair?”

It did, actually. “Alright, I’ll bite. You’ve got yourself a deal.”

Lucifer smiled. “I’d shake you on that, but I’m kind of restrained at the moment.”

Sans grinned as the sheets surrounding his hand tore apart, cut by his trusty hand-drill. He stuck it into Lucifer’s blankets until he breached the shell of fabric.

“You said it’s fair game if it’s in good humor, right?” Sans chuckled.

Lucifer rolled his eyes. “I did say that,” he said. He grabbed Sans’ hand and shook it once firmly before pulling away, afraid of a repeat of his first encounter with the skeleton. Sans pulled his own hand back, wet with fresh blood. It was a satisfying feeling.

“Ugh, that probably wasn’t a good idea while I’m sick,” Lucifer sighed. “I doubt you’ve even washed that thing once.”

“Psh. And lose all the history and sentimental value? This thing’s passed through a lot of hands.”

Sans cut himself free of the rest of the blankets and started pulling them off of Lucifer. He still felt like shit, but he decided he was well enough to get out before Papyrus started smothering him.

“Why do you even have so many blankets? Neither of you have skin to keep warm,” Lucifer asked. The blankets were soaked with sweat, and a little blood.

“Beats me,” Sans chuckled. “We’re probably gonna need some new ones, though.”
Rhythm

Chapter Summary

Shockingly, Sans might not be the best choice of doctor for a human in the Underground.

Lucifer wasn’t getting better. In fact, he was getting worse - passed out most of the time, constantly drenched in sweat, and his infected wound only seemed to get more and more inflamed. It turned out Sans might not have to poison Lucifer to kill him; his stunt with Flowey might do him in by itself.

Which, paradoxically, was not something Sans was going to allow. He made a deal, and he never broke a deal - the only one he’d ever backed out on was the one he made with Toriel, and she’d given him permission to. Whether neglect was considered ‘hurting’ Lucifer or not was debatable, but if Sans was honest, he didn’t like anyone slowly wasting away like the human was. One, because it was boring - if Lucifer was going to die, it was going to be spectacular. He deserved that much. Two, basically everyone he knew was in the process of slowly wasting away, and if he could prevent any kind of it, he was going to.

“knock knock.”

“Who is there?”

“care for.”

“Care for who?”

“you know how to care for a sick human?”

It took a moment for Toriel to answer. “You are… referring to Lucifer, yes?”

“…yup. i’ll be honest, i’ve got no clue what to do with him. i’ve taken care of papyrus when he’s sick plenty of times, but a human’s an entirely different animal. i have no idea what i’m supposed to do with all those… organs he’s got. and skin. if he fractured his arm or somethin’ that’d be different, but…”

“What symptoms does he have?” Toriel asked immediately. She seemed eager to help.

“constantly sweaty, his face is red all over, he’s really, really warm - i think he called it a fever? and the skin around the wound he’s got is all red an’ puffy. s’infected, or something.”

“Have you properly cleaned and dressed the wound? How deep is it? Where is it?”

Sans remembered that he had just cut into Lucifer with his filthy hand-drill. It might have been funny, but not at all sanitary. “uh… that’s a negative on the cleaning? it’s an inch or two deep, maybe, right at the bottom of his ribs.”

Toriel let out an exasperated sigh. “Do not move. I will return shortly.” Sans heard her walk away from the door, so he plopped himself down in the snow and waited for her. To his surprise, the door slid open just slightly.
A white, furry hand reached out of the door and set a small white bottle on the ground, followed by a tall, lavender thermos. Sans tried to peek inside, but the door closed before he could get a look at her. He had never actually seen Toriel before; he’d told her enough skeleton puns that he was fairly certain she had a good idea what he looked like, but Sans actually had no clue what kind of monster Toriel was.

“It is vital that you clean him properly and cover the wound,” Toriel said through the door. She sounded slightly annoyed, as if that should have been obvious. The more Sans thought about it, it probably was. “I have given you some rubbing alcohol for that purpose. It is also important that you keep his fever down - keep ice packs on his forehead, and perhaps give him a cold shower. The thermos has tea that should help in the healing process.”

Sans stuffed the bottle and the thermos into his jacket pockets. “thanks, tori. you, uh… didn’t put anything special in here, did you?”

“N… No. There is nothing… extraordinary in the tea.”

“Alright,” Sans said, deciding to take her word for it. “thanks a bunch. i’ll keep you updated.”

“Please do. Good luck, my friend.”

Sans took the long walk back home - he really needed to leave his shortcuts for emergencies. Lucifer was tossing and turning when he opened the door, clawing at the soaked fabric of his shirt like it was strangling him.

“hey. hey, stop that,” Sans shook the human’s shoulder, keeping his voice soft. “c’mon, wake up. we need ta get you in the shower.”

Lucifer’s eyes flickered open slowly; they looked glazed. “Shower? Why?” His speech was slurred with sleep; or lack of it.

“doctor’s orders. i asked a friend for some advice on how to take care of you. we need to get you cleaned up.”

Lucifer nodded slowly and tried to get to his feet. His legs looked like they would buckle under him at any moment. “Maybe I like being covered in blood,” he said weakly, but his voice lacked any real mirth.

Sans decided to pity his attempt. “well, you are more attractive that way. don’t matter though - shower. let’s go.” Sans led him to the bathroom. “Alright. strip and give me your clothes so i can clean ‘em. and make sure that water’s cold, it’s supposed to help with the fever.”

“Yes, sir,” Lucifer chuckled. He sounded a little more like himself as he pulled his shirt over his head. Sans rolled his eyes and turned around as he took the rest of his clothes off and closed the door.

Sans took the clothes and began walking down the stairs. He laughed a little when Lucifer cursed as the cold water hit his skin. A little while after Sans threw the clothes in the hamper with his brother’s next load of laundry, Lucifer came back down wearing one of Papyrus’ bone-themed orange bathrobes. His skin looked pale.

“on the couch,” Sans ordered. “gotta... ‘clean and dress the wound,’ or some shit.” Lucifer laid down and shrugged the robe off of his shoulders so that his torso was exposed, but the robe was still tied around his waist. Sans took out the rubbing alcohol and dabbed some of it on a paper towel. “stay still,” Sans told him. He started to rub the towel around the wound.
Lucifer immediately shouted and tensed up in pain, twisting to get away from Sans’ hands. “I said stay still,” Sans growled at him, slamming one hand down onto the human’s chest to hold him in place. Lucifer gripped the edges of the couch, trying to do as Sans asked - he ended up thrashing out with his legs as he tried (and failed) to keep from screaming as Sans stuck his fingers into the wound. The sticky heat that radiated from the flesh around Sans’ fingers was… oddly satisfying.

Sans finished torturing the human and stared at the hand he’d put on Lucifer’s chest. “What… is that?” he asked. Lucifer didn’t know what he was talking about, so he just looked at Sans quizzically. “That… thumping?”

Lucifer chuckled a little. “Never felt a heartbeat, huh?”

“Huh. So that’s what they feel like…” Sans knew about heartbeats, of course. Most monsters had them, considering most of them had flesh of some kind. He’d just never heard or felt one first hand being the heartless (heh) bastard that he was.

“Is it always this… fast?” Sans asked, leaning a little closer so he could hear the pounding himself. He didn’t notice the weird looks Lucifer was giving him.

“No. It’s slowest when I’m sleeping, and it gets really fast if I’m excited, or panicked, or in pain,” Lucifer answered slowly. It didn’t help with Sans’ apparent transfixedness with his heart.

The staring started to become uncomfortable. Normally Lucifer would welcome the chance to tease Sans for ogling him, but the skeleton’s fascination with his heartbeat seemed almost unnatural. He was starting to worry that Sans would want to reach into his chest and pull his heart out.

Sans didn’t know why it was so captivating. The thumping’s rhythm as it slowed down was just… hypnotic in a way. Before he realized it, his fingers were drumming on the arm of the couch alongside it - Thu-Thump, tap tap tap tap. Thu-Thump, tap tap tap tap. Thu-Thump, tap tap tap tap...

“Sans,” Lucifer said, snapping his fingers in front of the skeleton’s face. It seemed to break the spell.

More than a little confused, Sans decided to ignore everything that just happened and pulled the thermos out of his jacket. “Here, drink up. It’s supposed to help with… stuff.”

Lucifer unscrewed the lid, watching Sans closely the entire time. He hummed contentedly as he took a sip. “I haven’t had good tea in forever. Where did you get this?”

“Tori gave it to me,” Sans said. Lucifer immediately froze. “She promised me there wasn’t anything weird in it. You’ll just have to trust us on this. We have a deal, remember?” Lucifer nodded slowly and continued with the tea, putting the bathrobe back onto his shoulders. “Anyway, I’ll uh… come back when your clothes are dry. Oh, and here’s an ice pack for you. I just stuffed it with snow from outside. And uh, cover that with this stuff.” He pulled out a roll of gauze. “Try and get some shuteye, yeah?”

Sans tossed him the gauze and bag of snow and left the house. That… was weird.
Lucifer finally gets better, and rumors seem to be going around Snowdin.

Lucifer woke up from yet another nap on the couch and stretched, yawning the sleep out of his limbs. He was feeling much, much better. He kicked the layer of blankets he had off and pulled up his shirt to look at his wound - hopefully the infection had subsided a little bit.

It hadn’t just subsided - it was gone entirely. So was the whole wound, actually, only a small scar revealing that it had ever been there in the first place.

“feeling better yet?” Sans asked him as he came down the stairs. “papyrus is exhausting enough to deal with without babying you, too.”

“There’s no way this should be gone already,” Lucifer said, running his fingers over the healed skin. “I got this a week ago. Injuries like that don’t just disappear.”

Sans peeked over Lucifer’s shoulder. “never had monster food, huh? tori’s a good cook when she leaves out her secret ingredient.” The skeleton sat down on the couch next to Lucifer. “monster food converts directly to energy, so it has some pretty neat effects. ‘course, our food has been pretty rotten nutrition-wise for a while. real monster food, though - you could stuff a cinnamon bun in your mouth mid-battle and you’d see stab wounds vanish like they were nothing.”

“That must’ve been nice,” Lucifer chuckled, noticing that his screwed-up hand had also been healed. “I feel like a new person.”

“Well then, it’s nice to meet you. i’m sans, sans the skeleton. “ Sans stuck out his hand for a handshake.

“Nice try.” The human rolled his eyes and stood up - his legs were a little shaky from a week’s worth of being laid up, but other than that, he felt perfectly fine. “C’mon, let’s go walk around or something. I’m sick of that couch.”

“tsk tsk tsk,” Sans said, opening the door. “how ungrateful of you. i take any chance i can get my hands on to lay around and do nothing.”

Lucifer smirked. “I could always break one of your ribs for you. All in good fun, of course.” He walked out in the snow, relishing the fresh(er) air outside.

“nah. you’re the masochist, remember?” Sans closed the door and started walking on his normal patrol route. “aren’t any nasty surprises waiting for me this time, are there?”

“If I told you, they wouldn’t be surprises now, would they?” Lucifer said with a sly grin. Sans gave him an unamused glare. “Come on, I keep my promises - if there are any surprises, they aren’t mine. I’ve been laid up for a while, remember?”

“true,” Sans said. He pointed to the woods behind the house. “go through there and meet me on the other side of town. you still don’t exist as far as everyone is concerned.” Lucifer nodded and
Sans took a detour to Grillby’s, greeting everyone as he walked in. The atmosphere seemed… off somehow. It was too quiet; Sans could hear whispers behind him whenever he turned away.

Slightly uncomfortable, he walked up to the bar and took his usual seat. “Sup, grillbz?” he said, hoping the bartender would be a little more friendly. The flame elemental came over, his usual quiet self. “I, uh, brought you something,” Sans said, pulling out the bottle of rubbing alcohol. “I know it’s not exactly quality, but I found it on one of my back shelves today and thought you’d probably have more use for it than I do.” Alcohol was like water to a fire elemental, and water was an intoxicant. While water was easy enough to come by (even if its magical charge was nowhere near what it used to be), spirits had disappeared quickly after the Core failed. Grillby was probably the most malnourished monster in Snowdin.

“…Thank you,” Grillby said, taking the bottle from him.

“So, uh… what’s with the dead atmosphere in here, huh? If I didn’t know any better, I’d say people were sick of my puns or something.”

“…Just rumors,” Grillby said, pouring himself a shot of the alcohol. He’d have to ration it out as long as possible.

Sans didn’t like forcing Grillby to talk very often, but he wanted to know what was going on. “Care to elaborate, buddy?”

Grillby sighed. “…People are saying the human is still in Snowdin. That you might be harboring it.”

Sans’ mood soured. He turned around to face the crowd, and everyone averted their gazes and hushed their conversations. He felt his grin widen involuntarily and his bloodshot left pupil shrink. “Really, guys? I keep the crown off your asses, feed all of you, take a hole in the fucking head for you, and this is the thanks I get?” He stood up and walked towards the door.

“I-I’m sure they didn’t mean anything by it, Sansy,~” the rabbit-monster by the door said, eyes swirling with madness and whatever liquor could be scrounged up, like usual. “They’re all just… frustrated that we didn’t catch it.”

Sans chuckled darkly and looked at the rest of them. They looked embarrassed. “Well, maybe if the dozen of you had caught the fucking human when I basically dropped ‘im in your lap, you wouldn’t need to be spreading nasty rumors about your good ‘ol pal sansy.” He swung the door open. “Maybe next time I’ll just let you do all the work by yourselves and see how that goes, since I’m clearly so untrustworthy. Fuck all of you.” He slammed the door behind him.

Sans was aware that he was being a hypocrite considering he was currently harboring a human, but he didn’t care. He’d done fucking everything for these people. They didn’t have the right to question him, human or not.

…He didn’t always have a temper like this, did he? He always just made people laugh.

Sans found it hard to miss that version of himself when he barely even remembered it.

Lucifer materialized out of the trees as he saw Sans approaching. “You took your sweet time, huh?”

“One more snarky comment from you and I swear I’ll rip your fucking tongue out of your mouth with by bare hands,” Sans threatened. Lucifer’s eyes widened, but he didn’t seem to be concerned by the threat. It made Sans even more pissed off. “C’mon, we’re going back inside. People are catching on disappeared from view.
that you’re still in town.”

“A stop at Grillby’s, I’m guessing?” Lucifer asked, trying to sound as calm as possible. He started taking the long route back to the house.

“yes. not that it’s any of your business,” Sans growled. “you’re a lot more trouble than you’re worth.”

“Well, I’m sorry if I’ve caused you any problems,” Lucifer said. It was a genuine apology, which also pissed Sans off. “I’m only staying as long as you let me. If you want me to leave, I’ll leave.”

Sans felt his grin twitching. “oh, you’re not going anywhere, i’m keeping an eye on you so i can gut you the second the other human i’ve got in the basement stops giving me meat. and i promise you it’s going to be bloody.”

“No other way I’d want to die,” Lucifer chuckled. He could practically feel menace coming off of the skeleton in waves. He thought for a moment. “You know, if you build a man a fire, he’ll be warm for a day,” he said. Sans raised a bone-brow. “If you set a man on fire, he’ll be warm for the rest of his life.”

Sans let loose a small chuckle. “that was terrible, you pyromaniac.”

“As if you have anything better,” Lucifer scoffed.

“you’re not wrong,” Sans said. He took a deep breath. “sorry for snapping, it’s not your fault i’m pissed off right now. ungrateful bastards…” he paused for a second. “actually, no, it is all your fault. i’m just not mad at you for some reason.” Sans sounded like he was thinking out loud rather than talking to Lucifer directly.

Lucifer raised an eyebrow at the comment. “Clearly you’ve fallen for my irresistible charms. It was only a matter of time,” he added with a wink.

“pfft. you’re about as charming as a serial killer,” Sans chuckled.

“Flatterer,” Lucifer smiled. “It sounds like they were being ungrateful, though. I’m sorry I’m getting you in trouble.”

Sans shrugged. “i was the one stupid enough to actually make that deal, so i’ll deal with the consequences. anything happen while you were waiting on me, by the way?”

“I almost forgot; how often do people from Snowdin go to Waterfall?” Lucifer asked.

Sans stopped in his tracks, turning to look at him. “only me, sometimes. there’s nothing that way but a bunch of starving water-dwellers and a toxic wasteland beyond that. did you see someone?”

“It looked like a werewolf to me. Do you know him?”

Sans’ manic grin returned. “ice wolf, you little traitor,” he chuckled. “oh, we’re going to have a chat.”

They arrived at the house. “Let me know if you need me,” Lucifer said to him. “I’ll try to stay out of sight.”

Sans watched him go into the house while contemplating how he was going to start skinning Snowdin’s former ice-thrower. The little shit was probably a spy for Undyne or something. He put
off wondering why Lucifer had gotten him to calm down so easily for later - tearing the skin off someone sounded a lot more fun than introspection right now.
It wasn’t hard to spot Ice Wolf; someone of that size tended to be easy to find. Sans waited by his old Waterfall station (whose wood had long rotted away from lack of maintenance) for him to return from whatever errand he was running. The werewolf immediately froze when he spotted Sans and his glowing red eye.

A sadistic grin grew on Sans’ face. “heya, *chum*. isn’t it a little warm for you here? All that thick winter fur must be exhausting to haul around all over waterfall.”

“Hi… hi, Sans,” Ice Wolf said.

“hehe, you seem nervous, pal… how come? it’s not like you’ve got a quarrel with your good buddy sans, right? i mean, all i really do anymore is keep all of you alive, so it’d be kinda counterproductive to hurt you or anything. unless you were, say, spying for undyne or something.” A wall of sharpened bones sprung up from the ground, pinning the werewolf against the wall as he tried to take a step backward. “any last words? you probably aren’t going to be able to say anything coherent once you start screaming.”

“I wasn’t spying!” Ice Wolf said, trying to struggle away from the bone spike poised at his throat. It cut into his skin as he moved, beginning to stain his fur red.

“right. just came for the scenery, right? although that hasn’t been so great since the star-crystals all died. the core can be a real drag sometimes, huh?” A hand-sized bone spike appeared in Sans’ hand, and he started dragging it down Ice Wolf’s chest slowly.

“I-I was sharing my portions,” Ice Wolf whined. He struggled against the bone pillars, but it only managed to make them dig into his skin.

Sans paused. “what?”

“W-With Shyren,” Ice Wolf said. “We sorta became friends a little bit before Undyne… uh… nevermind. That’s what I was doing, not spying.”

Sans finally noticed the empty bowl in his paw. The bone spikes retreated. “lead with that next time,” Sans growled. “why the hell didn’t you just come and tell me instead of sneaking around behind my back?”

Ice Wolf stared at the ground. “I-I… you said we couldn’t spare enough to help the people in Waterfall, so I…”

Sans rested his forehead on his hand. “i don’t care what you do with your portion. if you wanna share it, that’s your business. i just don’t want all those waterfall monsters swarming into snowdin like flies ’cause it’s gonna kill me to have to tell ’em that i can’t help them.” Sans looked the werewolf up and down. “you been giving her half?”
Ice Wolf nodded. “dude, you’re ten times her size,” Sans sighed. “she doesn’t need near as much food as you do.”

“Sh-She’s been sharing with Napstablook, she told me,” Ice Wolf said. “Apparently, um… human can be eaten regardless if you’re corporeal or not.”

Sans nodded. “anyone else you’ve been helping?”

“N-No,” Ice Wolf stuttered.

“good. tell them both to keep it that way. snowdin’s not a charity.” Sans turned back towards town. “and this conversation never happened. got it?” Ice Wolf nodded, and Sans started walking back to his house.

Sans would be lying if the fear in the other monster’s eyes didn’t make him uncomfortable. Mostly because he actually enjoyed the feeling a little bit. Had he done something like this before - jump to conclusions? He couldn’t remember anything specific, but… his memory hadn’t been all that reliable recently. Maybe this was why everyone in Snowdin seemed to be afraid of him; why people didn’t seem to trust him anymore. If this had become a regular thing, Sans couldn’t really blame them.

Sans realized that he didn’t actually get to skin someone as he flopped onto the couch, which meant that he had time for introspection. Just perfect.

Lucifer peeked outside from Papyrus’ room. “Coast clear?”

“yeah,” Sans mumbled.

“Didn’t expect you to be back so soon,” Lucifer said, descending the stairs and leaning over the couch to look at Sans. “Or so clean.”

“pfft. you call this clean?” Sans hadn’t washed his clothes in forever. It wasn’t like a skeleton got them dirty as quickly as a human would - his body required a lot less maintenance - but there were a lot of stains that had accumulated over time.

“You know what I meant,” Lucifer said, rolling his eyes. “You catch him or no?”

“jumped to the wrong conclusion. he wasn’t doing anything wrong,” Sans said. He didn’t feel like elaborating. What he needed was a distraction. “anyway, why don’cha sit down? i think it’s time i got to ask some more questions.”

“And pierce the mystique I’ve got going? That wouldn’t be any fun,” Lucifer teased, sitting down anyway.

“you’re staying in my house and i know next to nothing about you,” Sans said.

“That’s fair. Fire away.”

“tell me about your sister,” Sans said after a few seconds.

Lucifer’s smile turned sad. “Lucille Jacinda Arkwright. Our parents called her Lucille, but I called her Lucy because that’s what she actually wanted to be called.”

Sans wore a genuine smile for once as the human continued. “She hated dresses even though she was forced to wear them all the time. She had a sophisticated sense of humor, but she had the dorkiest laugh you’ve ever heard - snorting and everything. Her favorite color was slate grey, and
she could cook a mean soup; that was the only thing she could cook, though. She was a hopeless romantic, but she also loved horror films. And she was the only person I ever really understood."

“don’t you mean ‘she’s the only person that understood me?’” Sans asked.

“I mean… that too. But I meant the other part. Humans, they just… don’t make sense to me.” Sans gave him a curious look, and Lucifer sighed, looking for the words to explain. “Lucy was the only person I ever met that was… real . Does that make sense?”

“not really,” Sans said. He couldn’t follow Lucifer’s train of thought.

“That’s because everyone in Snowdin is real. You never had to deal with all those… empty, faceless people up there. It’s like I was surrounded by mannequins, or… marionettes, or something. They weren’t real .”

“i still don’t follow you.” Maybe this was where all of Lucifer’s issues came from.

“Everyone wears masks. We all act different to different people - even Lucy. My parents had to have at least one child to tow around like a showpony, so Lucy took the brunt of it for me since I was such an embarrassment. Always putting on a pretty face, smiling and waving, acting like a doll. But I knew the real her. Everyone else, it was like… there wasn’t anything behind the masks. They were all faceless, empty shells. They weren’t real . I don’t know how else to say it.”

Now Sans understood. It was irrational thinking, sure, but he could figure out were the human was coming from. Maybe that was why Lucifer didn’t have an issue with being a cannibal; he didn’t see the people as people . It was some sort of weird dissociation between the real world and what Lucifer thought the world was like. Not that Sans could claim he was any less screwed up.

“i think i get it,” Sans said. He didn’t bother trying to correct Lucifer, or elaborate further. It probably would do more harm than good.

Lucifer nodded. “So, what about you? Figure out why you’re not mad at me?”

Ugh. Introspection. Sans just stared at the ceiling for a while, and Lucifer waited patiently. “i don’t have anyone else to talk to,” Sans said at last, figuring it out.


Sans kept looking at the ceiling. “yeah, i got tori, i guess. but there’s only so much you can share with a person you’ve never seen before;” he said. “and the last time i dumped all of my problems on her, it kinda ruined her life, so… i try to avoid that now. i was never really close with any of the townspeople. just… casual friends, y’know? they’d give me gossip, tell me about their days, i’d crack a few puns and make ‘em laugh. i was a little closer with grillby, i guess, but he’s a lot better at listening than talking, and most of the time i don’t wanna bother him with my problems - he’s got plenty of his own crap to deal with. and as far as papyrus goes… i just don’t know how much he understands anymore.”

“What do you mean?” Lucifer scooted closer so he could look at Sans’ face.

“the first time we had human… papyrus was dead-set against it. in fact, he was appalled that i had even suggested it. when i tricked him into eating it, i thought he’d just… get over it eventually and see things my way. but that wasn’t what happened; he changed overnight. y’know how his teeth are all crooked? that happened over one night. somehow, eating human changed his magic makeup almost instantly - same with everyone else. i’m the only one that still looks like i used to, minus the
head-hole and screwed-up eye. papyrus used to be such a... beacon to me. i kept most of my problems to myself 'cause i didn’t want to burden him, but if i really needed him... i knew i could talk to him. i knew he’d help me. now, though, i just... he’s not all there. i don’t think he’d really understand all the shit that goes through my head. i’m glad that he’s happy, but... i miss him, if that makes any sense. so i guess i’m lonely. that’s why i’m not mad. it’d suck to lose the only person i can really talk to about certain things.”

Lucifer smiled at him. It was a bittersweet gesture. “Then what are you gonna do when you run out of food?”

Sans sighed. “i don’t know. i don’t want to kill you, if i’m being honest. hopefully we’ll get another guest before then and we won’t have to deal with it. all we can really do is wait.”

Lucifer crossed his arms behind his head and leaned back against the couch. “I think there’s something a little more proactive we can do.”

“Oh? and what’s that?”

A sly grin appeared on Lucifer’s face. “Depends on how much you trust me.”
“so what’s this grand idea of yours?” Sans asked.

“You said the military is hogging all the food, right? Why not liberate a little of it and give everyone a little variety in their cuisine?” Lucifer said.

Sans frowned, inasmuch as his semi-morphable skull would allow him to. “as much as i love making the queen and her little band of lapdogs miserable, that’ll do more harm than good. she’ll immediately suspect snowdin and crack down on us .”

“But why would she suspect Snowdin when a human was seen stealing the food?” Lucifer said, grinning.

Sans made a whistling sound. “you sure like living dangerously, kid. but... you’re right. and if you could make it work, it’d make you look even further away from here than before. one problem, though - that’s one hell of a heist to pull off.”

“No risk, no reward, right?” Lucifer chuckled. “Besides, you have to kill me eventually anyway if this doesn’t work out. Call it a long-term investment.”

Sans narrowed his eye-sockets. “alright, it’ll bite. i can get you through waterfall, but you’re on your own after that. hotland isn’t exactly healthy for my complexion.”

“Pssh. What complexion?” Lucifer put on his cloak, intending to head out immediately.

“tch. ouch,” Sans chuckled. “anyway, i guess you’ll need some directions. once i leave you in waterfall, you’re gonna head straight and take the first left you see. there’ll be an old elevator shaft that they converted into a big ladder since the power shut off. you head as far up as it’ll take you, and you’ll see this big tunnel-looking thing made out of weird metal sheets. that’s their attempt to protect people from the praecantium mess, though it does basically nothing. you go through that, take another elevator-shaft-ladder and get off at the first exit, and you’re in new home.”

“The city is seriously called ‘New Home?’” Lucifer said.

“yeah. asgore was a big fuzzball, but his naming skills left a little something to be desired,” Sans shrugged. “anyway, do not go further than that first exit. you’ll end up in the castle, and you do not want to be there. the main garrison is on seventh street, and most of the army’s food is probably in there somewhere. how the hell you’re gonna get your hands on it is your responsibility.”

Lucifer nodded. “You really do trust me, then?”

“huh?”
“To come back and not run off.”

The thought gave Sans pause. “yeah. guess i do.”

Lucifer smiled. “Okay, then. Let’s get going.”

Sans led Lucifer out of Snowdin and toward the dark caves ahead. “stay close to me and keep your head down. there’s lots of desperate people in here and not a lot of light to see ‘em coming.”

Sans was right - Waterfall became pitch black after a few minutes of walking, except for the bloody red glow from the skeleton’s eye. Lucifer would be lying if it wasn’t more than a little eerie. There were plenty of questions that popped into his head, but he kept them to himself for fear of alerting someone to their presence.

Ironically, Lucifer had never compared his experiences in the Underground to the many horror movies he and his sister had watched on the surface. Sure, he was currently living with a couple of serial killers, but he’d honestly never been nervous around the skeletons. Wary, maybe, but not nervous. Now, they were passing over a narrow path bordered on both sides with murky water, and Lucifer was just waiting for some slimy tentacle to reach up and drag him away.

As if responding to his thoughts, a tentacle did appear - blunt and pale yellow. Both Sans and Lucifer froze in place as an octopus-looking monster materialized out of the water with… the strangest expression Lucifer had ever seen.

“Hi… there…. it’s been a while since I’ve seen anyone come through Waterfall. Or since I saw you, Sans!” The monster waved at Sans with one of its tentacles, and Sans waved back. “I’ve never seen you before, though! I’m Onionsan! Onionsan, y’hear?”

Sans bumped Lucifer with his elbow when the human just stood there, dumbfounded. “Uh… it’s nice to meet you, Onionsan.”

Onionsan’s smile became even brighter, if that was possible. Lucifer actually found it kind of creepy, and not in the same way Sans’ was.

“so, uh… what have you been up to, buddy?” Sans asked, beginning to walk again. Lucifer followed him closely.

“Oh, y’know… just waiting around!” Onionsan said. Lucifer found it difficult to tell whether Onionsan’s immense amount of cheer was some sort of defense mechanism or if it was the basis for a trap. “Undyne’s said she was gonna fix everything, y’hear! I’m gonna get out of here someday and live in the ocean, y’hear! It’ll be great, y’hear!”

Onionsan’s jovial expression faltered a little bit. “E-Even though… it’s been years since I’ve seen her. O-Or heard from her at all…”

Defense mechanism, then. Lucifer relaxed a little. “yeah, well… undyne’s broken a lot of her promises over the years,” Sans said. “i’m sure you’ll be alright, kid. don’t give up hope.” Lucifer thought the words sounded empty, but Onionsan’s mood seemed to improve.

“Yeah… yeah, you’re right! I’m sure everything will be okay really soon!” Sans and Lucifer reached the end of the pool. “Well, looks like you reached the end of the room! Have a great time in Waterfallllllll…” Onionsan sank beneath the water again.

“What the hell was that?” Lucifer whispered as soon as they were out of earshot.
“onionsan? he’s a nice guy, even if he’s a little… off,” Sans answered. He kept his voice low, but he didn’t seem to be quite as concerned about making noise as Lucifer was. “he’s always been kinda isolated.”

“You seem to know everyone,” Lucifer commented. “And not just in Snowdin.”

Sans shrugged. “i got around a lot, way back when. the underground’s not a huge place anyway, so it wasn’t all that hard. until everything went to shit, that is.”

“I guess you were a pretty popular guy, huh?” Sans only shrugged again. They stopped once more when a tiny form appeared on the path in front of them. It looked like… a cat? Or was it a dog?

“Temmie falled down,” the creature said. She sounded tired. “Temmie tummy is hurty. No more temmiy flakes.”

Sans sighed and walked up to her. “guess you could say you’ve got a temmie ache ?” Temmie just whimpered, and Sans picked her up off of the ground. “sorry. guess that one’s not very funny when you’re hungry, huh? c’mon, lets get you home.” Sans took a right turn while Lucifer followed him, watching the skeleton closely. There was some sort of dim light ahead.

They entered some sort of village, lit by a single large crystal on the ceiling. The air was laced with humming - it was somewhat strained, but still upbeat - and a dozen or so of the same creatures were scattered around the room. One of them walked up to Sans as he set Temmie down on the ground.

“Oh, thank goodness,” the creature said. “I had no idea where she wandered off to. Temmie, are you alright?”

“Temmie wan temmie flakes,” Temmie said. “Temmie tummy is hurty.”

“Yes, yes, I’m sure. Come on dear, this way.” He led Temmie towards the back of the room before returning to Sans. “Thank you so much, friend. We haven’t had visitors from Snowdin in ages.” He looked at Lucifer. “I haven’t seen you around before. I’m Bob. Pleasure to make your acquaintance.”

“It’s… nice to meet you, too,” Lucifer said.

“I’ve been worried about the state of things outside our little village since the food shortage. How fare things in Snowdin?”

“we get by,” Sans shrugged. “we, uh… get food from the ruins. what about you guys? i didn’t think there was anything left to eat in waterfall.”

“Oh, not for most monsters, perhaps,” Bob sighed. “but the paper reeds that we use to make our Temmie Flakes are hardy plants. Our food production isn’t near what it used to be, but… we have enough to survive.”

Lucifer decided to walk over to Temmie while Sans and Bob were talking. “Hi there. Feeling better?” he asked her. She was eating… confetti?

“Tem okay now. Only sads, not hurty.”

“Aww. Why are you sad?” Lucifer sat down on the ground next to her.

“Temmie have no more dream. One time, Temmie wan go to cool leg and get big degree and make a lot a muns, but Temmie had to give up dream to help familie with foods.”
Despite himself, Lucifer felt a pang of pity and compassion. “Sometimes one dream doesn’t work out, so we need to find another. Maybe think a little smaller to start off.”

“But Temmies has only wishing stone left,” Temmie said, looking up at the crystal on the ceiling. “It can no grant all the wish. It not even reel star. Tem decide to share.”

Lucifer rubbed her head like he would an animal. She seemed to enjoy it. “That’s very nice of you, Temmie. Maybe someone else can use their wish to make things better.”

“That wud be nice,” Temmie sighed. Lucifer walked back to Sans as the skeleton signaled it was time to leave.

“Didn’t know you had such a bleeding heart for these fellas,” Lucifer said. His voice lacked any real mirth.

“pfft. what heart?” Sans chuckled. “besides, you’re one to talk. seems like you and temmie hit it off.”

Lucifer was silent for a while. He noticed the air was starting to warm up. “They don’t deserve this,” he said at last.

“huh?”

“They don’t… none of you deserve this,” Lucifer said. “It’s not fair. You’re all better people than anyone I’ve ever met on the surface, excluding Lucy.”

“that’s how life works, right?” Sans said with a dry laugh. “anyway, this is where i leave you. here, gimme your cloak. you aren’t gonna need the layers where you’re going.”

“See you later,” Lucifer said as he started walking toward the dim glow up ahead. When he turned around, Sans was already gone. For once, Lucifer was actually grateful for the alone time he was about to have so he could think through a few things.

Chapter End Notes

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Changed, Not Gone

Chapter Summary

With Lucifer gone in Hotland, Sans has a day to himself.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sans flopped onto the couch as soon as he returned from dropping Lucifer off at Hotland. Ugh, that was so much work. Lucky for Sans, he now had an indeterminate period of time to relax and do nothing, save for watching for new humans. No traps, no confusing houseguests - he’d have to talk to Toriel later and find out if she’d made any new acquaintances, but for now, he was just going to sit here and take a nice na--

“SANS! THERE YOU ARE, I’VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU!”

Sans nearly jumped out of his skin (heh) as Papyrus’s voice blasted out his non-existent eardrums from behind him. For someone with no concept of an inside voice, his brother could move pretty quietly when it suited him.

Sans took a deep breath to calm himself. “how many times have i told you,” he said, turning around slowly, “that if you’re going to shout at me, you need to be at least five feet away from my head?”

Papyrus looked slightly confused. “SANS, YOU KNOW WE HAVEN’T HAD ANY BEETS FOR MONTHS NOW! I’M SORRY, BUT YOU’LL JUST HAVE TO DO WITHOUT.”

Sans’ eye-socket started to twitch. Not this again. “feet, papyrus. five feet away from me.”

“But I thought we already used up both of the last human’s feet,” Papyrus said, scratching the top of his skull.

“no, that’s not - ugh, nevermind. what do you want?” The universe really couldn’t allow him one little nap?

“HMM… EXCELLENT QUESTION. I WAS…” Papyrus thought for a moment, “OH! YES, I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU HOW YOU WERE GETTING ALONG WITH OUR HOUSEGUEST!” Papyrus ran around the side of the couch so he could look Sans in the face. “YOU SEEM TO HAVE TAKEN QUITE A SHINE TO HIM! ONE COULD SAY YOU EVEN…” He leaned in so that their skulls were touching again. Sans leaned back as far as the couch cushions would allow him to. “LIKE HIM.”

Sans scrambled to find an answer to that, but he was too flustered to come up with anything but a string of half-formed words. “IN FACT, I THINK YOU LIKE HIM. AS IN, LIKE HIM, LIKE HIM. YOU LIKE HIM SO MUCH, IN FACT, THAT I BELIEVE YOU’D LIKE TO BE HIS…” Papyrus giggled in anticipation while Sans contemplated teleporting away to hide in some deep, dark hole where he’d never be found again, “FRIEND.”

...Oh. That didn’t go where Sans thought it was going to go. Thank the stars.
“WELL?!”

“uh... yeah, yeah, sure, i wanna be friends. now get away from my face, you’re practically kissing me.” Sans shoved Papyrus’s shoulders and stumbled to his feet, trying to put some distance between himself and his brother. He didn’t feel like having his personal space invaded so thoroughly.

It wasn’t any use, because Papyrus immediately tackle-hugged him to the floor. “I KNEW IT! I’M SO PROUD OF YOU SANS! I KNEW YOU COULD BE POPULAR LIKE ME SOMEDAY!”

“papyrus, please. you’re crushing my ribs.”

“OOO, SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHERE IS LUCIFER?” Papyrus shouted, ignoring his brother. Sans was going to go deaf at this rate.

“he went… on a trip…” Sans huffed, wriggling free of Papyrus’ deathgrip and crawling back onto his feet. He was too tired to deal with this.

“A TRIP?” Papyrus asked. His eye-sockets narrowed. “SANS… DID YOU DO SOMETHING TO OUR HOUSEGUEST?”

“what? no.” Papyrus inched closer, and Sans found himself backed into a corner.

“BECAUSE I FOUND THE LAST HUMAN YOU SENT ON A TRIP MISSING THEIR FINGERS AND THEIR TOES, HANGING UPSIDE-DOWN FROM A TREE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WOODS.”

“uh... i don’t remember that,” Sans said innocently.

“HMMM…” Papyrus leaned in again, and this time Sans pushed his face away.

“enough with the face! just... stay out of my face,” Sans groaned. Papyrus continued staring as if nothing had happened.

“I SUPPOSE I’LL GIVE YOU THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT. BUT I WILL WARN YOU - IT SAYS RIGHT HERE IN THIS BOOK THAT INTENTIONALLY LEADING A PERSON INTO HARMFUL SITUATIONS IS NOT A VERY GOOD WAY TO START A FRIENDSHIP!” Papyrus pulled a book out of somewhere and flipped to a certain page. “THIS BOOK ALSO HAS A BUNCH OF DATING ADVICE!”

“i’ll... keep that in mind.” Sans tried to escape again, but Papyrus had him thoroughly caged in. “are we done here?”

“OF COURSE NOT! WE MUST COME UP WITH A PLAN FOR YOU TO BEFRIEND LUCIFER, OF COURSE!” Papyrus picked Sans up and tossed him onto the couch like a football. “STAY RIGHT THERE! I AM GOING TO CHECK OUT VOLUMES TWO THROUGH TWELVE OF THE HANGOUT/DATING ADVICE SERIES FROM THE LIBRARY!”

Sans felt the house rattle as Papyrus slammed the door shut on his way out. Now Sans’ head was spinning - and he was most definitely not waiting around for Papyrus to come back. He staggered to his feet and walked out the door, heading for the Ruins.

“knock knock.”

Toriel was waiting for him, like always. “Who is there?”
“otto.”

“Otto who?”

“otto know. i’ve been forgetting things lately.”

Toriel giggled behind the door before knocking herself. “Knock knock.”

“who’s there?”

“Double.”

“double who?”

“W!”

Both of them snorted with laughter before settling down. “So, what is on your mind, my friend? How is Lucifer?” Toriel asked.

Sans sighed. “where do i start? kid’s kinda grown on me, you could say. he’s uh… well… in hotland right now.”

“Hotland? Why would he be in Hotland? I thought you said it had become toxic.”

“magically toxic,” Sans corrected. “i don’t think he needs to worry, being a human. probably. he offered to, uh… acquire us some food from the capital, and i couldn’t really say no.”

“He seems to care a great deal for all of you, then,” Toriel said. “I am glad Snowdin has been able to accept him.”

“well… they all don’t know he’s been staying with me an’ paps. so ‘accepted’ might be overstating it a little.”

“Oh… I see.” She sounded a little disappointed. “What about you, Sans? I’ve been so caught up with Lucifer that I haven’t gotten to hear about you lately. Are you well?”

Sans snorted. “i’ve been better. seems like no one in snowdin trusts me anymore. i’m usually just one to grin and bear it, but… i’d be lying if i said it didn’t hurt.”

“Perhaps the problem is not as severe as you believe,” Toriel said. “People’s faith waviers in times of distress. I am sure it is not personal. They will come around, you will see.”

“...i hope so. anyway, what about you? anything interesting happen in the ruins lately?”

“Nothing eventful. Ooo, I did find a large batch of snails for a snail pie later!”

“sounds awesome, tori,” Sans said, although he was lying a little. Most of Toriel’s recipes were pretty delicious - she’d shared a bunch of them with Sans, and he’d cooked a few back when they actually had cooking supplies - but snail pie was definitely not on his to-try list. “i should be getting back. paps is expecting me.” He groaned internally at the thought.

“Very well. See you later, my friend.”

Sans began walking back home, only to find a crowd of Grillby’s patrons hudled around his door. They all turned to him as he approached, a little surprised that he wasn’t in the house.
Sans immediately grew suspicious. “What is this?”

The ‘mayor’ of Snowdin, a large bear monster, stepped forward. “We just, um… came here to apologize. Uh, to you. For, um, spreading rumors.” He held out something - it was a handmade card. Sans took it and opened it; it was full of various apologies and ‘we love you’s,’ signed by everyone present. “We really, really do appreciate everything you’ve done for us, Sans. Sometimes, it just feels like nothing ever goes right in our lives, and… well. That doesn’t mean we should be distrusting the person that’s done so much to keep us all going. We can’t imagine the kind of stress you must be under, trying to keep us all fed and safe from the queen. We promise, nothing like this will happen again.”

“Aw, guys, you didn’t have to… ugh. S’okay. I forgive you,” Sans said. He actually felt like he was tearing up a little. “It happens. We uh… we’ve been in a pretty crummy situation for a while now, and that wears on people. So… thanks.”

The mayor looked happy. In fact, he walked forward and proceeded to crush Sans with a giant hug. Then the rest of them all came up and turned it into a giant group hug.

“Okay, okay, I get it! I love you all too. Now leggo a’ me, you’re crushing me with this bear hug.” Everyone chuckled and put Sans back on the ground before waving goodbye and heading off to their own homes.

For the first time in a very long time, Sans actually felt… serene. It was nice for a change. He opened the door and sat down on the couch, deciding that a nap was a great way to use this newfound serenity. He closed his eyes and--

“Brother! I have returned with the books!”

...well. It was nice while it lasted.

Chapter end notes

Fresh fluff here, getcha fluff here! We got bro fluff, goat fluff, everyone-in-Snowdin-fluff, getcha fluff here!
The Laboratory

Chapter Summary

Lucifer takes a detour.

Lucifer could now see why the region was named Hotland - the air was dry and stuffy, and stunk of noxious fumes. Far below him was a vast sea of magma - except, it was mostly cooled and solidified. The wavy black surface was split here and there by glowing cracks of heat, but for the most part, there didn’t seem to be much geothermal energy left in the area. That was why the Core had stopped working.

He doubted it would help much, but Lucifer pulled his shirt up to cover his nose; it was better than nothing. He looked around and saw the branching path Sans had mentioned - through the heat mirage, he could make out some sort of tall elevator shaft that led up to the next level. Hotland was a giant cavern with honeycombed bridges and rock formations stretched from side to side like some gigantic spider’s web.

More interesting, however, was the large building clearly labeled ‘Lab’ directly in front of him. It looked more or less abandoned. Sans hadn’t mentioned anything like that, had he? Lucifer couldn’t help but feel drawn to it.

He should just stay on the path Sans informed him of, he knew. It would be stupid to go poking around some abandoned laboratory filled with who-knows-what when he was supposed to be getting food. But… he was just so curious. Sans would probably say ‘curiosity killed the cat,’ if he were here.

But if Lucy was here, she would say ‘curiosity may have killed the cat, but satisfaction brought him back.’

...Lucifer was going to head into the lab for a quick look around. Just a quick look. He had fallen into an ancient cave filled with monsters for pete’s sake, and he wanted to indulge in a little adventure. Flirting with a skeleton could only entertain a person so much, right?

Lucifer pried the sliding doors open - the metal was hot enough that it began to sear his skin, but it didn’t have a serious effect. He squeezed his body through into the darkness ahead. He could barely see a thing - there wasn’t any electricity, nor were there windows. He probably should have thought of that beforehand.

He reached into the pocket of his jeans and pulled out a lighter - one of the very few possessions he had an attachment to. He hadn’t taken it out during his entire stay in the Underground for fear that the lighter fluid would run out. He flicked it open and used the dim light of the flame for a quick glance around; there was an elevator shaft up ahead. He snuffed the flame and returned the lighter to his pocket before feeling his way to the elevator. Apparently this shaft had also been converted to a ladder.

He slipped more than once on the way down, but luckily Lucifer was able to catch himself without any major mishaps. There was a soft glow beneath him - he headed towards it. He found himself in a long corridor lit by candles and what must have been battery-powered lamps. It was… rather eerie.
Lucifer immediately began thinking of all the poor choices people made in horror movies; he should leave. But that wouldn’t be any fun, so he continued down the path.

Lucifer froze when a quiet, tortured moaning drifted down through the corridors. He dropped into a hunter’s crouch and kept going forward, towards the source of the sound. He found it; there was some sort of fire elemental stuck inside a glass tube, slumped to the ground. She reminded him of Snowden’s barkeeper, actually, but green - a dark, cold, sickly shade of green. The tube-device was attached to some sort of machine. It looked like it was charging batteries of some sort.

Oh. That was… morbid.

Normally Lucifer would have kept walking, but his encounter with Onionsan and the Temmies got him thinking. Maybe this girl had a family somewhere - someone who cared about her. Thoughts like that usually flowed in one ear and out the other while Lucifer was on the surface, but here, it kept nagging at him. And the way she could barely make a sound as her life force bled away in the glass enclosure - it was disgusting. It made him sick. It… reminded him of something he didn’t want to be reminded of. Lucifer walked over to the thick cord connecting the tube and the machine and pulled it out of its socket. The machine powered down.

Lucifer planned on letting the girl out, but he wanted to make sure there was nothing else of importance here. Getting her out of the lab entirely was going to be very time-consuming. What he’d do with her after, well… he could figure that out later.

There was indeed someone else there - Lucifer could hear someone sobbing in one of the back rooms. Hopefully there weren’t roomfulls of people being drained to make batteries - his sudden spike of altruism wasn’t going to last long enough for that. He found himself in a room with a lizard-woman in a white lab coat, curled up into a corner as she sobbed quietly into her knees.

She jolted upright and scrambled to her feet when she realized she wasn’t alone in the room. “I-I’m s-so sorry, I-I was j-just…” She paused when she saw who she was apologizing to. “You’re… y-you’re a…”

“I’m not here to check up on you, if that’s what you’re thinking,” Lucifer said. Now he was very curious about what was going on. “Expecting someone else?”

“Wh… n-no - I-I mean, u-um--”

“Not the queen, I hope?” Lucifer asked, walking closer. The lizard-woman realized she was backed into the corner. “From what I hear, she’s a real bitch. It’d really suck to have her as a boss - is she your boss?” She could only form another string of meaningless stutters. “Cause she seems like she’s kinda fucked up the entire Underground. And if you were helping her, well… that’d mean there’s a lot of people out there that would have a bone to pick with you. A few friends of mine included.”

“I-It’s not her fault!” She screamed, almost desperately. She fell back down into her corner and buried her face in her knees again. Lucifer halted his approach. “I-It’s not her fault. It’s my fault, it’s all my fault everything is my fault I was supposed to keep the Core running and I failed and everyone is relying on her and she was relying on me and I failed I failed I failed everyone and now she’s gone because I can’t do anythingrightjustcan’ticant’Ican’t…”

Her rambling turned back to sobbing, as if she completely forgot Lucifer had just threatened her. In fact, he wouldn’t have been surprised if she’d forgotten his presence entirely. Lucifer stopped to get a good look at her - her lab coat was disheveled as if she hadn’t bothered to wash it in months, her glasses were scratched up and taped at the nose, and her yellow scales were pockmarked and thin-looking - it must have been an effect of whatever toxicity was affecting the region, eating away at her
Lucifer wasn’t sure what to do, or say. She had to have been some sort of scientist working for Undyne, but… Lucifer couldn’t seem to feel anything but sorry for her. This place was confusing. Unsure of what to do, Lucifer merely left the room and went back to the fire-girl. He pried open the door to the tube.

“Hey, can you hear me?” Lucifer asked. The fire-girl tilted her head slightly to look at him. “I’m gonna get you out of here, okay? Can you stand up for me?”

She tried to, but she slid back to the ground as soon as she made any progress. Sighing, Lucifer reached down and grabbed the back of her white shirt - it looked like some sort of beat-up school uniform, complete with a navy skirt. He didn’t want to touch her skin for fear of being burned.

He ended up touching it anyway when she stumbled and wrapped her arms around his neck, but luckily it didn’t hurt - in fact, she was barely warmer than he was. He just decided to pick her up and princess-carry her - she weighed almost nothing.

“Do you have a name?” Lucifer asked as he took her back to the elevator shaft.

The girl was barely breathing. “Fuku,” she whispered. It was all the sound she could muster.

“Alright, Fuku,” Lucifer said, adjusting his grip on her as he reached the ladder. “Try to hold onto me as best you can, alright? This is gonna be a long climb.”

Her loose grip on his shoulders became a little less loose, and he held her up with one arm while he tried to climb with the other. After a few rungs, it was apparent that this strategy wasn’t going to work.

“Alright, we’re going to try something else,” Lucifer said. “Put your feet on top of mine. Yeah, just like that. Now I’ll just take your hands and…” She was just barely short enough for this to work - he put his hands on top of hers and forced them to grab the rungs, slowly but surely making their way up the shaft. It took a long time, but they eventually reached the top. Lucifer collapsed onto the floor, exhausted; the lack of food was starting to catch up with him. He was starving - although Fuku had to have been much worse.

Lucifer looked around, the glow from Fuku’s body providing a little more light than his lighter had. There was an upper floor - dragging himself to his feet, he picked Fuku up again and brought her upstairs before laying her under a workbench that he found.

“Okay. I’m going to leave now and go get some food. I’ll come back for you when I’m done, okay? Just stay here and rest, and make sure no one finds you. Can you do that?”

“Yes,” Fuku said, curling up on the floor. “Th-Thank… thank you.”

Lucifer just nodded and smiled at her before leaving the lab and closing the doors again as much as he could. Hopefully the building could protect her from whatever radiation was in the area while he was away.

He filed all of the new information he’d learned away for later - Sans would probably be interested to know that he wasn’t the only victim of magic-draining. Lucifer guessed that he must have been more like a guinea pig - maybe the crying doctor down in the lab had refined the process, although clearly it wasn’t enough to power the Underground. It probably just provided energy for the military, and doubled as a convenient way to dispose of dissenters. Brutal, but efficient.
Lucifer tried to clear his mind as he approached the elevator shaft he was supposed to be ascending. He resolved not to take any more detours.
“no,” Sans said, trying to escape Papyrus’ bedroom. “absolutely not.”

Papyrus facepalmed as he blocked the doorway. “BROTHER, YOU ARE JUST IMPOSSIBLE TO WORK WITH SOMETIMES. IT SAYS RIGHT HERE THAT IF YOU WANT TO IMPRESS SOMEONE ON A HANGOUT AND BE THEIR FRIEND, YOU SHOULD DRESS FOR THE OCCASION!” Papyrus was of course referencing volume 3, page 47 of the hangout/dating advice series. Sans couldn’t exactly say he was a fan - in fact, if he ever met the author, well… there wouldn’t be a sequel series, he could say that much.

“WE DON’T KNOW WHEN HE’LL BE BACK, SO YOU’LL JUST HAVE TO WEAR IT THE ENTIRE TIME TO BE SAFE.” Papyrus pointed to the suit he had hung in his closet. It was, admittedly, a rather fine suit - navy blue and tailored pretty accurately to Sans’ body. Sans would probably look pretty handsome in it, if he would actually wear it.

Which was never going to happen, because he was not wearing a suit to impress Lucifer. One, because he didn’t care about impressing Lucifer, and two, because he’d take comfort over fashion any day of the week. He liked his blue jacket - he’d basically lived in it for years now. So what if it had a few stains?

“i am not wearing a suit,” Sans said, even though he knew Papyrus wouldn’t take no for an answer. His brother would tie him down and change him himself if he had to - Sans needed to logic his way out of this. ‘besides, uh… luce doesn’t have any fancy clothes. we wouldn’t want to embarrass him by dressing up all dapper, would we?”

“HMM…” Papyrus said, picking up a different book and flipping through it. “THAT IS A GOOD POINT. IT ALSO SAYS YOU SHOULDN’T TRY TO SHOW UP OR OUTDO THE OTHER PERSON. WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO DO?”

“why don’t we… sleep on this, yeah? c’mon, we got rounds to make.”

Just then, a frantic knock sounded on the door downstairs. The brothers looked at each other before rushing down the stairs and opening the door.

It was Snowdin’s ‘mayor.’ “Sans, the queen is here! What do we do?”

Sans’ eye-sockets widened. “make sure there’s no leftover food lying around, and just act natural. i’ll be there to deal with her in a few. papyrus, keep her distracted while i hide our friend downstairs. i don’t want her searchin’ our place and finding half a corpse in the basement.”

“OF COURSE, BROTHER. TAKE ME TO THE QUEEN, PLEASE.” The bear nodded and led Papyrus towards Grillby’s.

Sans snuck into the basement with a trash bag and stuffed the half-human inside before taking a shortcut to the Ruins. Luckily the adrenaline helped ease the flash of pain in his skull. He knocked
on the door loudly.

“Oh! Who is--”

“sorry, tori, but i don’t have time for knock-knock jokes. the queen’s here.”

Sans could hear her press her ear to the door. “What do you need me to do?”

“could you, uh… hide something for me? no questions asked?” The door slid open slightly, and Sans sighed with relief. “just… don’t open it, okay?” Sans tossed the bag next to the door, and a furry hand dragged it inside. “you’re a lifesaver, tori, literally in this case. thank you - i gotta go.”

“Stay safe, my friend,” Toriel said as the door closed once more and Sans walked away. He stopped by the hanging corpse and tugged it down, taking another shortcut to the pit of blue snow and tossing it in. Then he made a beeline for Snowdin.

“This isn’t GOOD ENOUGH!” Undyne screamed into Papyrus’ face. Sometimes the queen could be so inconsiderate - one wouldn’t see Papyrus shouting at the top of his lungs right in someone’s face. Still, it was very important that he kept Undyne busy while Sans was away. Oh, and to not make her angry. That was also important.

“I’M SORRY, UNDYNE,” Papyrus said. “THERE’S JUST NOTHING WE CAN DO UNTIL A HUMAN ACTUALLY FALLS DOWN! YOU KNOW HOW RARE THEY ARE.”

The queen gave him a vicious one-eyed glare. “That’s not what I’m talking about and you know it. I’m talking about the one that just escaped, you idiot! You’re part of the Royal Guard and it’s your job to catch them.”

“I AM AWARE OF THAT, UNDYNE, BUT THIS HUMAN WAS JUST TOO CLEVER AND SLIPPERY! IT KILLED ONE OF YOUR OWN ELITE GUARDS, REMEMBER? IF HE LOST TO THE HUMAN, YOU CAN’T POSSIBLY EXPECT A ROOKIE LIKE MYSELF TO OVERPOWER IT.”

“Don’t get smart with me;” Undyne growled, taking another step closer.

“OH, WHY THANK YOU! I AM VERY INTELLIGENT.”

Undyne blinked a few times, confused. It was at that point that Sans sauntered up.

Sans didn’t like how close Undyne was to his brother, but he couldn’t help smiling for some reason. In fact, the closer he got, the more his grin widened. It took every ounce of will he had not to start giggling hysterically at Undyne’s face, and he really couldn’t figure out why. This situation was just so funny for some reason. Maybe it was because Sans was imagining just how hilarious it would be to chain her down to the grill and have Grillby roast her alive. Or smoke her, even - that would take longer. Sans wouldn’t mind a fish dinner.


“human? haven’t seen a human around here for a few days. you didn’t run into it on the way here?” Thankfully, he didn’t chuckle. He was still grinning like a maniac, though.
Undyne summoned a spear and pointed it right at his eye socket. “Don’t *fuck* with me Sans. You know what’ll happen if you do. Either you let it go or you’re hiding it,” she tapped his sternum with the tip of the spear, “and either way, I am *not* happy.”

“since when are you ever happy?” Sans said. Snark wasn’t going to get him anything but trouble, he knew, but he just couldn’t help himself.

“W-What he means to say,” Ice Wolf stuttered, marching up and trying to separate the two, “Is that he did capture the human, but, um… it got away.”

“Oh really?” Undyne said. She matched Sans’ manic grin with a sadistic one of her own. “So you’re just incompetent, then. Maybe I need to station someone else in Snowdin, since you’re clearly still too lazy to do your job. It’s your fault we’re all still stuck down here, after all. If you’d done what you were supposed to we’d all be free by now, and we wouldn’t need to ration food supplies.”

Sans’ smile twitched violently and his eyelights shrank to pinpoints. “you and i both know that’s not true, you hypocritical little fish b—” Grillby had walked up behind Sans and promptly muffled Sans’ voice.

The mayor waved a little to get Undyne’s attention. “Well, you see your Majesty, it wasn’t actually Sans’ fault that it escaped. He had it all trapped up in the woods, but one of the elite guards came by and insisted he take it to you personally. He told Sans to go away, and by the time Sans came to reset the trap… it seems the human got the better of him.”

Undyne narrowed her good eye. “If that’s true,” she said, lowering her voice as she stooped down to look straight at Sans’ face, “then why didn’t you notify the rest of the guard when you found out? Because I only *just* heard that 02 was dead. I came here personally to make sure no one was thinking about committing *treason* .”

Sans had gotten control of himself by now. “i guess that was my bad. it’s just, well… the scene was pretty gruesome. blood everywhere, scales, severed fingers - i just couldn’t imaging seeing the look on 01’s face when i told him his hubby’d been tortured to death. this human’s really sick in the head; i mean, from the looks of it, it was probably hours and hours of agony. can you imagine a monster doing that to someone? it’d make us just as bad as the humans.” He stared straight at Undyne, pleased by how that statement seemed to get deep under Undyne’s skin. He peeked his head out from around her to see 01 standing behind her, shaking like a leaf. “oh. sorry, buddy, didn’t notice you were standing right there.”

The queen stared at Sans defiantly for a few moments before standing up and turning around. “Guards! Turn this entire town upside down, all the way up to the ruins. If you find *anything* remotely suspicious, you come straight to me. As for the rest of you,” she swept her gaze across the townsfolk, who shrunk away, “you’re all staying right here with me until they’re done. Wouldn’t want anyone slinking off and disposing of evidence, would we?”

Sans shifted uncomfortably. The guards would be thorough, he knew. All it would take was one misstep to get someone killed. “nope, we definitely wouldn’t want that.” He looked across the faces of the townspeople - none of them seemed any more nervous than one would expect them to be at the moment. Hopefully that was a good sign.
In and Out

Chapter Summary

Lucifer prepares to steal some supplies from the Royal Guard in New Home.

There was an annoyingly large number of guards between Lucifer and New Home, mostly concentrated at the only exit that didn’t seem to be boarded up or blocked off in some way. Lucifer could handle himself in a fight, sure, but he didn’t like his odds against half a dozen beefy, armored monsters that definitely outweighed him while unarmed. He really should have thought about asking Sans for a knife or a cleaver or something before he left, but it was already far too late for that.

The solution was to be clever about this, then - Lucifer might not be able to overpower half a dozen guards, but he definitely had experience with distracting that many.

“Help… help me…” he moaned from under the rock bridge, trying to sound desperate. Hopefully he could pull at least one of the guards away.

“Shut up out there!” One of them shouted. “No one in and no one out while the queen is away. Go die somewhere else.”

Well, that was rude. But, if it took being a nuisance to get into the city, Lucifer could manage that easily. He kept groaning, despite the guards’ warnings for him to shut up. Eventually, one of them got fed up and marched over to his location.

“C’mere so I can snap your neck and put you out of your misery, you little--” Except, Lucifer wasn’t there; he’d pressed himself into the underside of the rock bridge ninja-style, which was so, so much harder than it looked. He took a quick look over the guard and noticed that there was a sword attached to his belt. Excellent.

Lucifer dropped down and swung behind the guard before pulling the sword from its scabbard and jamming it straight into the gap in his armor at the neck. After a shout of surprise and a dying gurgle, the guard collapsed into dust to leave his armor to clatter on the ground.

The other guards heard the sound immediately, and three of them rushed away to find out what happened. Lucifer climbed across the underside of the bridge and resurfaced on the other side, right in front of the last two remaining guards as the three who’d broken off hopped down the rocks below in search of him.

One of the guards immediately rushed at him - he carried a giant mace - and tried to slam it straight down onto Lucifer’s head. Unfortunately for the guard, one of Lucifer’s best assets was his agility. He sidestepped and shoved his sword straight into the eye-slit in his armor as the guard tried to recover from the heavy swing, splitting his skull in two as he dissolved into dust.

The crack of a whip sent Lucifer sprawling to the ground - the other guard wasn’t quite as slow. Another lash left a cut down Lucifer’s lower lip and chin as the guard came down on top of him, grabbing the human’s neck with both of his hands and choking him.

The sword had fallen too far away to reach, and this monster was far too strong for Lucifer to break.
out of the grapple. Instead, he reached up and tugged off the guard’s helmet before turning it around and jamming the pointed cheek-guards straight into the monster’s eyes.

He howled in pain and Lucifer managed to wiggle free of his grip before grabbing the sword once more and decapitating the guard with three hacking swings. A spray of dark blood shot up to make a streak across his face and clothes - Sans would be proud. Lucifer immediately turned around and rushed into the city before the other guards could return, then slunk off into the shadows of the back alleys.

The city would be on full alert now, he knew, so there wasn’t really a point in rushing around. He took his time surveying the place - for what was supposed to be the Underground’s largest city, the streets were eerily empty and quiet. There were only a few pairs of eyes to avoid other than the roving guards, and they kept their heads down and shuffled to their destinations as quickly as possible. New Home was a city covered with a blanket of exhaustion and fear.

The garrison wasn’t terribly hard to find; it was centrally located as Lucifer expected, a few blocks away from the castle. Strangely, the castle wasn’t all that imposing - it had certainly seen better days, but the neglect lent it a more melancholy air than it did a menacing one. The architecture itself was inviting and almost whimsical, with soft curves and sweeping arches accenting the stonework. He couldn’t really imagine a spartan queen like Undyne living in there - all he could picture was some big, fatherly fairy-tale king. He wondered what the previous king Sans had mentioned was like; his name was Asgore, if memory served.

The garrison was more like what he expected; it was a newer building, sharp and severe with very little thought given to its aesthetic. It was clearly built for functionality. The security was lighter than what he thought it would be, but he supposed some of the soldiers might have been called away to look for him. Why would a human know about the garrison, after all?

He waited for a gap in the patrols before sneaking forward to one of the side entrances. Luckily, he’d kept the needle Sans had given him to break into the little Snowdin shop and began messing with the lock. Luckily, it wasn’t the most well-constructed lock he’d ever seen - they probably thought no one would be stupid enough to cross the Royal Guard.

He slipped inside the building just as the footsteps of the next patrol began to sound from around the corner. He took a thorough look around the building - apparently, all the guards were kept outside - and found that the garrison was actually relatively empty. There were plenty of weapons and armor; honestly, an excess of weapons because Lucifer doubted even the entire Royal Guard could actually employ half of them.

Lucifer finally found what he was looking for - the storeroom. There were crates upon crates of food stacked in here; this had to be where food for the whole military was kept and distributed. He was a little shocked - the food was just stacked up with no thought given to its preservation. There was raw meat sitting there, for pete’s sake, but oddly it all looked fine. He couldn’t find even a hint of spoilage. He decided to ask Sans about it when he got back, but for now he had work to do.

Now came the logistical problem of actually getting some amount of the stash back to Snowdin. He could just shove a bunch of stuff in his pockets and run off; it’d be the safest option in the long run since it wouldn’t actually hinder him if he needed to make a getaway, but it wouldn’t be all that helpful. Conversely, he could probably carry one of the crates back to make a real impact on things, but that would make him incredibly slow and easy to spot. Dilemmas, dilemmas.

Lucifer decided he might as well go big or go home. He left the room to peruse the armory for a set of armor that would fit him; after donning it (sloppily, because he had no idea how to put on armor), he went back to the food and started arranging one of the crates for him to take. He shuffled the
contents - if he was bringing back this much food, he might as well give the monsters some variety. Fruits, vegetables, bags of salt and flour and sugar, and plenty of meat. Actually, now that he was touching it, it didn’t feel exactly like meat. Strange.

Lucifer wrapped up the box with a tarp and lifted it up - oh, this was going to be much harder than he thought, especially while wearing armor. He should have thought this through more. Maybe he should try to find a smaller box and…

No. He was going to do this. The longer the food supply lasted, the longer Lucifer could stay down in his newfound paradise. The thought of having to run away from - or stars forbid, hurt - Sans or Papyrus once the food finally ran out made him feel sick to his stomach. He peeked out of the door he had entered through and waited for another gap in the patrol before walking out and heading straight for the gate.

He avoided the guard patrols when possible - he couldn’t run in this armor even if he wanted to, even ignoring the giant crate of food. Luckily, the few citizens that were out and about avoided him like the plague and the guards he couldn’t bypass didn’t seem to give him a second thought until he reached the gate out of the city.

“What are you doing with that?” One of the guards asked. The entrance had been doubly-reinforced now, and there was no way Lucifer was leaving any route but the direct one.

He thought quickly. “The queen is in need of resupplying,” Lucifer said, remembering the guards had told him she was away. “The problem is worse than she thought, apparently, and she’s going to be staying a while. She wants extra provisions brought her way.”

“I haven’t heard such a thing,” the guard said, looking at him suspiciously.

“The order just came in,” Lucifer continued. Ugh, this armor was torture - the way he’d put it on clearly wasn’t correct because the edges were digging into his skin in several places. Cutting into it, Lucifer corrected himself - he could feel a trickle of blood begin to drip down from under his arm as he shifted his grip on the box. He didn’t show the pain.

“Must not have gotten around yet with all the confusion going on. Look, man, I don’t want to be the guy that delivers Queen Undyne a late breakfast - I gotta get going.”

The guard snorted. “Yeah, I can imagine. Must suck being the guy that delivers through Hotland - don’t stay too long.”

“Will do,” Lucifer nodded gratefully as the guard stepped out of the way. Thank goodness. He made his way quickly through the gate and across the rock bridge. As soon as he was out of sight and made sure there were no prying eyes, he started shucking off the armor. He’d only been in Hotland again for a few minutes and the sweltering air was already making him dizzy.

Or, maybe it was the blood loss - Lucifer must have really screwed up when donning that armor, because there were very large blood stains all over his clothes now; on his legs, down his sides and arms, it even soaked through the collar of his shirt. Not to mention the ugly purple bruise that was forming around his neck from when the guard had tried to choke him. He needed to start looking after his own health a little more, because it would probably only deteriorate more the longer he stayed down here. He sighed and picked up the crate again, preparing himself for a very long journey back to Snowdin.
Undyne and the Royal Guards search Snowdin.

Snowdin’s town square surrounding the Gyftmas tree was dead silent as the queen and the townsfolk all waited for the Royal Guards to complete their search of the town. Sans and Undyne were locked in a death-stare match while Papyrus looked on uncomfortably.

Eventually the taller skeleton decided to break the silence. “SO… HOW HAVE YOU BEEN, YOUR MAJESTY? WE HAVEN’T HEARD FROM YOU IN A VERY LONG TIME.”

“Oh, I’ve been just great, Papyrus. The Core’s still kaput, and Alphys told me its beyond salvaging. The only human to fall down for months manages to slip right through your fingers, which means we still don’t have enough souls to get out of this place; and, to top it all off, it’s looking more and more likely that I have a whole town full of traitors underneath my rule.”

Undyne finally broke eye contact with Sans to glare at his brother instead. “What about you, Papyrus? You look terrible.” She swept her one-eyed gaze across the rest of the townspeople. “…and surprisingly well-fed, for how small our rations have been getting.”

“eh. I’m sure the fur makes ‘em look a little heavier than they actually are,” Sans shrugged. “and skeletons lose weight from the inside out. trust me, we’re all just as malnourished as you want us to be.”

Her gaze flicked back to Sans. “I don’t want anyone to be malnourished. But as long as we’re all stuck down here, we have to make our supplies last. If we were able to start collecting those souls, we wouldn’t have to deal with all that, now would we?”

“could’ve fooled me,” Sans said, “considering the last two food shipments we were supposed to be getting still haven’t come yet.”

Undyne smirked ever so slightly. “Really? I’ll have to have a word with my delivery boy.”

“oh, don’t concern yourself, your majesty,” Sans grinned. “worryin’ about your people is clearly beneath you. i mean, so what if a few dozen monsters all the way out here in snowdin starve to death, right? there’s that one human out there that needs a spear through the cranium.” Sans reached up and picked at his head wound - a tiny piece of bone chipped off and started leaking red. “we’re all behind you there. we all want revenge too, right guys? that’s so much more important than being fed.”

There were a few nervous murmurs of agreement, and Undyne’s smirk shifted into a venomous frown. She stopped looking at Sans. “Your head’s bleeding. You should get that checked out.”

“hmm? oh, this thing.” Sans reached up and touched the wetness leaking from his skull before smearing it between his fingertips. “eh, i’m sure it’s fine. it happened in some freak accident - you wouldn’t believe me if i told you.” Undyne could feel Sans boring holes into the back of her neck.

One of the Royal Guards returned, and Undyne marched up to him immediately. “What did you
“This way, my queen,” he said, walking east. The crowd followed as Undyne was led to the skeleton brothers’ house and down into the basement. Sans immediately felt a rush of panic and pushed forward to see what the guard had found.

And then, the answer became painfully obvious. Sans had hidden the body, but the bloodstains from when he’d butchered it still remained. They were all over the floor, mixed with all the different fluids and chemicals Sans had been using to preserve the body. He’d learned that lesson quickly - the body hanging from the tree and the ones in the snow pit were all inedible because the meat had spoiled. It was a new concept for him, since monster food lasted indefinitely, and had taken more than a few tries to get right.

How had he forgotten something so blatantly obvious? The jig was up now - Sans would have to take the fall for everything to make sure Papyrus wasn’t implicated. Undyne would either kill him on the spot and make an example of him (right in front of his brother, he couldn’t let that happen) or take him back to New Home and subject him to… anything she wanted, really. He didn’t even want to think about it.

Undyne turned to face him slowly, sadistic smile fully displayed on her face. “That’s a lot of blood, Sans,” she said, walking up one step on the staircase leading to the basement so that she towered over him. “Just what could that be from?”

Sans prepared himself to fess up. He’d say that he captured a human earlier and kept it down here just to spite her. Only one, and no one else knew about it. And then he’d--

“I-It’s mine,” Ice Wolf stuttered, pushing through the crowd to stand in front of the queen. Sans froze.

“…What?” Undyne frowned, looking up at the furry monster. “Why would your blood be in his basement?” She turned back to Sans, who was still too stunned to elaborate.

“I-I…” Ice Wolf gulped before taking a deep breath. “I… expressed some doubts about… about the monarchy,” he said, voice trailing off to a whisper. “S-So Sans taught me a lesson. It’ll never happen again, I promise.”

Undyne walked up to him and observed him closely; she paid special attention to the shallow cut down his chest. When had that happened? Sans thought he would have remembered an injury like that. In fact, Ice Wolf had several scratches all over his body.

Undyne’s expression shifted to something between disgust, frustration, and suspicion.”Sans doesn’t strike me as the kind of person to uphold the law so strictly,” she said quietly, turning back to the skeleton.

“we uh… these are desperate times,” Sans said, still staring at Ice Wolf. He felt like he was forgetting something important. “last thing we need is anarchy. can’t afford to be questioning the government now, even if it has the occasional hiccup.”

Something in the queen’s expression turned dark. “…Well then. Thank you for your loyal service to the crown, Sans,” she said slowly. She leaned in close to him. “Next time, though, you don’t have to be so lenient,” she whispered.

With one swift movement, Undyne spun around, summoned a spear, and drove it straight up into Ice Wolf’s ribcage before ripping it out with a shower of blood and a whimper not unlike a kicked dog.
“Let’s go!” She called to the guards above as she marched back up the stairs. “We’re done here.”

As soon as the queen disappeared over the lip of the stairwell, Sans rushed over to kneel by the werewolf. He tried to cover the spear wound with his hands.

“S...sorry,” Ice Wolf whimpered, choking up blood. It started to trickle out of the corner of his mouth.

“what the hell are you apologizin’ for? shut up and save your air,” Sans said quietly, trying to add more pressure to stop the bleeding. Damn him and his skinless hands, the blood was pouring out straight past his metacarpals and--

“For not telling you… about Shyren,” Ice Wolf coughed weakly. “You’re the… real leader of Snowdin. Didn’t mean to… make you feel…”

“i told you to shut the fuck up,” Sans snapped. He looked up at the monsters crowded in the stairwell, looking down at him. Sans felt small all of a sudden. “what are you all standing around for? either do something or give us some air to--”

Ice Wolf’s brown fur turned grey as his body dissolved into dust, cascading down the steps. Sans let his hands fall slack to his sides. He let out a chuckle, and it morphed into a fit of low, giggling laughter while he stared at the mess of red and grey on his basement stairs.

Sans’ head snapped up when he felt a heavy paw rest on his shoulder. It was the mayor. “We’ll… gather the dust for the funeral,” he said quietly, offering Sans a hand up.

Sans got up on his own. His fingers of his axe hand were twitchy - he hooked a few of them through his eye socket to keep them still, leaving a bloody handprint on his skull. It was uncomfortable, but Sans was too dazed to notice. “right. funeral.” He set his gaze on the slippers. “we’ll have to get someone else to crank the hand generator, then. someone’s gotta charge a few batteries for us.”

He started walking up the stairs, and everyone moved out of his way. Everyone except Papyrus, who waited at the top of the stairs. “BROTHER… ARE YOU ALRIGHT?”

“sure bro, i’m fine. mind movin’ out of the way? i wanna go get cleaned up.”

“...OKAY,” Papyrus said quietly, stepping aside. “I’LL… BE AT HOME.”

Sans kept walking north through the woods behind his house until he reached the river. He absentmindedly pulled off his clothes and hung them on one of the trees before sliding into the shallower water near the bank. Sure, it was cold, but Sans had a pretty wide range of temperature tolerances being a skeleton.

He started scrubbing at his bones while he gave the water in front of him a thousand-yard stare. He didn’t feel clean.
Lucifer returns to the Hotland lab.

Lucifer set the crate down with a grunt at the top of the lab stairs, pushing it to the side as he flexed his sore muscles and caught his breath. In hindsight, that giant box of food had been a terrible idea. He had to construct a makeshift pulley contraption out of the dysfunctional elevator cables in order to get it down the ladder-shafts - something that he really should have thought of beforehand, because this trip was taking him much, much longer than he’d been planning on. It was impossible to tell time down here, but judging by the sleeping breaks he’d been forced to take it had to have been at least a few days. It was honestly a challenge for him not to eat through half the crate; between the blood loss, excessive sweating, and the malnutrition that had already shown up, his body had finally reached its limits. Luckily, even just a little monster food did a pretty amazing job of keeping him healthy.

He grabbed an apple out the crate and walked over to Fuku’s hiding place. Her glow was barely visible, even in the darkness of the lab - he reached out and shook her shoulder.

“Hm…” she sighed. She was barely breathing.

“I got you some food,” Lucifer told her, putting the apple into her hands. She couldn’t even close her fingers around it, so he grabbed it again and put it up against where her mouth would be. The green fire began to lick at it, slowly burning it away. Her flames began to brighten, and her eyes flickered to life.

“Feeling better?” Lucifer asked as Fuku began to sit up. She took the apple from him.

“Y-yes. Thank you,” she said. Her voice sounded hoarse. “You… actually came back for me.”

“I told you I would, didn’t I?” Lucifer smiled. Her voice reminded him of someone. “I’ll be right back to take you somewhere safe, so just finish that and wait for me. Got it?” She nodded, and Lucifer walked back down to the elevator shaft to get to the lower levels. He wanted to visit someone.

The yellow lizard-woman was in the room with the magic-draining chamber, behind the giant control panel with an array of tools sprawled out on the floor next to her. Once again, she was too oblivious to notice him approaching.

Lucifer cleared his throat and she immediately squeaked in surprise, banging her head on the frame of the device she was halfway inside of as she tried to stand up. Her white labcoat was covered in grease stains.

“Y-You again,” She said, backing away from him. “What… w-what do you want?”

Lucifer studied her from afar. “Honestly… I’m not really sure,” he admitted. “Curiosity, you could say.” He looked around the room. “You’re an engineer?”

She glanced around nervously. “N-Not a very good one,” she said.
Lucifer shrugged. “Doesn’t seem to be anyone better around here. What’s your name?”

“Dr. A-Alphys,” she said, clutching her fingers together.

Lucifer leaned up against a wall casually. “Well then, Dr. Alphys. I’m relatively new in town and I was wondering if you might enlighten me a little,” he said, giving her an unnerving stare. “You seem to know the queen, and apparently you don’t think she’s the homicidal bitch I’ve been told about, so why don’t you give me her side of the story?”

“I-I don’t… why are you--”

“Just answer me,” Lucifer said. “I’m honestly not here to hurt you - unless you piss me off. I just want to know a little more about what’s going on down here.”

“Y-You d-don’t… you don’t know the k-kind of stress she’s under,” Alphys said.

“It seems like everyone’s under a lot of stress down here. Doesn’t mean everyone’s sucking the life out of their own kind to make flashlights,” Lucifer smirked. Honestly, the way Alphys got flustered constantly was more than a little amusing.

“She’s n-not… y-you just don’t understand,” Alphys said, voice cracking as she swiped her hands under glasses. “She puts the weight of e-everyone’s problems on her shoulders,” she said, glancing away. “And things only… k-keep getting worse. A-And none of it’s her f-fault, i-its all beyond her control or…” she stared at the tips of her fingers, “o-other people’s failures. She j-just looks for someone to b-blame, and it leaves…” she turned her gaze toward the glass chamber Fuku had been in, “collateral d-damage.”

“A lot of collateral damage, from what I’ve heard.” Lucifer said, crossing his arms. “You seem so ready to defend her. She must appreciate the loyalty, at least,” he said, watching Alphys’ reaction. She looked as if he’d just slapped her.

“I’m not worth anything to her,” she said, and it was the first sentence out of her mouth that Alphys actually sounded sure about. “I’m just the fraud of a scientist that let the entire Underground go to hell. She knows that. E… Everyone knows that.”

“You’re still here, aren’t you?” Lucifer asked. Alphys blinked at the question. “What position do you have, anyway?”

“I’m the R-Royal Scientist,” she said.

“So you were appointed by the queen, then?”

“K-King A-Asgore, actually. B-Before he… before he…”

“Well, he clearly saw something inside you, then,” Lucifer said. He knew an inferiority complex when he saw one, and it made his blood boil just a little. It unearthed some long-buried resentment in his cache of memories. “So quit sulking and use it. If you built all of this, clearly you have some kind of skill.”

“It’s n-not that simple,” Alphys stuttered. “I c-can’t just m-magically fix a p-problem that--”

“Nothing’s ever simple,” he said, stalking towards her. She backed up into a corner, heart beginning to beat faster. “So if you want her to love you, stop being a coward and do something to earn it.”

Her voice caught in her throat, surprised. “I-I d-don’t… She--”
“I could see it in your eyes,” Lucifer said, rolling his own. “I’ve never even met her and I can see it written all over your face.”

Alphys tried to respond, but the sound of someone climbing the ladder behind them made them both freeze. Lucifer pinned her to the wall by her throat, making her look up at him in fear.

“If you tell anyone I’m here, I’ll make sure you’re dead before I leave this room,” he threatened in a harsh whisper. “So I’d consider keeping your mouth shut.” He let her go and crawled into the wires of the machine, grabbing the missing panel and clicking it in place as someone else entered the room.

“There you are,” someone said. It was a female voice, deep and gruff. “Do you have the new battery packs?”

“R-Right over here,” Alphys said, walking away from the corner.

“Should I even bother asking if you made any progress on the Core?” The other woman said. She sounded tired.

“N… no,” Alphys said. “I… I’m sorry, Undyne. B-But… um…” She took a deep breath, and Lucifer could almost feel her glance at his hiding place. “I h-have a few theories I’m g-going to try. They p-probably won’t work, but… at l-least it’s something.”

“Oh… that’s good,” Undyne said, and a sliver of the exhaustion left her voice.

It was silent for a moment. “A-Are… are you d-doing alright?” Alphys asked.

“I’m fine,” Undyne said, almost defensively. “Just focus on whatever sciencey crap you’re doing. I need to get back to New Home.”

“O-Okay,” Alphys said quietly. “U-Um… if… i-if you ever n-need a check-up, o-or, u-uh, if your e-eye ever acts up… y-you c-can…” she trailed off.

Lucifer could almost imagine a soft smile creep onto Undyne’s face. “I appreciate that, Alphys,” she said, and Lucifer could hear that same smile. He knew there was a depth to their relationship he’d never fully understand. “I’ll see you later.”

Lucifer waited until he could no longer hear what he assumed were the sounds of her armor before he crawled out of the machine. Alphys jumped, as if she had forgotten he was there. “Thank you,” Lucifer said, straightening his clothes. She didn’t respond. He decided to join her in staring off at nothing in thought.

He didn’t have a doubt in his mind about his theory on the monsters now. They really did have a depth he’d never believed humans capable of - even Undyne, the terrible monster queen that Sans hated more than anyone, was clearly a complex person. A person obviously capable of egregious mistakes that many of her subjects would likely never forgive (and Lucifer probably wouldn’t, either, considering the suffering she put his new home through), but a person nonetheless.


“W-Wait,” Alphys said as he began to walk away. “C-Could I… c-could I ask a favor from you?” she asked, before freezing up as she realized she was asking favors from a human that had just threatened her life.

“Is it something for the Core?” Lucifer asked, and Alphys nodded. “What is it?”
Alphys began sweating through her scales somehow. “U-Um… c-could I take a blood sample? F-From you?”

Lucifer narrowed his eyes suspiciously. “What for?”

“U-Uh… h-humans have special q-qualities that monsters d-don’t have, and I think a l-living one might have something I can w-work with. B-But, um, Undyne won’t… leave any of them alive.”

Lucifer raised an eyebrow at her. “Alright. Make it quick.”

“R-Right,” Alphys said, looking around for an empty syringe. Lucifer stuck out his arm, pulling up his sleeve. He watched her closely, making sure she wouldn’t be putting anything in him. He looked away as she started to draw the blood; he wasn’t squeamish with gore by any means, but he couldn’t say he was a fan of needles. At all.

“O-Okay. Thank y-you,” Alphys said, and Lucifer nodded as she wrapped a strip of gauze around his arm. “M-Maybe… maybe we’ll see each o-other again someday?”

“Maybe,” he said, heading back to the ladder. He walked back to Fuku, who was sitting patiently beneath the workbench. “Come on, let’s go,” he said. “Have you ever been to Snowdin?”
Lucifer finally finishes his excursion into the rest of the Underground.

“knock knock,” Sans said, rapping his knuckles on the Ruins door.

“...Hello, Sans,” Toriel responded.

Sans’ already weak smile faltered. “heh... that’s not how the joke goes, you know,” he said, trying to diffuse the tension even though he knew it was pointless.

The door creaked open and a white hand pushed a bag out into the snow before shutting the door once again. Sans felt his soul sink in his chest.

“did you look?” he asked, voice flat.

“...No. But I believe I surmised its contents,” she said quietly. Sans could hear her take in a shaky breath. “Did... did she suffer?”

Sans closed his eye sockets as he let his skull thump against the door tiredly. “don’t do that to yourself, tori,” he said.

“Just answer the question,” she said.

“...i made it quick,” Sans told her. It was more a bending of the truth than a lie. The axe swing had been quick, even if the other things... hadn’t.

“That is not what I asked and you know it,” Toriel said.

Sans felt his fingers begin to tap in the snow. “i don’t think so.”

“The truth,” Toriel said. Sans could hear the tears on her voice.

Sans remembered the girl - what was her name? Ginger. It had been a day that Sans was in too foul a mood to entertain Papyrus’ puzzles. He scared her right out of the gate, and she ran. He remembered taking his time, leisurely following the sound of snapping branches and the trail of blood from her hand along the trees. He remembered finding her crawling, barbed wire trailing behind her and dragging from her ruined leg. He remembered his own manic laughter drowning out the sounds of her begging for her life, because everything about the situation had just been so, so funny and Sans didn’t know why. He remembered the warmth of her blood spraying onto his clothes as the axe came down. He remembered Papyrus’ confused expression when Sans told him he’d just found her like this, all while holding her head behind his back by her curly red hair.

“i could have been quicker,” Sans said simply.
Toriel nodded to herself behind the door. “I… I am sure it was not your fault. The new traps and puzzles in Snowdin are… less friendly, are they not? As mandated by the Queen?”

Sans didn’t know whether he wanted to laugh or sob at the irony. “…yeah.”

“How… how is Lucifer? Has he returned? Did the queen…?”

It felt like another punch to Sans’ nonexistent gut. It had been almost a week now, and Sans had checked back at the border of Hotland and Waterfall as often as he could. Lucifer was probably either dead, or if he was smart, he was finding a way out of the Underground. Either way, he wasn’t coming back, and Sans should’ve known he wouldn’t. He should’ve axed him the moment they met, because the sting he felt was both painful and frustrating.

“the queen doesn’t have ‘im, as far as i know. but i don’t know how he’s doing, either. he left town a while ago, and he hasn’t come back.”

“I see,” Toriel sighed. There was silence for a moment. “Well, I am sure he will return. You seem to have become very close, and he seems very resourceful.”

“he’s just another human,” Sans said, and he was surprised to find a note of bitterness in his voice. How stupid was he? Stupid enough to let him live. Stupid enough to care about him. Stupid enough to make a deal with him, becauseSans hated breaking deals and promises.

“Are you so certain?” Toriel asked, and there was something knowing about her tone. “Perhaps you should check one more time before you give up on him.”

“what’s that supposed to mean?” Sans asked.

“…Nevermind. I am just a silly old lady who worries too much. You should not take everything I say seriously.” More silence. “I… have some things I must attend to. Let me know if you find him, will you not?”

“sure thing, tori,” Sans said, getting up and walking towards Waterfall. Why not humor her? It’s not like he had anything better to do.

He began to feel suspicious when he saw a green glow forcing its way through the darkness at the mouth of Waterfall’s entrance. He readied his axe. Sans lowered it when he realized it was a fire-elemental girl in a ragged school uniform, barely managing to carry along an enormous crate. She set it down as he approached her.

“who the hell are you?” he asked.

“I’m Fuku,” she said, brushing at the flames atop her head as if they were hair. “Are you Sans?”

Sans raised a bone-brow. “what if i am?”

She nudged the crate forward. “Um… this is for you. From a friend. I was hoping, in exchange, I… might be able to stay here? I have family in Snowdin.”

Sans narrowed his eyes as he tried to peer under the crate’s lid. “you’re grillbz’ niece, aint’cha?” She nodded as he pushed the lid open a little bit to reveal the stash of food inside. The sight - not to mention the smell - almost made Sans weak in the knees. Stars, Lucifer had outdone himself. This was…

“where’s your ‘friend,’ then?” He asked. He’d be damned if he let Lucifer get away with giving him
a farewell gift and then leaving.

“He’s waiting for you in the Temmie Village,” Fuku said, smiling. “He said, um… that it was best if he waited for you to escort him back to Snowdin for some reason? He didn’t say why.”

Sans chuckled to himself. “Alright, then,” he said, looking up at her. “Welcome to Snowdin, Fuku. Why don’tcha go find my brother Papyrus and have him help you put this stuff away, yeah?” She nodded and began walking towards town. “Hey… you moved to new home after Hotland went to shit, right?” She nodded again. “You didn’t get this from a friend. you brought it with you after you escaped new home to come live with your uncle. you get me?”

“O-Of course,” Fuku said, nodding once again.

good. if anyone asks, i’m out tailin’ the queen and this conversation never happened.” He began to trudge through Waterfall.

“Oh, this is so nice! Thank you!” Onionsan said as Lucifer held out a small tray of sushi rolls. He shuddered as Onionsan’s slimy tentacles grabbed it from his palm.

“My pleasure,” Lucifer said, walking towards Temmie Village. “Maybe I’ll see you around again sometime.”

“Oh, I hope so! Have a nice time!” The octopus sunk back beneath the water as Lucifer looked around with his lighter once again. He watched for the glow of the Temmies’ wishing stone.

“Ooh, its coot hunan!” Temmie said as she bounded up to him. She looked far better than the last time he had seen her.

“Oh, you flatterer,” he chuckled, walking into the little village and sitting down by the entrance. Temmie climbed into his lap and she sighed as he stroked her fur. “Are you feeling better?”

“Mm hmm. Tem has no temmie flake and no hurty now.”

“That’s nice to hear,” he said, staring up and the dimly glowing stone on the ceiling. He sighed contentedly. “Hey, Temmie,” he said. “Would you mind if I made a wish?”

“Ooh, yes hooman makes a wishes! Temmie wan to kno wish.”

He kept staring. “I wish the monsters would get what they deserve someday.”

Temmie nuzzled against his stomach. “That nice wish.”

Lucifer heard a knock on the stone beside him. It was Sans. “There you are. I was wondering when you’d show up.”

“that’s not how it goes. you’re supposed to say ‘who’s there?’”

Lucifer snorted. “I’ll remember that next time. How are things back home?”

Home? Did Lucifer really think of Snowdin as home? “the good ol’ queen gave us a visit,” Sans said, and Lucifer immediately turned to look at him. “so about as well as you think they’d be.”

“Is everyone okay?” Lucifer asked.

“no,” Sans said simply, sitting down next to him.
He jolted when he felt Lucifer’s hand on his back. “I’m so sorry,” he said. “It wasn’t… because of me, was it?”

Of course it was, Sans wanted to say. If he’d killed him earlier, he wouldn’t have to deal with Undyne being suspicious or an extra mouth to feed or any of the shit he’d been dealing with. “nah. wasn’t related to you.”

Sans was about to mentally curse himself, but he realized there were other things he wouldn’t have without the human and his lack of sanity. Someone rational, if not sane, to keep him company, or to test out his sadistic pranks on, or the giant crate of food that admittedly was going to last much, much longer than Lucifer’s scrawny body would have. So, maybe there were pros and cons and not just cons.

“If you say so. Can we get back home safely?” Lucifer asked. There was that word again. Home.

“sure thing, kid. thanks to you, looks like we’re in store for an extra-special dinner tonight.” They both stood up, and Sans felt a wave of relief hit him. Honestly, Sans felt an urge to hug the human that he immediately fought down because what on earth was wrong with him?

He sighed as they began walking back to Snowdin. Lucifer had a way of screwing with his already screwed-up mind. He was in way over his skull.

Chapter End Notes

So, this story may or may not be on a brief hiatus while the author deals with finals and other such things. It depends on if he can find time to write or not, but if not, it may be two weeks or more. Or maybe he'll keep writing instead of studying. Who knows?

But hey, at least we finally finished this story arc after... six chapters of our main characters being separated, right?
**Status Quo**

Chapter Summary

Sans, Papyrus, and Lucifer share a dinner.

Chapter Notes

So, you know how I said there might be a hiatus? Well, I lied, have a thing. Because who needs to study for calculus exams, right?

“Admit it - you missed me,” Lucifer smirked as he sat down on the skeletons’ couch. Finally, he could relax - that whole ordeal had been interesting, sure, but there was a certain comfort in returning to normalcy. Well, whatever Lucifer actually considered normalcy.

“yeah, like i’d miss a headache,” Sans rolled his eye-lights playfully. “except, well… i always have a headache. so damn hard to get rid of both of ya.”

“I didn’t know you were trying,” Lucifer said. “So, what’s for dinner? Did Fuku get you the crate? I hope it was alright that I told her she could stay here. Did I bring enough? I didn’t know if--”

“don’t know, yes, it’s fine, and you brought plenty. i still got no clue how you managed to pull that off. you gotta tell me what happened,” Sans said. “did fuku help you out or somethin’?” He sat down next to Lucifer, and found his mood had improved in spite of himself. This whole ‘attachment’ thing was dangerous, he knew - he’d already proved it to himself when he thought Lucifer wasn’t coming back. So why couldn’t he stop himself from enjoying his company?

“It was the other way around, actually,” Lucifer said, crossing his arms behind his head. “I may have offed a few guards on the way in and impersonated one on the way out - there’ll definitely be a scene when Undyne gets home. As for Fuku, I found her in some weird lab with someone named Alphys. She was in some sort of magic-draining thing, so I… liberated her.”

Sans’ grin fell. “wait... you went into the lab? why?”

Lucifer glanced away, embarrassed. “I was just a little curious.”

Sans was mildly perturbed, and he didn’t really know why. Why should he care? “...how’s al doing?” he asked, deciding not to think about it for now. His mind was muddled enough as it was without adding the confusion Lucifer always seemed to bring along with him.

“You know her?” Lucifer asked. “I didn’t think you two would get along, considering she works for the Queen.”

“I knew her a long, long time ago,” Sans sighed. “back when i used to be a physicist. she uh… she drew a pretty shitty hand of cards in her lifetime. i don’t really blame her for any of this,” he said, gesturing vaguely.
“You used to be a physicist?” Lucifer asked, surprised. He’d never have taken Sans for the scientific type.

“an even longer time ago,” Sans said dismissively. “that was… hell, that had to have been a few decades before even frisk came here.”

Lucifer blinked. “Decades… just how old are you?”

“it’s rude to ask a skeleton his age, you know,” Sans winked at him. “honestly, i stopped counting. one-sixty, one-seventy, somewhere in there. depends on the monster, but a lot of us live a lot longer than humans, assuming we’re healthy. in your terms i’d be, uh…” he did the mental math, “late twenties, i guess? to be honest, though, i doubt i’ll last long enough be an old man.”

“Learn something new every day, I guess,” Lucifer said. “Say, if you don’t know what’s for dinner… mind if I cook tonight?”

Sans turned to look at him. “you, cook? why?”

Lucifer shrugged unconvincingly. “There’s just something I wanted to try. I can mix in some human meat and some of the new stuff. Does monster food not spoil or something, by the way?”

“kitchen’s all yours,” Sans said. “just make enough for everyone. and yeah, it doesn’t spoil. your human stuff is weird.”

Just as Lucifer got up and headed towards the kitchen, Papyrus burst through the front door. “GASP! LUCIFER, YOU HAVE RETURNED! THIS IS WONDERFUL!” He dashed forward and tackle-hugged him to the ground, and Sans got up to close the door. “I SAW ALL OF THE DELICIOUS FOODS YOU BROUGHT BACK! YOU ARE SUCH A GOOD FRIEND!”

Lucifer giggled and hugged him back. “It’s good to see you too, Papyrus,” he said.

Papyrus’ face lit up as if he’d had an idea. “SPEAKING OF FRIENDS…” his head twisted slowly to look at Sans, and the shorter skeleton immediately felt uncomfortable. “SANS HAS SOMETHING HE WANTS TO TELL YOU. DON’T YOU, SANS?”

“no. nuh uh, we’re not doing this.”

“WHY ARE YOU SO IMPOSSIBLE?” Papyrus groaned, getting off of Lucifer and marching over to Sans. “TELL HIM. NOW!”

“no way. i’m not playing this game. don’t you have traps to set or - hey! let go of me! put me down, papyrus, i’m not playing arou--gah!” Papyrus picked Sans up, carried him over to Lucifer (who was still laying on the ground), and suspended him in the air so his face was hovering about an inch above Lucifer’s.

“JUST SAY IT,” Papyrus said.

“stars above, all i said was i wanted to be--” Papyrus dropped Sans right on top of Lucifer, making their foreheads smack together. They both shouted in pain as Sans scrambled to get off of him. “what the hell, papyrus?!”

“WAIT! YOU CAN’T SAY IT YET! YOU NEED TO BE DRESSED NICELY WHEN YOU PROPOSE!”

Lucifer blushed. “Propose?”
Sans was somewhere between rage, mortification, and debilitating laughter. “i ain’t proposin’ nothin’! and i sure as hell ain’t puttin’ on that monkey suit you got upstairs!”

“YES, YOU ARE! AND THEN YOU’RE GOING TO…” Papyrus gasped loudly and smacked his hands to the sides of his skull. “OH NO! I FORGOT THAT IT’S ALMOST DINNER TIME SOON! I CAN’T GET YOU DRESSED AND COOK THE TOWN’S MEAL AT THE SAME TIME WITHOUT RISK OF SPOILING YOUR CLOTHES! OH, THIS IS JUST TERRIBLE!”

‘Monkey suit’ was all Lucifer needed to hear. He grinned slyly and glanced toward the kitchen. Sans saw it, and his eyelights shrank.

don’t you dare leave me with him,” Sans growled.

Lucifer’s smile only got wider. “Oh, I can cook dinner for you, Papyrus. It’s the least I could do, since you’ve been such a gracious host.”

Sans prepared to strangle Lucifer as Papyrus knelt down and wrapped his arms around Sans like a vice, leaning down into Lucifer’s face. “REALLY?”

“Absolutely,” he smirked, looking directly at Sans. Papyrus jumped up, carrying Sans over his head.

“SEE, SANS? I TOLD YOU HE MAKES AN EXCELLENT FRIEND! COME ON!” He sprinted up the stairs towards his room.

“you’re a dead man, luce, you hear me? you’re - papyrus. papyrus, the door fra--”

Smack. Sans’ jaw collided with the doorway, and he moaned loudly as Papyrus slammed the door shut. Lucifer brushed himself off and headed towards the kitchen.

It had taken a little over an hour for Papyrus to finish whatever he was doing to Sans upstairs. The first half hour or so sounded like a heated argument, accompanied by the occasional sound of something being knocked over; the second half was mostly just Sans groaning defeatedly. Regardless, it had been ample time for Lucifer to finish his culinary concoction, and he had just finished cleaning his hands of flour when he heard the door to Papyrus’ room open.

He stepped out into the living room to watch Sans shuffle down the stairs one at a time, hands stuffed in his pockets and wearing the ugliest expression Lucifer had ever seen. Papyrus stood on the upper floor balcony, beaming proudly.

Sans was in a suit - navy blue with a white button-up shirt underneath, complete with a bow-tie and a pair of shiny black shoes. Evidently even Papyrus wasn’t able to get him to tuck his shirt in because it hung out past the suit-coat; his laces were united, the bow-tie was off-center, and the pants were just a little too long.

Lucifer caught himself staring, though, because damn did Sans look good in a suit, sloppy or not. He felt like his heart skipped a beat.

Papyrus cleared his non-existent throat expectantly, and Sans sunk further down towards the ground. “…do you wanna be friends?” he mumbled.

Lucifer fell to his knees as a fit of hysterical laughter bubbled out of his mouth. He tried to cover his mouth with his hand as Sans gave him the most murderous glare he’d ever seen, but it didn’t help
“Yes,” Lucifer managed to choke out. Papyrus danced up and down giddily before rushing down the stairs and picking up the both of them in a giant hug.

“Oh, I’m so excited for you two! It’s alright to be emotional, Sans. You can cry, too.” Indeed, tears began to roll down Lucifer’s face as his laughter fit continued. “So, Lucifer, what culinary masterpiece have you made for us tonight?” He set them back down.

Lucifer tried to catch his breath. “There’s… pfft! There’s a meat pie in the oven,” he said.

“A… meat pie? Not… spaghetti?” Lucifer nodded. “You humans are strange. Oh well, I’m sure it will be good anyway.” Papyrus went into the kitchen to serve up dinner.

Lucifer sighed as he wiped at his eyes. “I’m sorry. But you have to admit that this situation is hilarious.” Sans just kept up his death glare. “In all seriousness, though… you look pretty damn hot in a suit. Feel free to use me to get it dirty any time you want,” he winked, and Sans couldn’t help but roll his eyes at the double entendre.

Yeah, well take a good look ‘cause this thing’s never bein’ worn again.” Sans said. He forced his hands deeper into his pockets. “Ugh. Why do I feel naked with so many layers on?”

“Well, I bet you’d still look hot either way,” Lucifer smirked. Papyrus returned with a serving of pie.

“What is this miniature pie for, Lucifer?” Papyrus asked. He held out the second pie Lucifer had made in a cupcake tin.

“That one’s for Sans. One-hundred percent human free,” Lucifer winked at him, and Sans immediately felt himself drooling. Damn, that stuff smelled good. He finally let his drowned-cat expression be replaced with the hint of a smile. Maybe he felt like he’d just been tortured for an hour by his own brother, but an actual meal just might be worth it. Even if Lucifer was never going to let him hear the end of this.

Papyrus sat down with his serving of pie, intending to hand out the rest of the town’s slices later, followed by Sans. “So, tell me luce - why meat pie?” Papyrus set the plate on his lap, and Sans almost felt dizzy. It took almost every ounce of control not to just swallow the thing whole and instead stab into it with his fork. Mmm… he hadn’t eaten this well in years. Sure, the meat was a little dry and the crust a touch overcooked, but this might as well have been the most delicious thing Sans had tasted in his life. If only he had some ketchup to…

Papyrus set a red bottle next to him, and Sans blinked in disbelief. Welp, Sans knew for sure that he’d died and gone to heaven now. He squirted a generous helping into the hole in the pie he’d just made, deciding to splurge just this one time. Now it was officially the best thing Sans had tasted in his life.

“There was this guy named Sweeney Todd on the surface. He had a barber shop, but instead of trimming hair he killed the customers and sold their bodies to the lady next door, who turned them into meat pies.” Lucifer went into the kitchen and returned with his own helping. “I’ve always been a fan of irony.”

“You must be one twisted son of a bitch if they’re your role models,” Sans chuckled, digging into the food.
Lucifer just shrugged as he moved to sit next to Sans, though he jumped up almost as quickly. He reached behind himself and pulled a rusty nail out of the back of his pants, giving Sans a playful glare. “You *cheeky* fucker.”

Papyrus reached over and smacked them both on the head. “NO FOUL LANGUAGE DURING DINNER!” Sans and Lucifer just exchanged a smirk as they enjoyed the meal.
Introspection

Chapter Summary

Lucifer has a day to himself.

Sans was gone for the day to make sure that there weren’t any “royal assholes” hanging around, as he put it, and Papyrus evidently had his monthly, thorough check-up on his puzzles. Lucifer had offered to help, but Sans wanted him to stay out of sight and Papyrus told him that this particular chore was something he preferred to attend to personally. So, that left Lucifer with the day completely to himself in the skeleton brothers’ house.

Unfortunately, there wasn’t much in the way of entertainment in the Underground. They had a television, but it probably hadn’t been turned on in years considering their power problem. Papyrus had books, but most of them were either extremely technical and wordy, or for small children (Lucifer honestly didn’t know how they could both entertain him being so vastly different, but then again, that sounded just like Papyrus).

The human was generally pretty good at keeping himself entertained, but an entire day without leaving the house or playful banter with Sans was starting to drive him crazy. He laid down on the lumpy couch, sighing as he stared at the ceiling. Maybe he should start thinking up puns for Sans when he got back, or think up a few more dinner recipes to cook - he wasn’t a chef by any means, but he could keep himself fed.

He let his mind wander, since there wasn’t really anything else to be doing. He snorted as he remembered his first meeting with Sans and his hand-drill prank. He really didn’t understand why more people didn't appreciate that kind of humor - then again, he did have a pretty high pain tolerance.

Lucifer began to notice a pattern in his wandering thoughts; they kept circling back to Sans. His sense of humor, his piercing gaze during their ‘date’ at Grillby’s, the sadistic glee on his face when they’d captured that royal guard - him in that suit. Lucifer's face flushed a light pink.

What was this? It would be natural to think about him some, considering everything he’d been through together with the skeleton in the past few weeks, but was it natural to be thinking about him every moment he had to himself? He became more and more perturbed as he laid there, because he found he just couldn’t take his mind off of the little punny skeleton.

Was this a crush? He didn’t know what that felt like. The only person he’d ever given a damn about on the surface was Lucy; everyone else he either avoided like the plague or learned to manipulate. He wanted nothing to do with their judgemental stares and their hollow, empty eyes. How ironic it was that Sans’ eyesockets always seemed anything but empty.

There it was again - he was thinking about Sans. Was that really what this was - a crush? Lucifer couldn’t think of anything else it could be, and that was problematic on a number of levels. As much as he avoided thinking about it, realistically, he knew his days down here were numbered. It could be weeks, months, years away, but the monsters would eventually run out of food and Sans would turn on him. It was the grim reality, and Lucifer had to face it at some point. And the thought of Sans actually trying to kill him; would he even be able to fight back?
And that was without considering he might be discovered by the villagers or worse the queen before then, getting Sans in trouble with either the people he’d sacrificed so much to take care of or the Underground’s ruthless monarch. Both of those options sounded even worse than running from Sans.

Whatever these feelings were - and they were a crush, Lucifer had decided - he could never act on them. He could enjoy this time while it lasted, enjoy finally feeling at home, but he had to accept the fact that sooner or later this would end and whatever relationship he had with Sans would cease to exist. So, he couldn’t get any closer to Sans. He could survive losing a friend, but if it became anything more… he wouldn’t let it get to that point, for his sake and for Sans’.

There was a knock on the door, and Lucifer peeked over the door-window to see Fuku standing outside. He opened it.

“Oh good, you’re… you’re here,” she said quietly. “Can I come in?” Lucifer nodded - Fuku knew who he was anyway, and Sans had told him that he’d asked her to keep quiet. He looked around to make sure the skeleton brothers weren’t coming back, just in case.

Lucifer took a good look at her - she’d changed since the last time he’d seen her. Her flames flickered and danced in an almost manic way, and her facial features (or whatever a fire elemental could consider a face) were warped and twisted-looking. Apparently she’d tried Lucifer’s pie. Fuku sat down on the couch and grunted as if she were in pain.

“Are you feeling alright?” Lucifer asked.

“I…” Fuku wrapped her arms around herself. “The air here is almost devoid of magic. It stings, and… my soul is starting to hurt. My uncle said that he’s been feeling the effects for a while now.”

“I’m sorry to hear that,” Lucifer said, sitting down next to her.

“I’ll… learn to live with it. What about you? I never did learn your name.”

“You can call me Lucifer,” he said.

“Lucifer… that’s an interesting name.” She looked at him. “You’re… you’re a human, aren’t you?” Fuku asked.

“I am. Will that be a problem?” Lucifer answered.

“N-No, no. I’m forever grateful to you for saving me. Your secret is safe.” Lucifer nodded. “So… Sans and Papyrus, huh? I never would have thought you’d be living with them considering they’re the ones who… you know…”

“Convinced everyone to eat humans? It is a little ironic, I suppose,” Lucifer chuckled. “I can’t exactly complain though, considering I’ve done it myself. In fact, I’m the one who made the pie last night.”

“Really?” Fuku said. She looked slightly uncomfortable, but only slightly. “Well, I’m glad that you’re okay. You’re a very good person, Lucifer.”

“Why, thank you, Fuku,” Lucifer said. “So, what brings you here today?”

A yellow blush appeared on her cheeks. “I just wanted to see you,” she said, “and thank the man who saved my life.”
“You’re welcome,” Lucifer said. “Ignoring the air quality, how are you enjoying Snowdin?”

“It’s nice. Very different,” she said. “Everyone here is a little… off… but then again, I haven’t felt the same since I woke up this morning. And I have to admit, it’s nice to be as far away from Queen Undyne as possible. I feel so free out here without the Royal Guard breathing down my neck all the time. And it’s great to see uncle Grillby again.”

“I’m glad. I like this place a lot myself,” Lucifer said, glancing at the back window. He could see Papyrus approaching from the distance by his bright clothing. “Well, it’s nice to hear you’re doing well, Fuku, but I’ll have to ask you to leave. The skeletons should be home any minute and I’m not supposed to have guests at the moment. Talk to you later?”

“Absolutely,” she said, standing up. “And… thank you, again.”

“Any time,” Lucifer said. “I’ll see you next time, Fuku.”

A few moments after she left, Papyrus burst into the house. “HELLO? SANS, ARE YOU HOME YET?”

“Not yet, Papyrus,” Lucifer smiled. “How are the puzzles holding up?”

“OH, EXCEPTIONALLY WELL! I WAS QUITE PLEASED,” Papyrus said. “HOW WAS YOUR DAY, LUCIFER?”

“It was… interesting,” Lucifer said. That it had been. Sans walked in the door just then.

“hey, guys,” he said, leaning his axe against the wall and sitting down on the couch. “you weren’t too lost without me, were you?” he chuckled at Lucifer.

Lucifer blushed a little as he remembered his thoughts earlier that day, but it was light enough that Sans didn't notice. “Lost? Please, I have a great sense of direction,” Lucifer said.

“maybe, but everyone needs a good map after a long day,” Sans said, laying his head down on the armrest.

“Come on Sans, that was weak.. At this rate I’m going to compass you up on your pun skills,” Lucifer said. He could still joke around with Sans without feeding his crush, right? And flirt, because making Sans flustered was still just too hilarious to stop doing.

“STARS ABOVE, DON’T YOU DARE START!” Papyrus screeched, whacking them both on the head. “SANS, YOU ARE A TERRIBLE INFLUENCE! STOP CORRUPTING MY FRIENDS!”

“How come you get to call him a friend without dressin’ up in a suit?” Sans asked.

“BECAUSE THE GREAT PAPYRUS IS ALREADY FRIENDS WITH EVERYONE, OF COURSE! MY IRRESISTIBLE CHARMS BEFRIEND EVERYONE I MEET! THERE IS NO NEED TO ASK,” Papyrus explained.

“It’s true,” Lucifer agreed. “You just have to put in some more effort, Sans.”

“keep pushing me,” Sans threatened, though his tone was playful. Lucifer couldn’t help but look at the sparkle in his eyelight as he spoke. He felt his heart flutter just a little.

Stars, he was in deeper than he thought, wasn’t he?
“NYEH HEH HEH! NOW I HAVE YOU RIGHT WHERE I WANT YOU, LUCIFER!” Papyrus giggled, turning the hand crank. A convoluted series of contraptions were set in motion, and a plastic cage dropped down onto a plastic mouse.

“Darn it,” Lucifer sighed. He wasn’t the type to sit back and let someone win (even though he could tell Sans was), but Papyrus had some real skill when it came to Mousetrap. At least, as much skill as he could have in a mostly luck-based game; he was very good at making sure the traps were set properly so that they didn’t fail halfway through. “How do you do it, Papyrus?”

“i wouldn’t bother asking,” Sans chuckled. “my bro’s pretty cagey when it comes to his secret mousetrap powers.”

“WHY MUST YOU RUIN EVERYTHING?” Papyrus groaned. Sans just shrugged and leaned back against the couch from his position on the floor.

“You better not let him win for a fourth time in a row,” Lucifer said, giving Sans a playful glare.

“let ‘im win? i don’t think so. i’ve been tryna beat him for years, he’s just too good,” Sans said.

“THIS IS TRUE,” Papyrus confirmed, resetting the mousetrap.

Lucifer narrowed his eyes at Sans. “So you expect me to believe that after years of playing this game, you haven’t been lucky enough to win once?” Lucifer asked.

“yup. what can i say, i’m just not on his level,” Sans said.

Lucifer smirked a little, and Sans could sense another game was about to start. He wasn’t going to be caught off guard this time. “You might have the mouse-fur pulled over your brother’s eyesockets, but I can see right through your cute little innocent act,” Lucifer said.

“cute? please, we both know i’m goddamn sexy,” Sans said nonchalantly, and the human was just a little caught off guard. He recovered quickly, though.

“Well, I guess you caught me. I’ve been wanting to take a bite out of you from the moment I saw you.”

Sans didn’t back down. “if you wanted me ta bone you so bad, all you hadta do was ask,” he said, leaning a little closer to Lucifer. Lucifer leaned away.

“That’s a little forward, don’t you think?” Lucifer said, quickly losing control of the situation. Sans’ grin widened a little; flustered Lucifer was absolutely hilarious.
“i dunno, you tell me,” Sans said, leaning even closer and poking a finger at Lucifer’s chest. The human froze, and Sans could feel his heartbeat underneath his skin - thuthumpthuthumpthuthump. “cause judging by what you told me, you’re either afraid or excited right now. unless i’m pressing too hard?”

Sans smirked triumphantly and returned to his original position leaning back against the couch. “point for me.”

“Excuse me?” Lucifer said.

“You’re blushing,” Sans said, and the dusting of pink on Lucifer’s face deepened to a bright red. “point for me.”

Papyrus looked between the two of them, confused. “SANS, YOU KNOW THIS GAME DOESN’T WORK ON A POINT SYSTEM.”

Sans turned his sly grin back to the board game as Lucifer looked away, embarrassed. “it doesn’t? my bad. you know me, paps, i’m kinda forgetful sometimes. your move.” Papyrus took his turn, and the trap sprung onto Sans’ mouse. “darn. got me again, bro.”

“THAT WAS SO MUCH FUN! SHALL WE PLAY AGAIN?” Papyrus asked.

Lucifer swallowed down the lump in his throat and looked at the taller skeleton, trying to block Sans out of his periphery. “I think you’ve demonstrated your mousetrap superiority thoroughly enough for one day, Papyrus,” Lucifer said. “I want to go out and walk in the woods for a bit for some fresh air. If that’s alright, Sans?”

“yeah, that’s fine,” he said, still in a good mood. “actually, there’s someplace i’ve been meaning to bring you. follow me. see you in a little while, bro.”

“GOODBYE! BE HOME IN TIME FOR DINNER!” Papyrus said, and Sans was reminded that he actually had a dinner to come home to for once. Just the thought made his non-existent stomach grumble.

Apparently, Lucifer heard it. “How does that even work when you don’t have a stomach?” he asked.

“magic,” Sans answered simply, and Lucifer rolled his eyes.

“I don’t believe you. Lift up your shirt.”

Sans did just that, revealing a spine and hollow ribcage. “tsk tsk. and you said you didn’t want me to bone you,” Sans teased.

Now that Lucifer knew the game was being played, he wasn’t just going to roll over and let Sans win. He stepped in front of Sans’ path, leaning down so that he was a few inches from the skeleton’s face. He dropped his voice to just above a whisper. “If I was flirting, Sans, I wouldn’t be asking you to pull your shirt up. I’d ask you to pull something else down.”

Lucifer smiled at the light flush on Sans’ face. He didn’t bother asking how bone could blush. “Point for me.” Sans grunted, displeased. He should’ve made it a little harder than that. Strangely, Lucifer looked away immediately. Had Sans done something wrong? “Where are we going?” Lucifer asked, still avoiding eye contact.

“someone’s been missing you,” Sans said, watching the human closely out of the corner of his eye. Something was definitely off - he seemed nervous, twitchy almost. Was he scared of Sans or
A feeling of dread began to creep up Sans’ spine. Had he gone too far somehow? Had he done something to freak Lucifer out and forgotten about it? He wouldn’t put it past himself - ever since Ice Wolf had died, Sans felt like he had forgotten something important. He didn’t want Lucifer to be afraid of him; if he was scared, he would run away, and that would cause a number of problems. And that was absolutely the only reason Sans didn’t want the human to be scared of him.

They walked in silence past Papyrus’ puzzles, both wrapped up deeply in their own thoughts, before they reached the Ruins door. Lucifer gave Sans a suspicious glance.

“You don’t even hafta go inside,” Sans said. “Just keep her company for a little while. Like i said, she’s been missing you. Asks about you all the time. Anyway, i got a couple things to do. I’ll come by and getcha in a bit, k?”

“Alright,” Lucifer sighed. He approached the door, and Sans walked away.

Something clicked inside his skull - Shyren. Ice Wolf had been giving some of his portions to Shyren. That’s what he was mumbling about on the stairs as he died. When had they had that conversation? The fact that Sans couldn’t remember made him even more concerned that he’d done something to spook Lucifer.

He had to be more careful - there had to be a way to control himself, right? He didn’t eat human. He didn’t have an excuse like the rest of them, he should be the normal one in Snowdin. That’s what he was supposed to be, the only half-sane person left to take care of them all. He had to do better than this.

Sans made up a little fruit basket and took it towards Waterfall, where he saw Shyren looking out towards the snowy town hopefully. She jumped and hid as soon as she saw Sans coming.

“I’m not here to hurt’cha, shyren, come out,” he said. “I got something for ya.”

She peeked out from around Sans’ rotted old sentry station. “Wh... what do you have?” She asked quietly.

“Rations for you and napstablook for the week,” Sans said, holding out the little basket. “Sorry you haven’t been getting fed for a little while. Some weird stuff’s been happening around town lately.”

“O-oh… thank… thank you…” she said, taking the basket from him. “B-but, um… my friend ice wolf usually brings stuff to me. Is he… is he okay?”

Sans’ grin fell a little. “I’m real sorry, buddy, but he won’t be coming anymore. The queen came in a little while ago, and... well.”

“O-oh... oh, that’s... i’m...” Sans could see silvery teardrops start to pool in her eyes, and he put a hand on her back.

“These are hard times, pal. Shit like this happens, even if it ain’t fair.” Sans turned back towards Snowdin. “I’ll be coming back every week from now on, alright?” Shyren nodded, trying not to cry. “Take care of yourself, kid, cause ice wolf really cared about you.”

The windless Snowdin air seemed even more still than normal as Sans made his way back towards the Ruins. Would Lucifer even be there? Or had Sans finally convinced him he wasn’t safe and made him run off? He started walking faster.
Chapter End Notes

Looks like Sans might be jumping to conclusions about why Lucifer is acting weird. Also, you thought Lucifer and Toriel were going to talk, weren't you? Well too bad, you have to wait until next time.
Lucifer stood silently in front of the Ruins door for a few long moments. He had so many mixed feelings about this place. Honestly, he’d never intended to return here, even if he did feel some vague sense of yearning when he thought about it. Sometimes things were best just left in the past.

But, Sans had asked him to, so it looked like his hands were tied. He gave two short knocks on the door, hoping that she wouldn’t answer and at the same time hoping she would.

“Oh! Who is there?”

Did she really get so many visitors to this door that she had to ask who it was? Lucifer thought only Sans came here. “Lucifer,” he said.

Lucifer could hear her breath catch in her throat through the door. “L… Lucifer who?”

The human was confused for a brief moment before he realized she thought this was a knock knock joke. He scrambled for something to answer her with. “You know more than one? Tell the Devil hi for me the next time you see him.”

It was silent for a second. That was a stupid response, of course, but Lucifer had been thinking on the fly and--

Toriel started howling with laughter, and Lucifer could see the doors shake a little from it. Her back must be pressed up against them. She laughed so hard and for so long that Lucifer couldn’t help but join in a little.

“Is it really you, my child?” Toriel asked once she regained her breath.

“Yeah,” Lucifer answered, sitting down against the doors himself.

“I…I do not know what to say,” she said. “Though, perhaps an apology is a good way to start.”

Lucifer took a deep breath. “...I’m listening.”

“You do not know how sorry I am, my child,” Toriel began. “That person, I… I was not myself. I have not been myself since…”

“Since Sans told you about the rest of the Underground,” Lucifer finished for her.

“Yes,” Toriel said. “I realize what I have done to you is unforgivable. But please… the rest of them. Sans. The way they are is not their fault. Please, do not hold it against them.”

“I don’t,” Lucifer sighed. “They deserve so much better.”

“...Indeed,” Toriel said, and a wave of silence followed.
It was a long moment before Lucifer spoke again. “Just this once,” he said.

“I am sorry?”

“I can forgive you just this once,” Lucifer said. “But only because I know you were trying to protect me.”

“My child…”

“I’ve been surrounded my whole life by people that try to control me,” Lucifer said, cutting her off. This needed to be said. “And I hated each and every one of them for it. But it was always for their own benefit, so… I won’t hold it against you this time - if you can promise me something like that will never happen again.”

Lucifer could hear something shift on the other side of the door. “…I wish I could make that promise, my child, but… I do not trust my own mind enough to do so. I can, however, promise you that I will try my hardest.”

“…That’s good enough, I suppose,” Lucifer said.

There was another wave of silence. Toriel broke it this time. “Would you like to come in for some tea, my child?” she asked.

The thought of being poisoned again made Lucifer’s body tense up, but he fought back the urge to immediately say ‘no.’ He’d give her the benefit of the doubt. Besides, Sans would come and get him if anything bad happened, right?

“Yes,” he said.

“Wonderful! Wait right there. I will return shortly.” Lucifer could hear her footsteps retreating quickly, only to return several minutes later. Lucifer stood up and dusted himself off as the door swung open and Toriel appeared, two mugs of steaming tea in hand. “Won’t you come in, my child?”

Lucifer smiled and walked inside, and Toriel closed the door behind him. They both sat on the ground and Toriel handed him his mug. He took a sip.

“I apologize if it is not the best,” Toriel said. “…my husband was much better at making tea.”

It wasn’t the best tea he’d ever had, but it wasn’t bad by any means. “I didn’t know you were married.”

Toriel’s eyes misted over with memories. “A long, long time ago. I have not seen Asgore for…”

“Wait. You were the queen?” Lucifer asked, surprised.

Toriel looked away. “…Yes.”

Lucifer tried to process the information. “Wait. So that means… you…”

“Please, can we… put off this discussion for now?” Toriel asked quietly. “This is not something I want to discuss at the moment. I should never have brought it up, my child.”

“…Alright,” Lucifer said. He tried to think of something else to talk about. “Why do you call me that? ‘My child?’ I’m hardly a kid.”
Toriel chuckled a little. “It is an old habit, I suppose. I can stop if it makes you uncomfortable.”

Lucifer smiled a little. “No, I don’t mind. You make a far better mother than my own ever did.”

Toriel seemed a little shaken by the comment, strangely. She looked him straight in the eyes and put a hand on his shoulder. “Whoever your mother is, my child… I am sure she loves you very much.”

Lucifer looked away. “You’re wrong,” he said flatly, and he sounded so sure that it made Toriel’s heart break a little. “Love is sacrifice,” Lucifer said. “It’s putting someone else before yourself, because seeing them happy makes you happy.” He closed his eyes, and his voice went bitter. “My mother was a coward. She didn’t love me.”

Toriel reached over and pulled him into a tight hug, and Lucifer had to bury his fight-or-flight response. She started stroking his back gently. He eventually relaxed, laying his head on her chest - it reminded him of something. Not his own mother, of course; she could barely give him a pat on the back. No, he could remember Lucy holding him like this when they were both much younger. He remembered crying, for some reason, but he couldn’t remember why. All that mattered was that Lucy had been there for him, even as a little girl. It should have been his parents’ burden to bear, but she took it on all the same.

“Even if she did not love you, you must never forget that you are loved,” Toriel told him, her voice dead serious. “Someone will always love you.”

Lucifer just nodded softly, and Toriel felt tears prick at the corners of her eyes. The human had been so wary, so guarded when she first met him. Now that he’d let his walls down, she could see them - the scars, and how deeply they ran. It reminded her of another child she had met so many lifetimes ago, back when her life was happy, back before all the tragedy and horror. This poor boy had so many voids that needed to be filled; some in places where love and support should have grown but never did, and other parts where it had seemingly been torn apart. It was both a blessing and a curse, how clearly she could she into the hearts of others.

Lucifer was so scarred, in fact, that Toriel knew she alone would never be able to fill in all the gaps. Wouldn’t it be better if he died here, in her arms? No more pain, no more suffering, no more scars. He would be free of them.

...No. She had made a promise.

“I think it’s time for me to go,” Lucifer said quietly. Toriel let go of him. “I don’t want Sans to have to wait on me.”

Toriel smiled at him as they both stood up. “Visit again soon, will you not?” she asked hopefully. Lucifer smiled and nodded.

Lucifer wasn’t in front of the door. Sans felt himself start to hyperventilate as he looked around frantically - he wasn’t here. Lucifer had run away.

It shouldn’t have been a big deal. They had plenty of food for now - in fact, if Lucifer wanted to leave, he’d more than earned a ticket out. He’d done so much for Sans and the rest of Snowdin, even if they didn’t realise it.

So Sans couldn’t figure out why he was outright shaking with panic. The pain didn’t even register when he reached up and hooked his fingers into the crack in his skull, the old festering wound
breaking open again and spilling red down the side of his face.

And then the door to the Ruins swung open, and the human stepped outside. He froze for a second when he saw Sans. The skeleton immediately marched over and slammed Lucifer against the nearest tree.

“Sans, what the--”

“what the fuck were you doing?!” Sans growled, staring up at him. His red eye had gone completely manic, shaking intensely.

“Keeping Toriel company, like you asked me to,” Lucifer said, trying to figure out what was going on.

“you can’t just disappear like that,” Sans spat. “I thought you ran away.”

Lucifer still figure out what was going through Sans’ skull. “Why would I run away? Sans, you aren’t making any--”

“you’re afraid of me,” Sans said, still breathing heavily.

“What? Sans, I’m not afraid of--”

“don’t you fucking lie to me, i can feel your fucking heart beating,” Sans said. He didn’t take his eyes off of Lucifer’s face.

“Sans,” Lucifer said, as calm as could be, “you’re hurting me.”

Sans glanced down at his hands - the fingertips had torn through Lucifer’s shirt and dug into his skin. He immediately jerked his hands away, and the fingertips came back stained red.


Sans took a shaky breath, and whatever panicked rage he’d been possessed by passed. “...nah. i’m fine. you know me and my mood swings.” He looked away, avoiding eye contact. “c’mon, let’s get you back before someone sees you.”

“If you say so,” Lucifer said, giving Sans a concerned glance.

Sans knew it. Lucifer was afraid of him; and for some reason, that made Sans feel like there was something clawing at his soul. There had to be a way he could fix this.
Sans does some of his own introspection.

“Sans,” Lucifer said as the skeleton shut and locked the door. “Are you sure you’re okay?”

“I told you, I’m fine,” Sans snapped. He scolded himself mentally. “You know me. I pick at it all the time, s’nothing,” he said, more subdued.

“You’re still bleeding, Sans,” Lucifer said. “That can’t be good for you. At least let me wrap it up or something. You don’t want a repeat of what happened when I got sick, do you?”

Sans rolled his eyes. “Fine, if it’ll get you to quit nagging. You’re as bad as Papyrus.”

Lucifer smiled. “Papyrus knows what he’s doing sometimes. I wonder if he kept that dog cone around somewhere.”

Sans glared at him. “I will break your arm,” he threatened. He froze, chastising himself again. How was threatening to break someone’s arm supposed to make them less afraid?

“Promises, promises,” Lucifer chuckled, seemingly unaffected. “Do you have gauze or something?”

Sans dug a roll out of his seemingly endless pockets and handed it to him reluctantly. “Sit down,” Lucifer said, walking behind the couch. He started winding the gauze around Sans’ cracked skull.

Lucifer’s hands were warm, Sans noticed. He’d assumed they would be, but he’d never really stopped long enough to check before. And they were soft… and smooth…

...And those were weird thoughts to be having. Sans sat bolt upright when he realised he’d laid his head back into Lucifer’s hands, and Lucifer snatched them away, embarrassed.

“Uh... thanks,” Sans said awkwardly.

“No problem,” Lucifer said, swallowing a lump in his throat. Sans resisted the urge to rip open the couch cushions in frustration.

“Uh... here, let me do you, now,” Sans said, taking back the gauze.

Lucifer looked down at his chest. “Sans, it’s barely a scratch.”

“Just take off your shirt,” Sans sighed, trying very hard not to let his frustration slip into his voice. “Like you said, we don’t want a repeat of you getting sick.”

Lucifer reluctantly pulled his shirt over his head, and Sans clenched his fists inside his pockets as he walked over, positive that Lucifer was afraid of exposing himself. He looked over the human’s torso, looking for any sort of injuries he might have inflicted other than the ones he was preparing to bandage. He couldn’t see any.

He’d lost weight, like both of them had expected. His collarbones had become more pronounced,
and… Sans could see his ribs underneath his skin, poking out from his sides. Damn… Sans could tell this man had a mighty fine set of bones, and he could barely see any of it. He looked down straight at the floor when he realized he was staring and started wrapping gauze around Lucifer’s torso.

...his skin was even warmer there.

Lucifer hastily put his shirt back on as soon as Sans was finished, and the skeleton put his hands back in his pockets. When had everything become so tense between them?

“do you, uh… wanna… do something?” Sans asked, still avoiding eye contact.

“...That would depend on what ‘something’ means,” Lucifer said, also avoiding eye contact.

“well, we could, uh… i could read you one of papyrus’ books,” Sans said, trailing off.

“How old do you think I am?” Lucifer said, just a little offended. Sans gripped at the fabric inside of his jacket.

“s-sorry. i mean… i still read to papyrus sometimes, so… i just… nevermind.”

“Honestly, I could really use a little alone time to process a few things,” Lucifer sighed. “I hope you don’t mind?”

Sans felt his soul sinking in his chest. “s… sure thing.”

Lucifer gave him a smile and walked off into his closet-bedroom. Sans sat down in the doorway of Papyrus’ room, where he could see both the closet and the window. Why on earth was he so paranoid?

Introspection was an ugly thing, and Sans hated it with a passion. But when left alone on the floor with nothing but his thoughts gnawing at him, well… it was inevitable, anyway.

Why did he care so much? Sure, they were friends, and Sans didn’t want him to be afraid of him, but… that didn’t explain why the thought made Sans feel like he was being stabbed in the sternum.

His soul started to sink further and further as the realisation crept up on him. The reason he was so concerned was because… he had feelings for Lucifer. Not just friend-feelings, but feelings feelings. That’s why the thought of the human being afraid of him made him feel sick. That’s why he kept finding his own thoughts looping back to Lucifer constantly. That’s why he kept catching himself staring, or having… dreams.

...That was why he was so fascinated with his heartbeat. Why it was so easy to imagine falling asleep to the sound of it. Thu-Thump, tap tap tap tap. Thu-Thump, tap tap tap tap. Thu-Thump, tap tap tap tap.

“Sans?” Lucifer said, stepping out of the closet. Sans looked down to find his fingers tapping on his tibia.

“uh… hi. sorry, lost in thought. i, uh, have something to do outside.” Sans stood up and rushed out of the house before Lucifer could say anything. The skeleton headed for the woods.

He was such a fool. He knew getting attached was dangerous, but this? He couldn’t afford to have feelings like this, let alone for a human of all people. He’d convinced his whole town to eat them. Undyne was out for their souls. Lucifer was going to die a horrible, bloody death one day and there was nothing Sans could do about it.
What could Sans possibly want from him? What was his stupid, fucked-up soul expecting? Someone
to talk to? A mate? Anything as long as Lucifer wasn’t afraid of him because it was making Sans lose what little sanity he had left.

Sans let loose some kind of feral growl and slammed his axe into the nearest tree. Seeing the mark,
he hit it again, and again, and again, until he heard the creak of wood splintering and the tree fell to
the ground. He planted the blade in the stump and slid to the ground.

...why didn’t he just kill Lucifer from the very beginning? His life would be so much easier now.

*You’d have starved to death by now,* his stupid mind decided to remind him. *You’d probably have lost what little sanity you have from having no one to talk to. That flower freak might have killed you.*

...He could never say anything about this. He couldn’t act on it. If he did, and Lucifer actually reciprocated (why would he feel the same way, he was terrified of Sans), and they… got closer… Sans would lose him eventually. He didn’t want to know what that would feel like.

...That didn’t mean Sans couldn’t enjoy the time he had, right? He immediately silenced the thoughts that told him that would only make things worse. Instead, he paid attention to the ones that told him that he’d left Lucifer alone and he was going to run away and that couldn’t happen because Sans wasn’t ready for that and…

He rushed home to find Lucifer on the couch, reading a book.

“Welcome home,” Lucifer said, giving him a strange look. “Did you finish your… whatever you were doing?”

“uh... yeah?” How was Sans supposed to act normal now that he’d figured things out? Or be anywhere near him, for that matter, with all of that… soft, warm skin that Sans just wanted to…

Stars above, now his head was in the gutter.

“...You look like you might want the house to yourself for awhile,” Lucifer said. “I’ll just go for a little walk out in the forest and--”

“no!” Sans shouted. Lucifer blinked in surprise. “uh…” Sans began to panic internally, “don’t wanna risk you being spotted. i don’t need to be alone, we can uh… just stay here. you shouldn’t leave.”

Lucifer frowned at him. “...okay? I might as well start on dinner then--”

“no, i’ll cook,” Sans said, making for the kitchen. “you don’t need to worry about it.” He had to convince Lucifer that he wouldn’t hurt him, and he couldn’t let him run away, and he couldn’t… couldn’t…

He was losing his mind over this, he realised. Not that the sensation was anything new.

...But he couldn’t bring himself to do anything else but try to keep Lucifer to himself for as long as he could possibly manage.
“Sans,” Lucifer sighed, exasperated. “There is no reason I shouldn't be able to go out now. Essentially everyone is asleep, and I'm very good at not being seen when I don't want to be. There's no reason--”

“you ain’t going out, and that’s final! so quit asking,” Sans said, desperately trying not to scratch through the gauze on his head. The old wound was itching progressively more and more as the day went on, and Lucifer’s insistence on leaving was not helping. He couldn’t leave. Not before Sans fixed things, not before he wasn’t afraid anymore, not before…

“When can I leave, then?” Lucifer asked, throwing his hands up in the air.

“never,” Sans said without thinking. Something seemed to click inside his head, and his smile began to grow wider. If he never left, he’d be so much safer. No risk of being spotted, Sans could just keep him fed and figure out how to fix things and--

“Excuse me?” Lucifer asked.

“you heard me,” Sans said, staring blankly ahead as the gears in his mind began to spin wildly out of control. “it’s better if you just stay here. just... stay here.”

“That’s ridiculous,” Lucifer said. “You can’t just keep me locked up in this house indefinitely.”

“like hell i can’t,” Sans snapped. He started chuckling involuntarily, and his smile grew even wider. Of course this would work. Lucifer wouldn’t go anywhere, he’d stay right here where Sans could… could… but he couldn’t…

“You can’t,” Lucifer said, more forcefully this time. He started walking towards the door.


It stopped when he looked up at Lucifer’s face to see the most hurt, angry expression he’d ever seen on the human. Sans’ crazed thoughts ground to a halt and he felt his soul seize up. That had been way, way over the line. What was wrong with him?

“You don’t own me,” Lucifer said, voice deadly quiet. He shoved Sans aside and pulled his cloak off of the coat rack before swinging open the door.

Sans felt his own breathing start to pick up rapidly. “where… where are you going?” he asked. He knew he needed to back off and let Lucifer blow off some steam, but maybe if he at least knew where he was Sans would be able to stop himself from completely--

“I think I’ve overstayed my welcome,” Lucifer said darkly, slamming the door behind him.
That sounded…

Permanent.

No.

No, no, no nonono *nonononono*

Sans rushed out the door after him. “wait, wait! you can’t… you can’t go, just… let’s go inside and talk—”

“There’s nothing to talk about,” Lucifer said, swiping at his eyes angrily. Was he… crying? “Stop following me.”

“you can’t leave,” Sans said, and it was impossible to keep the panic out of his voice. “you can’t leave!” He reached out and grabbed Lucifer’s cloak.

“Watch me,” Lucifer growled. “And let go of me you fucking—”

“(you can’t leave, *i can’t let you leave* ,” Sans said, hyperventilating. He yanked on the cloak hard enough to make Lucifer stagger towards him, and Sans grabbed him by the belt loops on his jeans.

Without thinking, Sans took a shortcut to the basement with the human in tow just as Lucifer shoved him away. The skeleton took a quick glance at the door and dashed outside, locking the door behind him.

“Sans? Sans!” Lucifer started pounding on the door from the other side before rattling the doorknob in a futile attempt to get it to open. “Sans, you let me out of here *right now* !”

But Sans was already back in the house, stumbling around aimlessly as he clawed at his own skull. What was he *thinking* ? Everything was wrong now, Lucifer would never trust him again and he’d keep trying to escape at every possible opportunity and just thinking about it made Sans feel like he was *dying* and…

Sans saw his axe out of the corner of his eye. He should just kill Lucifer. That’s what he should have done ages ago. It would be better, that way… wouldn’t it? If he was going to die sometime anyway, it would be better if Sans did it. He’d make it quick. Sans would be kinder than some random Royal Guard or stars forbid Undyne. His twitching fingers reached out and grabbed the axe handle.

No… no, a better idea came to him. He could just… chop off the human’s hands and feet so that he couldn’t escape anymore. And then he could keep him in the basement and take care of him, and eventually Lucifer would realize that he didn’t have to be scared anymore. And then they could… they could…

“SANS? WHAT’S GOING ON?” Papyrus appeared from his room wearing a set of pajamas. He rushed down the stairs. “STARS ABOVE, BROTHER, YOU LOOK TERRIBLE! WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED?”

Sans shook himself from the gruesome train of thought. He didn’t *want* that. He didn’t want it, he *didn’t*, so why wouldn’t the idea leave his stupid fucked-up skull?

“SANS,” Papyrus said calmly, grabbing his brother by the shoulders and staring straight into his eyes. “TELL ME WHAT’S WRONG.”

“i fucked it all up, papyrus, that’s what happened,” Sans said, beginning to rattle under Papyrus’
grip. “he’s terrified of me now, he’ll never trust me again and I can’t handle it —”

“CALM DOWN. DEEP BREATHS,” Papyrus instructed, and Sans tried his best to comply. “WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? LUCIFER?”

“i screwed up, paps,” Sans said. “i just… i lost all control and i… i…”

“DEEP BREATHS,” Papyrus said again. “SO… YOU MADE A MISTAKE? IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?”

“i made so many of them, paps,” Sans said. “you don’t understand. everything’s wrong now and it’s all my fault.”


“it’s too late, papyrus. we aren’t friends anymore. he hates me now.” Sans started clawing at his skull again, and Papyrus pinned his arms to his sides.

“STOP THAT! YOU’RE BLEEDING ALL OVER THE FLOOR AGAIN!” Papyrus sighed loudly. “LUCIFER LIKES YOU A LOT! YOU SHOULD AT LEAST TALK TO HIM BEFORE ASSUMING THE WORST, SANS.”

Sans finally felt his breathing begin to normalize and his thoughts gain a little clarity. Papyrus was right, of course. He was being irrational. His panic had made a royal mess of everything, and more panicking wasn’t going to help. He needed to think about this calmly.

Lucifer would listen to reason eventually, wouldn’t he? Sans just… needed to be honest. He’d apologize for freaking out, maybe blame it on one of his mood swings. Lucifer knew he had them, and he didn’t seem to care. And then Sans would remind him that they’d made a deal, and Sans never broke his deals. He didn’t need to be scared. And if Lucifer would just agree to stay awhile, he’d prove it. And he’d be free to go outside whenever he wanted.

...That was a much better idea than cutting off the human’s hands and feet. He didn’t want to hurt Lucifer, and Sans was fairly certain Lucifer didn’t want to hurt him, either. He’d just overstepped some boundaries. He was sane enough to realize it.

Lucifer wouldn’t really leave, if Sans told him all that, would he? Sans thought back through all of his interactions with the human, trying to judge if he would or not. He remembered something important.

Lucifer could pick locks.

“i gotta go,” Sans said, ducking out of Papyrus’ grip and sprinting back to the basement.

The door was open. Lucifer wasn’t inside.

Sans twisted his hands around the handle of his axe, mentally beating down another wave of panic. Papyrus was right - he had to stay calm about this. He had to find Lucifer. He had to fix this, or… he didn’t know what he’d do. Lucifer would never love Sans, could never love Sans, but the skeleton still wanted him around all the same. Sans would do what he had to do to protect him.
There were tracks leading out into the snow, but Lucifer was too clever for that. He probably doubled back somewhere to try and lose any pursuers. Luckily, Sans was well-fed currently and had full access to his shortcuts.

Sans took a deep breath - he needed to be smart about this. He’d follow the tracks as quickly as he could and see if he could actually track the human, and then he’d use his shortcuts to look for likely hiding spots. It… it would all be okay. Papyrus really was a miracle worker. Sans vanished just as Papyrus reached the basement stairs.
A Near Confession

Chapter Summary

Sans tries to find Lucifer.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

To Lucifer’s credit, it had taken a lot longer for Sans to find him than the skeleton was hoping. The tracks he’d left were winding and confusing, and they’d doubled back more than once. If Sans hadn’t been a decent tracker and didn’t have shortcuts to give him a time advantage, Lucifer might very well have lost him.

Luckily for Sans, he’d chased more than a few humans through the woods surrounding Snowdin, and he was particularly determined to catch this one. He caught a glimpse of the fleeing human in the distance and teleported directly in front of him. Lucifer immediately backpedaled, trying to get away.

“wait,” Sans panted, trying to catch his breath after exerting himself so much. “please wait.”

“We have nothing left to talk about,” Lucifer said, taking a combat stance and pulling out a machete he must have found in the basement somewhere. “I was wrong about you, you just want to control me like everybody else. Now back off or I will hack you to pieces.”

Sans put his hands in the air non-threateningly and slowly walked towards Lucifer. “i ain’t here to fight you,” he said quietly, trying his best to stay calm.

“No, of course not,” Lucifer scowled. “You’re just here to lock me up in the basement again like an animal, right?”

“i’m so sorry i did that,” Sans said. “i didn’t mean to—“

“Oh, so you just accidentally locked me in the basement, then? That makes so much sense,” Lucifer said.

“i just panicked!” Sans shouted, trying to bottle up his frustration. “i’ll never do anything like that again, i swear. i-if… if you really want to leave, then…” Sans tried to shut out all the voices screaming at him not to say what he was about to say, “then i’ll let you go. you’ve… you’ve earned your freedom, if that’s what you want. but… please, just hear me out first?”

Lucifer lowered his weapon slightly, and Sans sighed in relief. He paused for a moment stupidly, trying to figure out what to say. At this point, the only thing Sans felt would work was the truth. But what was that, exactly? Why did he panic so much, aside from that certain obvious something that he couldn’t afford to say out loud? Something clicked.

“I knew i screwed up… i knew i really screwed up when i said that i own you. that isn’t true, and i know i shouldn’t have said it. but i didn’t think you’d actually up and leave for it! so i just… freaked out, and i…”

Sans ran his hand along the good side of his skull, trying to come to terms with all the ugly truths he
was about to reveal. But… that’s what Sans liked about Lucifer - he knew he could talk to him about anything. “when frisk left,” he began, trying to keep his voice steady, “we weren’t… we weren’t super close, but we were…we were pals, you know? i only knew ‘em for a little while, but in that little bit of time, they became really important to me. kinda like you, in a way.” Not in the same way, his thoughts reminded him. I don’t just want to be ‘pals.’ But I can’t have more than that.

“the second that they left,” he continued, “everything started going downhill. i lost friends, i lost sanity, i lost my right to have a goddamn meal every day…” he reached up and laced his fingers through the cracks in his skull, which were itching so much it was starting to hurt. “the only thing i got out of it was this fucking hole in the head.”

Lucifer’s weapon had dropped all the way to his side, and he stared at Sans in a way that almost made it seem as if he could feel the skeleton’s pain himself. “you know what the funny part is?” Sans asked, his façade of calm finally crumbling away to reveal just how broken he was. “i hated my life before frisk came here, and now i spend every night wishing i could go back to it. that wasn’t even the first time it happened. when g—” he stopped abruptly, fingers making his skull bleed again as he fought back the bitter memory. “it’s not the first time someone’s left my life and everything’s just fallen into a downward spiral. just before i met frisk, i had a day were i thought ‘my life can’t get any worse than this.’ hilarious, right?” Sans chuckled darkly.

“i’m not that stupid now. i don’t wanna know what happens…” he shut his eye sockets tightly as tears began to drip from them and his whole body started rattling, “i’m terrified to find out what happens when you leave…”

Sans was too wrapped up in his own head to notice Lucifer walking towards him slowly. “i never meant to scare you off,” Sans said. “whatever i did to scare you, i’m sorry. i don’t remember what i did. i’ve been trying so, so hard to fix everything and i’ve just been making it all worse because i don’t know what i’m supposed to be fixing and…” Sans’ voice cracked as all of his ugly emotions started pouring out of the seams. The next sentence came out barely more than a whisper. “and i know i’m not worth your time, but i—"

Sans froze as a pair of arms wrapped around him tightly. A hand reached up and gently pulled Sans’ bloodied fingers away from his skull, and the skeleton wrapped his arms around himself inside of Lucifer’s embrace. The body Sans was pressed up against was still soft, despite how tight the hug was, and the human’s skin glowed with warmth. And Sans could hear the heartbeat, pulsing underneath Lucifer’s chest. Thu-thump. Thu-thump. Thu-thump.

“I don’t ever want to hear those words out of your mouth again,” Lucifer said, and his voice wasn’t steady either. “And I was never afraid of you.”

Sans shook his head. “you’ve been so nervous around me,” he said, and he wasn’t going to let Lucifer deny it. Sans knew it wasn’t just paranoia. Lucifer flinched at every contact, shut down at the weirdest remarks. Sans had done something very, very wrong, he knew. He hadn’t seen any real injuries when he’d made the human take his shirt off, but he hadn’t looked below the belt so maybe…

Stars above. All the lewd thoughts Sans had been having lately… he hadn’t forced himself on Lucifer, had he? The thought made his breath stop and something in his soul start to die.

“That wasn’t…” Lucifer ran a hand down his own face as he looked up, trying to stop the tears flowing down his own face. “That wasn’t your fault. It’s just me and my own stupid…” he trailed off, remembering something he couldn’t say. “You didn’t do anything wrong.”

“then why?” Sans asked. “everyone else is scared of me, too. they’re tryna hide it, but i know they
are. I keep forgetting things, luce, things I shouldn’t be. I did something to spook them and I don’t
know what it is, but I never thought I could do something to papyrus or... or you. I know I don’t own
you, lucifer.” But I want to. I want you to be mine. And I want to be yours. “But even though it
doesn’t make any fucking sense, you’re one of my own. And I protect my own, luce, I spend my
whole life protecting them...” he started sobbing into the human’s chest, because he wanted so, so
desperately to believe it.

Little did Sans know that nothing could be more thrilling or more painful to Lucifer than what he’d
just said. The human forced his train of thought to remain steady through the maelstrom that began to
spring up in his mind, because Sans needed to hear this. “I know you do. Everyone knows you do. It
doesn’t matter why I’ve been acting off,” Lucifer told him. “It’s going to stop. I never meant to make
you feel like this.” Deep breaths. Don’t let go yet, even though it had to happen at some point. Even
if he never wanted it to stop. “The way I’ve been acting has nothing to do with you.” Lucifer had to
resist laughing. It had everything to do with him. “I care about you so much, Sans. I just... I never
thought you’d try to control me like that. But I guess this time that was my own damn fault.”

“i’m so sorry. i’m so, so sorry. never again, i swear. i promise.” Sans never broke a promise. “i
promise.” Sans finally pulled his arms away from holding himself and wrapped them around
Lucifer’s torso, clinging to the tattered fabric of his shirt.

“Alright,” Lucifer whispered. “It’s all over now.” He forced himself to pull away, because if he
didn’t, he might never let go again. “Let’s go home. I’ve got my own story to tell.”

“What?” Sans asked.

“You spilled your guts to me,” Lucifer said. “It’s only fair. Someone should know why I am the way
I am, and you’re the only person I care to tell.”

Chapter End Notes

Aaaaanyone in the mood for Lucifer’s backstory?
The Past

Chapter Summary

We begin to learn the story of how Lucifer came to be.

Chapter Notes

Just to make things clear, this and the next few chapters take place entirely in the past. There's a lot to get through and I thought it would flow better if I just left Sans' reactions until the end, so... just be aware that this is all being told to Sans even though I'm not explicitly stating it.

Lucifer - or as he was called back then, Xavier - didn’t even blink as Lucy stormed into his bedroom. He finished the paragraph in the book he was reading - it was one of the steamy romance novels Lucy kept stashes of all over the house - and looked up at her.

“The party went better than usual, I guess?” Xavier chuckled as Lucy pulled off her high heels.

“Don’t even start. Help me get this damned thing off,” Lucy replied, gesturing to her elaborate and immensely uncomfortable ball gown. Smiling, Xavier walked over to her and unzipped the back of the dress before turning around as she pulled it off unceremoniously and changed into a crop-top and a pair of well-worn ripped jeans. She placed her heels back in their shared walk-in closet carefully and then tossed the gown into the hamper without any regard for its well-being. Then she flopped down on Xavier’s king-sized bed and grabbed the remote on the nightstand, flipping through channels.

“So you treat the heels nicely but try and rip the dress?” Xavier asked, smiling.

“The heels are fine. The dress is not only a medieval torture device but also hideous.”

“Aside from torture devices, how was the duchess' grand ball?” Xavier asked sarcastically, using his mock-aristocratic voice. “I’m assuming Dad had another lovely young man lined up for you?”

Lucy rolled her eyes and stopped on some cheesy-looking horror flick. Perfect. “Of course he did,” she answered. “A real charmer.”

“Oooh, do tell. There’s no way he topped the last one,” Xavier said, resting his head on his palm as he turned to look at her.

“The pretty boy wore more makeup than I did and everything that came out of his mouth was either ‘I’m rich,’ or a sexual innuendo. Both, a lot of the time. He wasn’t even remotely subtle,” Lucy answered.

“Mm. Looks like we found your dream husband,” Xavier chuckled.

“I know, right? I’m just head over heels for him,” she smirked.
“Does that mean you took off one of your shoes and bitch-slapped him after he made some super-forward remark?” Xavier grinned.

“Hell yeah it does,” Lucy smiled, holding up her hand for a high five. Xavier obliged her.

“That poor boy,” Xavier said mockingly. “How could you mistreat him that way? All he wanted was to get in your pants. Probably in one of the bathroom stalls or something.”

“I know. I’m such a selfish person,” Lucy sighed dramatically. She glanced over at the dress in the hamper. “Maybe I should treat the clothes a little nicer. Don’t want them to be ripped when I donate them or anything.”

“Eh, don’t worry about it. Those poor second-hand stores are used to getting worn out garbage constantly,” Xavier said. “Rips or no rips, I’m sure whomever they get the pleasure of selling your once-used clothes to feels like a princess.”

“That’s a nice thought,” Lucy said. It was quiet for a moment before she turned towards Xavier and leaned in a little closer. “You know… everyone’s left by now,” she said quietly.

“Yeah?” Xavier said, similarly lowering his voice and leaning in as well.

“We’re alone,” Lucy said.

“Mm hm?”

“Do you know what that means we can do together?” They were barely a few inches apart at this point.

“Raid the dessert table for leftovers?” Xavier said, breaking the facade with a dorky eyebrow-wiggle.

“You read my mind,” Lucy laughed, jumping off the bed and racing toward the door. Xavier followed close behind, sliding past corners in his socks as the siblings raced towards the big spiral staircase.

A few steps down, Lucy had to catch herself on the banister as she started coughing. Xavier rushed past her at first, but paused as she started hacking violently, doubled over and losing her balance. He walked back up to her.

“Hey, hey, are you okay? Come on, sit down,” Xavier said, guiding her down to sit on the steps. She continued coughing, trying to keep her mouth covered as best she could. It seemed like forever before she stopped.

“What the hell was that?” Xavier asked, keeping a hand on her back as she tried to refill her lungs.

“I don’t know,” Lucy said, shaking her head. “That was weird.” Xavier took a good look at her. She looked… tired, all of a sudden.

“...Why don’t you just head back up to my room?” Xavier said. “I’ll bring some water with me.”

“Nonsense. We have desserts to pilfer,” Lucy said, trying to play it off.

“I’ll pilfer them for you. I know what you like,” he smiled, and Lucy reluctantly headed back up the stairs. Xavier returned with a large glass of water and two plates of confections - mostly tiny raspberry cheesecake bites and snickerdoodles - to find his sister sitting cross-legged on the bed.

“Thank you,” Lucy smiled, taking the glass and immediately snatching a cookie of Xavier’s plate.
He retaliated by stealing cheesecake off of hers.

“So, when is Dad’s next attempt to find the man of your dreams?” Xavier asked.

“More like the man of his dreams,” Lucy scoffed. “The only thing you need for a good boy is money, apparently. I don’t know why he just doesn’t get divorced and go marry some young, sleazy moneybag himself. It’s not like he’s slowed down in the bedroom department.” She rolled her eyes, disgusted.

“He have another one last night?” Xavier asked.

“I think there were two in there this time,” Lucy sighed. “The benefits of having a room adjacent to your slut of a father. Dear lord, I hope I can get out of here soon. The second my eighteenth birthday hits, I am gone,” she said. “Don’t worry, I’m taking you with me, little brother. We might have to break your legs to get you into the luggage, though.”

Xavier grinned. “A meager price to pay for a life on the run with my dear sister,” he said. “May our new lifestyle drag our father’s political name as a family man through the mud.”

“If only we’d actually escape him by moving out,” Lucy said. “He’d show up at my doorstep if I didn’t attend all his little galas. At least, until I bestowed upon him a large sum of cash from my lovely new husband. What else are children good for, right?” Lucy was normally pretty nonchalant about these things, but she seemed… bitter tonight.

“You really think that’s the only way to get him off your back?” Xavier asked.

“Honesty? It just might be,” Lucy said.

“I guess we need to get you married,” Xavier said, sitting up in bed.

“Excuse me?”

“Doesn’t need to be a gentleman, although being dumber than a box of rocks is preferable,” Xavier said, gears turning in his head. Lucy’s smile fell a little. She knew very well when her brother was being sarcastic, and this time… he wasn’t.

“I don’t understand,” Lucy said, giving him a serious look. Xavier didn’t seem to notice.

“It’s simple, really. Wedding nights are supposed to be so private - it’ll just be you and him. A couple knife wounds and his pretty pampered body’ll completely shut down; and a knife should be pretty easy to conceal under the giant poofy dress Dad’ll no doubt have you wear. Either that, or I could do it, just to be safe - we can break the window from the outside, make up some story about some creepy pervert showing up. We can even give the guy a heroic death about how he died saving you, and managed to wound the attacker and drive him away. Should help take the focus off of you a little. That means we’d need someone else’s blood, though - a jealous buddy of his should be easy enough for me to find. I could either bury the body somewhere and act like he went on the run after, or maybe I could just drug him and get what I need without him knowing. The real issue is making sure I don’t leave any evidence behind; although if it happened at our place any sort of DNA tests would be easy to discredit, so maybe we could…”

“Okay, Xav. Your joke has officially run its course. You can stop now.” The sinking feeling in Lucy’s chest was proven right when Xavier looked back at her, mildly confused.

“Come on now, I know it’s a rough plan, but it’s not that bad,” Xavier said.
Lucy gave him a concerned look and took his hand. He looked down at it, even more confused. “Xav… you know you can’t actually do that, right?”

He gave her a confused laugh. “Not with that attitude,” he said.

“Xavier. That’s premeditated murder. You know that’s wrong, don’t you?”

He still looked confused. “Only if we get caught,” he said, cautiously.

“No, not just… legally wrong, morally wrong. You’re talking about killing some poor random stranger to get me away from Dad,” Lucy said.

“…you’re painting the guy like a victim. I’m talking about some sleazy asshole that just wants to fuck you, Lucy - someone not worth anything.”

It had just been background noise for a long time, but now real, genuine concern was beginning to spread through Lucy’s body. Her brother didn’t actually think that way, did he? Had she just been ignoring signs? There had to be another explanation.

“I don’t care how sleazy of an asshole he is, he’s still a person, Xavier,” she said.

“…No, he wouldn’t be. I’m talking about one of those… hollow guys, you know? The ones with nothing behind their eyes. The ones that don’t feel anything.”

“They still feel things,” Lucy said, trying to figure out what Xavier was saying.

“No, they don’t,” Xavier said. “Haven’t you seen it? They’re all… empty. All like marionettes on puppet strings. They aren’t real, they don’t mean anything.”

“Who… who do you see like that, Xav?” Lucy asked, desperate to try and understand him.

Xavier looked at her like she’d come from another planet. “You’re the only one who isn’t like that, Lucy. Do you really not see it?”

Lucy tried to find something to say, but her opportunity to speak was stolen by another violent coughing fit. It was longer and more draining this time.

“Okay, seriously, are you okay?” Xavier asked as she finished hacking.

“Yeah, I’m… fine…” she looked at the crook of her elbow to see flecks of red on her skin. She and Xavier shared a horrified look.
Lucy

Chapter Summary

Lucifer recounts his last few weeks with his sister.

Chapter Notes

Trigger warnings for terminal cancer. It's a topic that hits very close to home for me and was really hard to write, to be honest, but... here we are.
Also, warnings for controlling relationships, I suppose? Xavier's/Lucifer's mother is more of a victim here as well, but some characters' frustrations are taken out on her even though she's also in a bad situation. Just being cautious.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Xavier sat patiently in the waiting room of the hospital, on the opposite side of room as his parents. He was, as in all public appearances, dressed in a suit. He didn’t really mind formal clothing like Lucy did, he just resented the fact that he was forced to wear it. Regardless, that was the least of his concerns at the moment.

Xavier’s father - well-known senator Joseph Arkwright - sat in the corner, fiddling with his phone as he sent work emails or whatever the heck he was doing instead of waiting anxiously like any decent parent would have been. He was a burly man, clean-shaven and wearing an impeccable suit as always.

Xavier’s mother, Elena Arkwright - in a gaudy pink skirt that was just barely long enough to not be considered skimpy - sat next to him clutching her purse in her lap. She glanced from the door to her nails to her shoes and back again, chewing on her bottom lip as she waited. Better.

Xavier and Elena stood up immediately as Lucy entered the room. Joseph took a few more moments to finish up whatever he was doing before walking over to them. Lucy’s eyes were red and puffy as if she’d been crying.

“Mr. and Mrs. Arkwright,” the doctor said, shaking their hands. She was a black woman, somewhat short in stature and beginning to show signs of age. “And you must be Xavier,” she said, shaking Xavier’s hand. “My name is Amanda Whitman. Come this way, please. This may be something we should discuss in private.”

Dr. Whitman led them down a corridor and into one of the rooms, letting everyone get settled before speaking. She put her clipboard down on a nearby desk and took a second to compose herself.

“There’s really no way to break this news to you gently, so I’m afraid I’ll just give it to you directly. Your daughter has stage four cancer of undetermined primary origin.”

Xavier felt the color drain out of his own skin, and Elena covered her hand with her mouth. Joseph just looked mildly surprised. Lucy brushed her hair out of her face.
“She says I have about three weeks,” Lucy said, her voice cracking as she nodded her head.

“What are the treatment options?” Joseph asked immediately.

“There are a few experimental chemo treatments that may help prolong her life, but… the chances of her living beyond six months even with these treatments is less than two percent. I’m sorry.”

“That’s why I’ve decided not to pursue any treatment,” Lucy said.

“You’re a minor, and that’s not your decision,” Joseph said.

“I’m seventeen and a half. I’m perfectly capable of understanding the consequences of this decision. I’ll sue you for medical emancipation if I have to, father, so I’d suggest you respect my wishes on this. It wouldn’t be very good publicity, considering you’re about to announce your candidacy for president next week.” Lucy sat up straight and looked him square in the eyes, not backing down. Dr. Whitman began to look uncomfortable.

“There must be something you can do,” Elena said.

“The cancer is extremely advanced, I’m afraid,” Dr. Whitman said. “There are well over three dozen tumors in her lungs and lymph nodes, two large tumors in her heart tissue, and multiple large tumors in her ovaries and uterus. Aggressive treatment would be the only advisable option, and it would likely be extremely debilitating.”

“In essence, I have the choice between a few solid weeks to live out my life, or slowly wasting away in a bed for half a year. Am I wrong, doctor?” Lucy asked.

“That is… one way of putting it,” Dr. Whitman sighed.

“That’s not acceptable,” Joseph said.

“I’ve made my decision,” Lucy said. “And I believe that means we’re done here. Dr. Whitman, thank you so much for your time.” Lucy grabbed Xavier’s hand and began walking out of the building, their parents flusteredly trying to catch up.

“Are you sure about this, Lucy?” Xavier said. It was impossible to keep his voice steady.

Lucy turned and smiled at him. “I’m sure, Xav. I’m going to enjoy the time I have left. You’ll come with me, won’t you?”

“For what?” Xavier asked.

“For everything,” she smiled. “I’ve got a bucket list, brother. No more parties, no more handshakes. Just you and me and a whole lot of adventure.”

Tears finally began to fall from Xavier’s eyes. “It would be my honor,” he said, trying to sound cheesy but utterly failing as he pulled his sister into a tight hug and began to cry into her shoulder softly.

The car ride home was surprisingly quiet. So was dinner. Everyone turned in early for the night, and it was only after Xavier was sound asleep that Joseph and Elena came into Lucy’s room. She wasn’t asleep anyway.
“Lucille, we need to talk about this,” Joseph said as she sat up in her bed.

“My decision is final,” Lucy said. “Now get out. I need my rest.”

“Lucille, you don’t understand—”

“First, My name is Lucy,” Lucy growled, cutting her mother off. “Do you hear me? Lucy. I hate the name Lucille and I’ve only told you a thousand times. Second? The adults are talking. Wait your turn.”

“What—”

“You know you’re a trophy wife, right?” Lucy said bluntly, all her frustrations finally beginning to boil over. Elena could only get out some shocked, half-formed response. “You can’t actually be that oblivious. All those nights he throws ‘guys’ parties’ and tells you to go out and enjoy yourself on the town? You know he’s screwing some random girl like the man-whore he is, right?”

Elena turned to Joseph for help, but he didn’t say anything. He looked red in the face from anger.

“Go ahead. Ask him. We both know he doesn’t actually love either of us.” Joseph didn’t respond. “So unless you happen to grow a spine in the next few weeks, I don’t want to talk to you. Now get out of my room.” Elena did just that, covering her mouth with her hand.

Joseph was beet red at this point. “I don’t know where this disrespectful attitude came from, Lucille, but I raised you better than to lie about—”

“Don’t you dare call me a liar, you sociopath,” Lucy said. “And this attitude? This is what I’ve thought of you my entire life. You’re a liar, a criminal, and a whore. You embezzle funds from charity drives and don’t care about anything other than your image and your money. You’ve stolen my entire life from me towing me around like a show dog for your sickeningly fake little ‘family man’ charade, and you’ve stolen my brother’s life locking him away in the dark because you think he’ll embarrass you. You may be a disgusting human being, but you’re an even worse father.”

Joseph backhanded Lucy across the face and she tripped back onto her bed. She didn’t seem angry, or hurt, or scared. She just smiled slyly, rubbing her cheek as Joseph’s expression shifted from anger to confusion. “Well, well, well. ‘Presidential Candidate Abuses Dying Daughter.’ That’s one hell of a headline, don’t you think?”

Joseph looked completely bewildered. “What the hell do you think you’re doing?”

Lucy stood up again. “It’s called blackmail, father dearest. I’m sure you’re familiar with the term.” She walked up close to him, staring up at him defiantly. “Your computer password is really easy to guess. Did you know that?”

“What are you playing at?” Joseph said, taking a step backward.

“Oh, nothing at all,” Lucy smiled. “It’s just, I think it might be bad for business if, say, a flash drive containing copies of all your personal files was accidentally mailed to the police. Just speculation,
though.”

Joseph’s face darkened. “What do you want?”

“You out of my life for the next few weeks,” Lucy said. “No more parties, no more speeches, no more smile-and-wave. Just me and my baby brother, with your credit card. That, or all your dirty secrets might just be revealed. Unless you want to hire a hitman to kill me? Although that doesn’t really seem cost-effective.”

“You’re a selfish bitch,” Joseph said.

“I learned from the best,” Lucy smirked. “Good night, dad. Oh, and, one more thing? You’re getting Xavier a therapist.” Joseph began to protest, but Lucy cut him off. “I don’t care if it looks bad on you. He needs professional help and you’re going to be a good person for once in your life and give it to him. Or else.” Joseph gave her a venomous glare, but chose to say nothing and sulked away. Lucy slept well for the rest of the night.

Xavier and Lucy traveled all over the country in those next two weeks. They spent a day at the beach. They went skydiving. They volunteered at an animal shelter. They went to visit a children’s cancer ward. Lucy donated almost her entire wardrobe, which was extensive. For those two weeks, she was more alive than she ever had been.

...and then the pain set in. It got hard to breathe, and then it got hard to walk. She finally turned herself into the hospital, and they dosed her with some heavy painkillers. For Xavier, the next three days turned into a year’s worth of grey haze, all to come to a single point of clarity when the nurse put her hand on his shoulder in the waiting room.

“It’s almost time,” she said, smiling softly. “She wants to see you.”

Xavier nodded and walked into the room. His parents moved to follow, but the nurse stopped them. “I’m sorry, but I’m afraid she specifically requested you not be allowed in the room. We can’t let you enter.”

“She’s our daughter,” Elena said, voice cracking once again. The nurse still wouldn’t let her pass.

“Hey,” Xavier said, sitting down next to the bed.

“No, no,” Xavier said, holding her hand with both of his now. “I want to be here.”

Lucy turned her head to see him better. “It’s going to be okay,” she whispered.

Xavier just shook his head. There weren’t any tears, just… resignation. “You’re the only thing that makes sense to me,” he said.

“It’s going to get better. You’ll see,” Lucy said. “Hey. Look at me.” Xavier looked at her. “I don’t know how angel-vision works, but I’m gonna be watching you every step of the way. And I expect some quality entertainment, alright?” Xavier chuckled. “I mean it, I want the whole shebang. Action, adventure, romance! Live your life. You’ll find your happiness one day, trust me. You’ll travel the
world, fall for some cute boy—"

“Boy?” Xavier asked, blushing heavily.

Lucy just smirked. “Baby brother, give me a little credit,” she chuckled. “Really, though. And I better have nieces and nephews I can spoil rotten in the afterlife,” she said.

“I’ll try my best,” Xavier chuckled.

“Good,” she said. “And… hey. Have the nurse turn this in to the police for me, will you?” Lucy asked. She put a pink flash drive into his palm. He looked at it curiously, and she winked at him. “I got my weeks away from him. Now we’re gonna pull the trigger and expose every dirty secret he has. Gotta go out with a bang, right?”

Xavier couldn’t help but smile. “You’re incredible.” He reached over and gave her a tight hug.

“I love you, Xav,” Lucy said quietly.

“I love you, too.”

Lucy fell asleep a little while after, and Xavier sat there with her for what seemed like an eternity, holding her hand the entire time. It was ironic, really - he didn’t feel sad. Just a little numb. The most important person in his life was dying, and he wasn’t sad.

And then that long, ugly sound that came with death began to drone out of one of the machines, and he broke out sobbing.

Xavier handed the flash drive to the nurse and asked her to give it to the police. She looked confused, but agreed anyway. There was a small crowd as Xavier left the room, wiping his eyes since they were still streaming tears. He looked around.

“There he is,” Joseph gestured to him. Two other men walked up to him.

“What is this?” Xavier asked.

“See, I told you, completely distraught,” Joseph said. Xavier looked to Elena, who seemed just as confused.

“My fucking sister just died, I’m allowed to be fucking upset,” Xavier said.

“You need to come with us, sir,” one of the men said, trying to grab Xavier’s shoulder. Xavier backed away.

“Like hell I am,” he said. The other man grabbed Xavier from behind. “What the—”

“Completely unstable, just like I told you,” Joseph said, shaking his head.

“Joseph, what’s going on?” Elena asked.

The other man came over and stuck some sort of needle into Xavier’s neck. Before long, Xavier couldn’t feel his limbs. He blacked out as the men dragged him out of the hospital.
Just wanted to clarify that the scene where Lucy talks to her parents was NOT something Xavier/Lucifer was aware of, nor did he tell Sans about it. Think of it more like a 'bonus scene' if you will.
Chapter Summary

Xavier wakes up into a hellish nightmare.

Chapter Notes

Uh... trigger warnings for psychological horror? Just to be safe.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Xavier came back to consciousness some indeterminate amount of time later, though it felt like he’d been drifting in and out of it for some time. In. Out. Up. Left. Zigzag, Spiral, loopbackdownfront…

He shook his head violently, trying to clear it. It felt like he was swimming in milk, everything cloudy. Milk. Honey. Mix the milk and the flour and the sugar, bake a cake and frost it red…

Xavier closed his eyes and dug his nails into the side of his head and immediately felt better. Pain was good. Pain felt real, even if nothing else did. He hoped it was blood trickling down the side of his face and not spiders, because it really felt like spiders. Hundreds of spiders, big and small, crawling into his ears to make a nest…

He slammed his head into a nearby wall several times, trying to squash all the ear-spiders, and the dull ache that came afterwards helped bring back a little of his sanity. When it was aching, the spiders weren’t there and neither were the centipedes crawling under his skin, trying to unstitch his face from his skull.

Desperate to get all the sensations to stop, he slammed his whole body into the wall repeatedly. One to get rid of the ants boring holes in his arm. One to get rid of the slimy, thorny vines slowly wrapping their way up his leg. One to get rid of whatever damned creature had eaten a hole in his abdomen and was currently squirming around inside his rib cage.

He did that for a few years… minutes? days? hours? before collapsing to the floor. Every inch of his body throbbed with pain, and he sighed with relief. No more insects, no more tentacles, just plain, sweet pain. He never thought pain could feel this nice.

Xavier finally dared to open his eyes, and instantly regretted it. He didn’t want to see any of the nightmare landscape in front of him, but he couldn’t bring himself to look away. He was atop some sort of tall pillar, and below him millions upon millions of long, charred black hands reached at his ankles. The walls oozed with worms, dripping out by the thousands, all trying to get to him so they could crawl inside his body and eat him alive from the inside. It felt like there were a few in there already, and Xavier gave himself a solid punch in the gut to get them to go away.

The door in front of him opened - it was made of severed tongues, all stitched together - and some hellish creature stepped through, suspended from the ceiling over the abyss by its long, green, sucking tentacle hair. It had two mouths where its eyes should have been, all circular and filled with
sharp teeth. It spoke with its eye-mouths, its main mouth just remaining open with its slithery blue
tongue lolling out.

“It’s time for your medication,” the creature said. It held out a slug, fat and oozing pus and making a
sound almost like a baby crying except that it was far more horrifying.

“I’m not sick,” Xavier said, backing away before he realized he had nowhere to go.

“You’re being treated for paranoid schizophrenia,” the thing said. “This will help with whatever
hallucinations you are experiencing.”

*She’s lying,* a voice said from nowhere.

*No he’s not! Eat the slug!* another voice said.

“No, no I don’t want it,” Xavier said.

“Mr. Arkwright,” the creature warned.

“I don’t like that name,” Xavier said. He didn’t know why, but he didn’t. “Don’t use that name.”

“Mr. Arkwright, you need to take your medication,” it said again.

*Why isn’t he telling him about the cabbages? She should tell him about the cabbages.*

*Pour the feet, you fool, pour the feet!*

~*Ring around the rosie, a pocket full of posies, ashes, ashes—*

*Lamb jam ham slam bam wham nam nam*

~*London bridge is falling down, falling down,*

*fallingfallingalwaysfallingnowyou’restallingashesasheswealefallalldown*

There had to be a dozen voices now. No, twenty. Forty. Xavier covered his ears.

“Shut up. Shut up, all of you, I don’t want to hear it. Shut up. SHUT UP!” He was screaming at the
top of his lungs now, trying to drown out the noise, but the voices just got louder and louder.

And then, all at once, they dropped to a whisper. Lucifer felt something cold and slimy begin to
snake up his spine.

*She’ll suck out your brain, you know,* a voice said.

*He’ll suck out your brain and put the slug in there. And then it’ll breed and they’ll crawl out your*

*eyes!*

*It’s more fun in the brain! Just let her do it.*

*Slug brain! Slug brain! Slug brain! Slug brain! Slug brain!*  

Xavier grabbed the slug out of its hand as he felt the tentacle snake past his shoulders and latch onto
the back of his skull. He looked down at it, squirming and oozing purple and yellow. He didn’t want
it.

He felt something akin to a tongue poke into his brain and he stuffed the slug into his mouth,
swallowing it whole. Except, it didn’t feel like he’d swallowed it. It was just crawling down his
throat slowly, still squirming.

“Good man,” the creature said, and the brain-tentacle went away as it left through the tongue door.

He could still feel the slug. Oh god he could still feel it and he didn’t want it he didn’t want it
hedidn’twantit

But if you spit it out, she’ll come back and put it in your brain, a voice reminded him. He collapsed
onto the floor, desperately wishing everything would just go away.

Come on. You’re not gonna let Dad beat you that easily, are you? It was a different voice. Familiar.
Xavier wracked his addled brain for a moment before he realized - it was Lucy.

And then he remembered more. His father… the hospital… needle in the neck. He felt unadulterated
rage begin to boil up through his chest.

Come on, Lucy said. Get that thing out of you. You’ve been sleeping long enough.

“I can’t,” Xavier said. The slug had made a cocoon inside him, sticking to his insides with spiders’
webs.

Sure you can. Close your eyes. Feel around.

Xavier did just that, and focused on the dull ache in his body. He could still feel. He crawled around,
feeling everything with his fingers - it was just a floor. His hands hit something cool and smooth, and
he felt his way around it - it was a toilet. This was just a normal room. He hunched himself over it,
never opening his eyes, and stuck two fingers down his throat. It made him throw up, and his insides
finally felt clean.

Now just lay down. Relax. Keep your eyes closed, but don’t fall asleep.

Xavier followed her advice, until she told him to open his eyes again an indeterminable amount of
time later.

The room was better now. The walls were slimy and the floor was tilted at an angle, but it was still a
room. The door was just a door.

Grab the tray, Lucy said. You’ll have to beat her.

Xavier grabbed a plastic tray off of a nearby desk - it must have had food on it at some point. He
stood behind the door until it creaked open.

“Mr. Arkwright, it’s time for your din… Mr. Arkwright?”

Xavier stepped out from behind the door and slammed the tray into the side of her head. It was a
woman - her skin was blue and her nose looked like a dagger, but it was still a person - and Xavier
kicked her to the ground. And then he hit her with the corner of the tray again in the side of the skull.
And then again. And again, and again, until he looked down and saw her skull was caved in,
pouring blood out onto his bare feet.

Go, Lucy told him. He ran out of the room.

He was in an asylum somewhere, he surmised. His father had paid someone off to take him to an
asylum. There weren’t any other people around that he could see, though - no other staff, no other
patients. Where were they?

He didn’t think about it too much, just following the directions Lucy gave him until he passed by an open door with a bunch of paperwork in it. Right next to it was an exit, where Xavier saw a man smoking a cigarette. He wasn’t back to normal yet, but things were manageable. He could think clearly.

The man was either very distracted or completely oblivious, because he didn’t notice Xavier sneaking up behind him.

*Give him a cheesy one-liner,* Lucy advised.

Xavier reached his arms around and slammed the cigarette into the man’s mouth, making him choke on it.

“She says smoking’s bad for your health, you know,” Xavier said, twisting his arms until he heard a satisfying *snap.*

Xavier let the body crumple to the ground and took a moment to look at it. He’d just killed a man. He looked down at his bloodied hands and feet, from when he’d bashed the woman’s skull in. He’d just killed two people.

Xavier couldn’t help but feel just a little warm inside. It felt… accomplished. He finally felt at peace for the first time since he’d woken up here. Was that so wrong?

Looking around to make sure no one else was around, he pulled off the man’s clothes entirely and then took off his hospital gown, replacing it with the man’s t-shirt and jeans. They didn’t fit him perfectly, but… they’d do.

He dug around in his new pockets to find a lighter. Smiling, he lit the hospital gown on fire and tossed it into the room with all the paperwork, before running out into the woods as fast as he could. For the first time in his life, he actually felt free.

Chapter End Notes

*Nightmare fuel, anyone?*

*Also don’t do LSD children, it's bad news*
“So, to cut a long story short,” Lucifer sighed, “I lived out in the woods for a few years after that. I learned to hunt, track, steal, and generally keep myself alive out there. I was presumed dead, according to the newspapers, and my father ended up going to prison for a laundry list of crimes. One day I just decided to climb Mount Ebott for no reason and, well… the rest is history.”

Sans just nodded in understanding. How was he supposed to reply to any of that? All he could really think was that Lucifer deserved better.

Sans had to resist the urge to laugh at the irony. The Sans before the Core broke down - the Sans that had appointed himself Judge and judged Frisk in the King’s hall - would have called Lucifer a psychopath. If he hadn’t made the promise to Toriel, that Sans would have blasted Lucifer the moment they met just for his LV alone.

…but that Sans had died a long, long time ago. He was so much less naive now. That past Sans didn’t know what it was like to watch his entire race starve to death. He didn’t know what it felt like to murder someone to keep his brother fed. He didn’t know what it was like not to be able to trust his own thoughts. This Sans did, though. Just how ignorant was it for him to Judge others? Who was he to define sanity?

No, this Sans didn’t see a serial killer. He saw a man that loved his sister. He saw someone mistreated by his parents and by his society. He saw a survivor. He saw someone honest and genuine and witty and funny and sexy and…

The old Sans couldn’t have felt this way about Lucifer, he realized. But this Sans? He could. For the first time since he’d figured out his own feelings, he wasn’t ashamed of it. Lucifer deserved to loved, even if Sans couldn’t afford to love him. For the first time since everything had gone to hell… Sans actually found something positive that had changed within himself.

“for the record,” he said, trying to fill the expectant silence, “lucifer is a better name than xavier.”

Lucifer started laughing uncontrollably. He’d just bared his soul to Sans, given him his entire life’s story, and the skeleton made a joke about it. That was just like him. He laughed so much that he started crying a little.

Sans couldn’t help but smile. He liked Lucifer’s laugh. The sound of it, how his face looked while he was doing it. He deserved to do that all the time.

“really, though,” Sans sighed. “i can see why you loved her so much. you both deserved better.”

Lucifer nodded to himself. “…do you think she’d be proud of me?” he asked, barely above a whisper. “Is this the life she wanted me to live?”

Sans had to think for a moment. Maybe Lucifer wasn’t entirely sane, maybe he lived in a moral grey zone, but… he always did what he had to. He wasn’t heartless. Actually, Sans envied his capacity to
“...hell yeah, she would be,” Sans answered, and he was being honest. “if this hasn’t been an adventure, i don’t know what is. you’ve definitely gotten the action part down. now all we gotta do is get you a cute boy to romance and you’ll be set,” he said with a wink.

Lucifer snorted a little, and Sans could see the barest hint of a blush on his face. It made his soul flutter just a bit.

“If only I was a monster,” Lucifer said. “I could walk around town and hit on all the cute boys I want and no one would care.” He stared off into middle distance for a moment. “I’ve never really felt at home until I came here. So, regardless of all the shit I put you through… I really am grateful for everything you’ve done for me, Sans. I just… I wish what I am didn’t dictacte my life. If I was I monster, I could…” he looked at Sans and then glanced away, blushing. “Nevermind.”

Sans could feel something light up in his soul. He’d never really considered it before with the mindset he’d been in lately, but... did Lucifer like him too?

He thought about it. The nerves, the jitters, the blushing. Lucifer had insisted it wasn’t fear that was making him act strange recently, but it had to be something, right? Maybe Sans was just projecting, or being too hopeful, but... it made sense, didn’t it?

He wanted to be angry at himself for feeling like this. He couldn’t afford to love Lucifer, and it would be even worse if Lucifer loved him back. But... he just couldn’t seem to find the energy to reprimand himself anymore. The thought that Lucifer might like him too, it... it was almost impossible to describe how it made him feel. Elated? Terrified? Nauseous? Giddy? Probably a combination of them.

He blocked out the one sane portion of him left that told him what he was about to do was a terrible idea. Sanity was overrated, anyway.

“hey. c’mere,” Sans said, spreading his arms. Lucifer looked at him, confused. “i think we both earned it after this stupid feels-fest we’ve had today. c’mon.” Lucifer leaned forward a little, and Sans wrapped him in a tight hug. “i’m grateful for everything you’ve done for us, too. and, for what it’s worth... i’m glad you’re here.”

Sans couldn’t help but smile a little. This had to be what peace felt like. And... he could hear Lucifer’s heartbeat. Thuthumphthuthumphthuthumphthuthump. It was pounding wildly, actually, and Sans pressed his skull just a little closer to the human’s chest. It got even faster, and Sans was almost sure now.

Lucifer pulled away, and Sans let go reluctantly. They looked at each other - their mouths were just an inch or two apart. Was it so wrong that Sans just wanted to lean up and kiss him? It would be so easy. Just...

He put his fake smile on and got off the couch. This... it couldn’t happen.

“ugh, i think that’s enough emotional crap for one day,” he sighed, and Lucifer looked just a little disappointed. “...why don’t you go out for some alone time. lord knows i’ve kept you cooped up long enough,” he said.

“Yeah. Sounds good,” Lucifer said, putting his cloak back on and walking out the door. Sans watched him go, sighing to himself. Whatever happened after this, at least he and Lucifer were back on good terms. He was sick of tiptoeing around his human.
“SOOOOOOO…” Sans nearly fell over backwards as Papyrus called to him from the upper floor. “I SEE YOU’VE WORKED THINGS OUT WITH LUCIFER!”

“uh… yeah,” Sans said. “how long have you been standing there?”

“LONG ENOUGH,” Papyrus said, walking down the stairs to join his brother in the living room. “WHAT’S WRONG, SANS? EVERYTHING SEEMED TO GO VERY WELL, YET YOU SEEM… CONTEMPLATIVE.”

Sans stared after where Lucifer had left. “you ever want something really, really bad - and you’re pretty sure you could get it if you tried - but… you know you still can’t have it?” Sans shook his head. He didn’t think Papyrus could really understand.

“OF COURSE, SANS,” Papyrus said, and Sans looked at him. “I CAN TELL THAT YOU DON’T JUST WANT TO BE FRIENDS WITH HIM.”

Sans blushed. Was he really that transparent?

“YOU WANT TO BE FRIENDS…” Papyrus said, leaning in closer, “WITH BENEFITS!”

“…um.”

“DON’T WORRY, SANS, THESE FEELINGS ARE PERFECTLY NORMAL! I, TOO, HAVE MANY FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS,” Papyrus said, gesturing with his hands dramatically.

Sans suddenly felt keenly uncomfortable. “wait, what? since when?!?”

“I THINK MY VERY FIRST SUCH FRIEND WAS UNDYNE, ACTUALLY! WE WERE FRIENDS, BUT SHE ALSO GAVE ME SECRET WARRIOR-COOKING TRAINING. SEE? BENEFITS!”

Sans rested his face in his hands. “stars above, papyrus, that’s not… that phrase doesn’t mean what you think it means,” he groaned.

Papyrus ignored him, as usual. “NOW, I AM ASSUMING THAT THE BENEFIT YOU ARE SEEKING IS PUNNY BANTER, WHICH I DO NOT APPROVE OF, BUT I SUPPORT THE RELATIONSHIP NONETHELESS. SO, THIS IS HOW YOU GO ABOUT ASKING FOR BENEFITS…”

“no! i don’t need anymore friendship advice from you! and don’t call it that, no more benefits. you don’t know what that… uuuuggggghhhhh…”

“Mmm. Thanks for the tea, mom,” Lucifer said, sitting in the Ruins next to Toriel. She froze for a moment.

“Did… did you just…”

Lucifer blinked. “Oh, sorry, that was weird. It just kinda slipped out and--”

“No, no! It is… fine. I did not mind,” Toriel said.
Lucifer smiled at her. “I’m glad,” he said. “So… I have a question for you.”

“Of course, my child,” Toriel said.

“Sans has no idea what you look like, so you must never invite him inside like this. Why?” Lucifer asked.

Toriel gave the tips of her toes a thousand-yard stare. “…Perhaps I am too ashamed to show my face,” she said after a while.

“What do you mean?”

Toriel sighed. “As you know, I was at one time Queen of the Underground. Many, many years ago, when my husband declared war on humanity, I abandoned my duties and came here to the Ruins. When the king… when Asgore died, I tried to reclaim the throne. It was then that Undyne led a revolution against me. She claimed that I had no business being the queen after abandoning my kingdom for decades, and… I am afraid I cannot say she was wrong. I stepped down peacefully and resumed my exile here. But… I cannot help but feel that if I had not left in the first place, or had fought for the throne… perhaps the Underground would not be in the state it is now.”

“If Undyne couldn’t fix the Core, there’s no reason to assume that you would have been able to. You can’t blame yourself,” Lucifer said.

“That is… kind of you to say,” Toriel said. “So. How have you been as of late, my child?”

Lucifer leaned back against the door and smiled. “…this place really feels like home.”
And Everything Was Fine For Just One Second

Chapter Summary

Undyne returns to Snowdin.

Just as Sans finally finished his long and very uncomfortable conversation with Papyrus and settled down on the couch for a nap, there was a frantic knock at his front door. It swung open wildly to reveal the mayor.

“Sans! Come quick, the queeaaargh!” A blue hand reached around him and hoisted him off the ground about an inch by his throat.

“As much as I appreciate your enthusiasm for announcing my arrival, I can take it from here,” Undyne said. She tossed the bear monster to the side like a ragdoll and walked inside.

“queen undyne,” Sans said slowly, trying not to show signs of panic. “feels like i just saw you.”

The corner of her mouth tilted up in a sadistic smile. “I thought I’d just make a little follow-up visit after our last chat. Come on, everyone’s waiting on you. Like usual.”

Sans stuck his axe hand in his pocket to keep it from twitching and followed Undyne out into the town square. Everyone else had already been gathered up, all standing in front of...

The crate of food. Sans felt his soul sink in his chest.

“So there’s this funny story I’ve just been dying to tell you,” Undyne said, talking casually like she would to an old friend. “See, someone snuck into the New Home garrison and stole a whole crate of provisions. Whoever they were, they just seemed to… vanish into thin air. Weird, huh? So we’ve been looking for the missing crate since it disappeared, and where should I find it but here in Snowdin. It’s the strangest thing, right?”

She slapped Sans on the back, sending him reeling forward into the snow. He felt her put her foot on his back as he tried to get up. “It seems like we’ve got a mystery on our hands. So tell me, Sans. Who do you know that’s good at vanishing and lives in Snowdin?”

“i... i don’t know what to tell you, queenie,” Sans grunted. He felt his ribs creaking from the pressure as Undyne pushed her foot down a little further. “our food delivery finally came in. They said they were just giving us the last three months they missed all at once.”

“Is that right?” Undyne said. “Because I’d never have authorized something like that. Just who was our little delivery boy, then?”

Sans looked over at Fuku and gave her the most apologetic look he could manage from the ground. He wasn’t normally one to throw people under the bus, but… he hadn’t survived this long by being nice.

“delivery girl, actually. it was little miss bright and green over there.” Fuku took a step backward, horrified. She looked at Undyne, and the queen’s smile faded.
“You. I know you, actually.” Undyne stepped off of Sans, and Papyrus helped him to his feet. “I sent you to prison a few months ago, didn’t I?”

Sans looked over at Grillby, whose flames had gone dim with horror. He doubted Grillby would ever be able to forgive him for this, but there just wasn’t a way to…

Sans looked past Undyne and Fuku towards the forest outside of town and saw a glimpse of something behind one of the trees. Lucifer. An idea lit up inside Sans’ head. He looked over at 01, who was standing just a few feet away.

“So, how have you and the hubby been?” Sans asked, loud enough for both 01 and Undyne to hear. The rabbit-monster started shaking with rage and his grip on his sword tightened. “aw, damn. totally forgot about that, sorry, man. my memory isn’t what it used to be these days.”

01 marched over to him and picked him up by the collar roughly. “How about you, like, shut your fucking mouth for once?” he said. Sans just grinned.

“hey, no need to get all worked up, pal. i’m just tryna offer my sincere condolences. b’ sides, i haven’t opened my mouth once this whole time.”

01 made some sort of inhuman growl and slammed Sans to the ground. Undyne looked over at the both of them, frustrated. “Would you two shut up?” she growled.

Sans just smirked up at 01 from the ground, eyes narrowing slyly. 01 watched him, confused, as he reached into his pocket and pulled out…

A handful of dust. He flicked it up into 01’s face with a little shrug.

Sans could see how red 01’s face had gone, even under his helmet. “I’m gonna break every goddamn bone in your body!” 01 screamed, slamming his fists down onto Sans’ ribs. The skeleton’s breathing hitched as he felt something crack.

Undyne walked back over and pulled 01 off of Sans, throwing him backward. “I told you to shut up.” Undyne said, turning her attention back to Fuku.

Sans managed to grin even wider through the pain. Time for the finishing blow. “huh. so that’s what military discipline looks like,” he chuckled, wincing as his ribs screamed at him for moving. They were definitely cracked. Undyne looked back at him.

“Excuse me?”

“Oh, nothing. i just thought you were a little more strict or something. i mean, he disobeyed a direct order from you and all he gets is a slap on the wrist? not that i can really judge. i’d be too lazy to keep him in line, that’s for sure.” Sans smiled even wider. It was easy to imagine 01’s face going pale under his armor.

Undyne looked around - the whole crowd was watching her, waiting to see what she’d do. Her face darkened as she walked over to 01. Out of the corner of his eye, Sans could see Lucifer waving to Fuku, and she slowly began to sneak away.

“I’m… I’m, like, really sorry, Queen Undyne,” 01 said, taking a knee before her. Undyne hesitated for a second, closing her good eye.

Then she kicked him to the ground. She summoned a spear and rammed it through his shoulder, pinning him to the ground and making him scream. Then, she slammed her fists into his chestplate,
denting it. Then she hit him again. And again.

The whole town looked on silently as 01 screamed out apologies and Undyne continued to beat him with her fists. Sans rolled over onto his side to watch, cradling his fractured ribs. Even with the amount of pain he was in right now, he couldn’t help but chuckle quietly to himself. There was something just so *satisfying* about this.

No one could turn away from the gruesome spectacle as 01’s apologies descended into pleas and eventually just broken whimpering. It seemed to last forever until Undyne stood up slowly, blood dripping from her fists. Everyone took a step back as she looked around the crowd.

“*That’s* what happens to people who disobey me,” she said, deathly quiet. She glanced over at where Fuku was standing, and her eye widened. “Where is she?!” she shouted.

Everyone looked around, confused. They had all been too engrossed by Undyne’s little display to notice her escape. The queen looked around, furious.

“Don’t just stand there you idiots, AFTER HER!” The remaining guards sprinted towards the woods where they assumed Fuku must have fled to. She grabbed one of the guards by the shoulder as she prepared to follow her comrades.

“Not you. Take the supplies back to New Home,” Undyne ordered, and the guard nodded before grabbing the crate and heading towards Waterfall.

“h... hey,” Sans said. “you can’t just take *all* the food we have. we’ll all starve!”

Undyne gave him a death glare, and Sans had the sense to stop talking. “That food is illegal contraband. You’ll have to wait for your normal ration shipment, just like everybody else.”

“BUT, MY QUEEN,” Papyrus said, helping Sans to his feet slowly, “THE RATION SHIPPMENTS NEVER COME TO SNOWDIN ANYMORE.”

Undyne didn’t even turn around. “If you have a problem with the supply lines, you can file an official complaint. I have a thief to catch.” Undyne sprinted off towards the woods.

As soon as Undyne was out of sight, the whole crowd rushed to Sans’ side, offering what little healing magic they could muster. 01 grabbed the mayor’s ankle weakly as he walked by. “p... please, h-help… help m-me…”

It was a gruesome sight. One of his ears had been ripped off entirely, and one of his arms was twisted at an angle it shouldn’t have been. The side of his helmet was dented in and there was a stain where blood had come splattering out of the eye slit. His chestplate was so badly dented that the metal had torn in multiple places, it’s sharp edges sticking into his flesh and making him bleed out into the snow.

The mayor shook his hand off. “I’m afraid we don’t have the resources to spare for you, my friend. You’ll have to take that up with the Queen.” He knelt down besides Sans and put a gentle paw on his ribcage, glowing with the little bit of green magic he could conjure.

“...Thank you for stalling for her,” Grillby said, similarly sitting next to Sans with one arm slung around him to keep the skeleton sitting upright.

“don’t mention it, grillbz,” Sans chuckled, wincing as his ribs moved. “family of yours is family of mine. someone’s gotta look out for our own, cause the crown sure ain’t gonna.”
01’s eyes fluttered shut as he dissolved into dust.
“Here we are,” Lucifer smiled, setting Fuku down on the ground after carrying her halfway through Waterfall. “No more singed footprints to follow you by.”

“...Thank you. You’re my hero, once again,” Fuku smiled.

Lucifer saw a Temmie - it looked like the Temmie he’d been acquainted with - peek out from behind a corner.

“Hi, Temmie,” Lucifer said, beckoning her over.

“hOI!” Temmie bounded over to him and purred happily as he stroked her fur.

“Can you go find Bob for me?” Lucifer asked.

“Yaya! Tem fine Bob for u!” She scampered off and returned with the intellectual leader of the Temmies.

“Ah, Lucifer. What a pleasant surprise,” Bob said.

“It’s nice to see you, too, Bob,” Lucifer said. “I know it’s a lot to ask, but… do you think my friend Fuku could stay here for a while? She’s in a bit of trouble, I’m afraid, and this place is a little out of the way, so…”

Bob sighed. “...I’ll see what we can do. Go ahead and come inside, Fuku,” Bob said. Fuku nodded.

“Thanks again… for everything,” Fuku said. “Will you come and visit me?”

Lucifer gave her a little smile. “We’ll see. It’s kinda hard to navigate in the dark without my own personal lantern,” he said.

Fuku giggled. “Are you going to be able to find your way back alright?”

“I’ll be fine. I’ll see you around, Fuku.”

“R...Right,” she said. She had a yellow blush on her cheeks. She watched him leave and then walked into the village.
Sans found Lucifer wandering around the darkness of Waterfall relatively quickly, just as Lucifer had hoped.

“The queen clear out?” Lucifer asked.

“...yeah,” Sans said.

Lucifer’s smile dropped. Something seemed… off.

“hey, uh… come this way with me. we’re gonna go run an errand or two.”

“...Okay,” Lucifer said. Something was definitely wrong. It felt like Sans was hiding something.

They walked and walked until they reached what appeared to be a dilapidated store stall. Sans shoved his way past it to find a door carved into the stone. He beckoned Lucifer over.

“so, i, uh… i need ya to do something for me,” Sans said.

“Sure,” Lucifer said.

“...there’s an old man that lives in here. real old, he uh… he remembers when the barrier was created. anyway, he’s pretty much blind and deaf at this point, not long for this world anyway. you don’t mind a little homicide, right?”

“In theory, no,” Lucifer said. “Why am I killing him?”

“he’s got something important. remember how monsters turn to dust when they die? well, this one’ll leave behind a little something else, too. you’ll know it when you see it. grab it as soon as it appears and meet me back out here. capiche?”

“Alright,” Lucifer said, still suspicious. He opened the door quietly and walked inside.

“Huzzuh? Tadpole? That you?” It was an ancient-looking turtle monster wearing a safari hat and some thick, cloudy glasses that would not help him see anything in the slightest.

“...Yeah, it’s me,” Lucifer said, deciding to test just how hard of hearing he was. He dropped into a battle crouch, just in case, and pulled out a pocket knife.

“It’s nice to see you, Undyne,” the turtle croaked. Lucifer blinked. He was very hard of hearing, evidently. Probably a little senile, too. “How’s the queenery going?”

“...it’s been better,” Lucifer answered.

“I’m sure it’s fine,” the turtle answered. “You don’t give yourself enough credit, Your Majesty. I mean, you still make time to come and visit old codgers like me, wahaha!”

That was… interesting. Undyne didn’t seem like the type to make visits to the elderly. Unless this was a relative of hers? But it didn’t seem that way.

“Speak up, now! What advice can this old war hero of yours offer today, tadpole?”

Lucifer paused. The man seemed harmless enough, but surely Sans had a good reason for asking Lucifer to kill him. He readied his knife.

“...what would you say to me… if I’d done some bad things? If I hurt a lot of people?” Lucifer asked.
“Well, that’s a rather strange question,” the turtle said. “...But I’d ask ye if you’d wanna be better. And if you’d say yes… I’d say you can be better starting any time you want. You just gotta put your priorities in the right order. And ye put not hurting people right at the top, wahaha!”

Lucifer nodded to himself. “I’ll keep that in mind.”

He made it quick - a gash across the neck, clean and simple. Blood gushed out for a few moments before the turtle’s whole body turned grey and crumbled to dust.

And then the ‘something’ Sans was asking for appeared. It was an upside-down heart, white and gently glowing. Lucifer stared at it for a moment, mesmerized. The heart began to flicker, and Lucifer reached out and snatched it before it could disappear.

The whatever-it-was dissolved into white mist at Lucifer’s touch, soaking into his fingers and giving him a rush of energy unlike anything he’d ever experienced. It mellowed out after a few seconds, dulling to a quiet hum underneath his skin. He walked out of the house, more than a little confused.

“did you get it?” Sans asked.

“I kind of… absorbed it? I swear I didn’t mean to, it just—”

“no, no, that’s supposed to happen,” Sans said. “here. i’m kinda on a time crunch, we’re taking a shortcut.” He held out his hand and Lucifer took it. He found himself at the Ruins door.

“That was a big jump, Sans,” Lucifer said, worried. “Aren’t you supposed to be conserving your magic?”

“...i’ve been pretty well-fed, lately,” Sans said. “don’t worry about it. i need you ta sneak me through tori’s house,” he said.

“What? Why?”

“just do it.” Sans snapped, before looking away. Usually, Lucifer could sense it - the subtle, dangerous killer that lurked just underneath the surface, giving some weight to all the threats he made. But this time, it was missing. Sans looked… empty. The air felt empty. A thick, creeping sense of dread began crawling up Lucifer’s spine.

He pulled open the Ruins door slowly. He had to trust Sans. Sans wouldn’t go back on his word - he wasn’t going to trick Lucifer in order to kill him. If they were really out of food, it’d be a fair hunt.

...That couldn’t be what this was. It couldn’t be over. What would Lucifer even do if that were the case?

*He’d just run. Wouldn’t look back. Run and put everything out of his mind.*

Lucifer glided up the stairs with silent footsteps, glancing down the halls on either side for any sign of Toriel. She must have been asleep. Lucifer motioned for Sans to follow him, and they left through the front door.

“Now what?” he asked.

“just keep walking,” Sans said.

*He probably wouldn’t be able to think straight enough to make the tracks confusing. Just a straight line. A blind sprint for his life.*
They passed by a withered old tree. Sans glanced both ways at the crossroads and went right. Lucifer followed, the dread clinging to his shoulders.

_No, he wouldn’t even be able to do that. He’d just stand there, refuse to leave. Beg Sans. Plead with him. They’d find some other way to keep everyone fed._

They maneuvered through a myriad of puzzles backwards. Fall-through floors, spikes, levers.

_Just stand there. Ask him to make it quick. Or not._

They trudged through an absurdly long hallway, and Lucifer felt the dread strangling his throat.

_Kneel in front of him so his neck was at axe-level. Grab his skull and press his lips to his teeth. Tell him it was okay. Press the blade to his skin himself._

They reached a bed of golden flowers, the ground slick with mud after a recent rain. The dimmest light from a cloudy sunset trickled down from far, far above.

Sans grabbed Lucifer’s hand again tightly, and he found himself on a slippery surface of bare stone. Lucifer could see it - the surface. From this perspective, it was just bare mountain rock and dreary sky. The barrier was here, too - a soft, pulsating light that ironically looked like a door. It must have been invisible from the outside.

The dread sunk its fangs into his heart. He felt it stop beating for a split second. Then it started pounding wildly out of control.

“No,” he said.

“You gotta go,” Sans said, and Lucifer could hear the pain on his voice.

“No,” Lucifer said, shaking his head and turning around to face Sans. The skeleton was shaking. Lucifer could hear his bones rattling together, muffled by his layers of clothes. “No, I’m not leaving.”

“Undyne took everything. I got enough left of my last guest to make one last meal for everyone. And I got a little of my personal stash left for paps. But after tonight…” he looked at the ground for a moment, and when he looked back up, his red eye was flickering blue. “I promised to keep ‘em all fed. I don’t break my promises, luce, I can’t… that’s all of me that’s left,” he said, and blush tears started leaking out of his eyesockets. “I promised not to hurt you until the food runs out. So… so after tonight… I gotta… I gotta…” he started to hyperventilate a little. “You got a monster soul now. You can leave. You’re free of me.”

“I’ve chosen to stay with you this whole time. I’m not leaving. You can’t make me leave,” Lucifer said.

“I can’t hurt you,” Sans whispered. “Not you. You have to go. Please, just… just go.”

“I’m not just leaving you all here to starve!” Lucifer shouted. “I’ll go and bring back food for you.”

“Won’t work,” Sans said. “I’ve tried human food before. Humans have magic in them, but their food doesn’t. It just falls out the bottom of my skull.”

Lucifer glanced down at the axe Sans held at his side and grabbed the blade, pulling it up to rest at his neck. “Just… here. Just do it.”

“No,” Sans said. “No, no, no.”
“This is how I want to die,” Lucifer said. “I’d rather… I’d rather die and know you were gonna be okay than live up here and die alone in the woods.”

“i can’t!” Sans screamed. He slammed his fist against Lucifer’s chest in frustration, before resting his head against it. “you know, there used to be a time where i thought i wasn’t capable of hurting anybody,” he said quietly. “…and then anybody turned into most people. and then most people turned into my friends, and that turned into my people. and now… if i’m really, really honest with myself… now it’s just two people.” He looked up at Lucifer again. “i can’t lose any more,” he said, voice cracking. “there’ll be nothing left of me if i lose any more.”

“Then here,” Lucifer said, moving the blade to his shoulder. “Take the arm. I’m left-handed, anyway, we’ll cauterize it and then—”

“no,” Sans said. “luce. it’s gonna end someday. it was always gonna end - me, undyne, something else. this ship’s been sinking for a long time. we’re just clinging to some mockery of life down here. you’re the only thing that can be saved from this place.”

“You could leave, if you had my soul,” Lucifer said. “I could save you.”

“i can’t leave them, luce,” Sans said.

“You could give Papyrus my soul and use me to feed everyone,” Lucifer said. Sans tossed his axe to the ground angrily and grabbed Lucifer’s hips, shoving him towards the barrier a few steps.

“don’t you dare,” Sans growled. “don’t you dare make me choose between you and him!”

“I don’t belong up there!” Lucifer begged, tears rolling down his face unhindered. “I belong down here, with you!”

They were both sure, at that point. Each could see how he felt reflected in the other’s eyes. They were so close. They both wanted it so badly. Lucifer could feel Sans’ hands shaking from where they rested on his hips, and his sharp fingers dug into his skin as he tried to steady them.

Sans closed his eyes. He tried to memorize how Lucifer’s skin felt under his fingers. Soft, warm. He could feel the hip bones underneath. Sans couldn’t help but wonder what it would taste like if he kissed him. Probably sweet. He couldn’t help but imagine how it would feel to have Lucifer under him, to be pressed up against his skin, to make all that suave composure the human had unravel at his touch.

“there’s three ways this is gonna go,” Sans said, his jaw clenched tightly, using every last ounce of control he had. “one, you leave.”

“I leave and you all starve,” Lucifer said.

“…eventually, yeah. i can keep paps fed for a little while,” Sans said. “two, you stay. i’ll have to kill you, and then i’ll die. my soul’s so broken and shriveled and fucked-up, luce, it’ll kill me. i’ll just fall down and die.”

Lucifer just shook his head and tried to deny it, but he could feel Sans meant every word.

“three, you stay. and i try and kill you, and you kill me first, and then you’re stuck down here with a bunch of starving monsters. and then you’ll get eaten alive, or torn apart by undyne, or starve like everyone else.” Lucifer just kept shaking his head. “i die all three ways. you die two ways. there’s only one way that makes any sense.”
“Don’t make me leave,” Lucifer begged, barely able to make a sound. Sans took a step forward and shoved him towards the barrier a little. “No.” A little more. “No, no.” A little more. “Sans. Sans, don’t—”

Lucifer stumbled backwards, and it felt like he was falling through mist. And then, it was all gone. No barrier, no Sans. Just an empty cave. He slid to his knees, grabbing his hair in frustration.

He hated it. He hated all of it, everything. He hated the Underground for keeping the monsters prisoner. He hated the humans for putting them there. He hated Sans for making him leave. He hated himself for letting him.

Lucifer let out some primal, beastial scream at the top of his lungs, holding the ugly note until his breath was completely gone and his throat was raw. Then he beat the ground until his fists bled.

Lucifer looked down at his skin, torn and covered in red. Gears started to turn in his head. He got up and started walking down the mountain.

This wasn’t over.

Not by a long shot.

Chapter End Notes

Just to clarify, I'm going with the theory that goats aren't the only boss monsters and that Gerson was one of them.

Also I'M GETTING REALLY EXCITED GUYS but if I've done my job right you're all in agony mwahaha

Anywho there's just a little disclaimer I wanted to put here. One of my goals coming into writing this was to stick as closely to the canonical world of Horrortale as I could, but it is an ongoing comic (and if you haven't read it GO DO IT NOW) and some new details have come to light about the history of the place. I'm debating whether to go back and change some details to match, or to gradually correct things as I continue the story. If you have an opinion, go ahead and let me know. Anyway, I hope you all have a lovely day.
Aftermath

Chapter Summary

Sans and Lucifer deal with the aftermath of the human's departure.

Lucifer reached the base of the mountain, making his way through the woods he’d made his home in for the last several years. Wheels spun in his head, different ideas forming and swirling around in his skull. He was so wrapped up in his own mind that he almost didn’t notice the deep, mournful growl off to his left.

He dropped into a crouch and approached the noise to find… a bear. It’s hind leg was caught in one of the rusty old hunting traps Lucifer had stolen from one place or another. It still worked, apparently. It must’ve gotten snagged while Lucifer was in the Underground.

The bear could barely move - it must’ve been there for a while. Lucifer could hear a click in the back of his brain. He pulled out his pocket knife.

“Sorry, buddy. Wish I could’ve put you out of your misery sooner.” He slashed open it’s throat and waited until it’s eyes went dull. He looked down at his knife - he really wished he still had his machete. Sighing, he bent down and got to work butchering the beast.

Sans felt his magic reserves fall back down to dangerously low as he teleported back outside the Ruins door. All the extra food that Lucifer had gotten him was all for nothing. Just like all of it had been - all for nothing. He slid to the ground and his head made a thump against the door.

“Who is there?”

Sans closed his eyes, exhausted. He wasn’t even in the mood for a knock-knock joke. “sans,” he said.

“…Sans who?”

He smiled in spite of himself. Oh, Tori. “…i’m sans a human now,” he said, chuckling darkly.

“Lucifer?! He… he is…”

“he’s on the surface now,” Sans said, laughing some more. He didn’t really know why. It didn’t feel like laughter bubbling up through his chest, it felt like some demon trying to claw its way out of his ribcage, gnawing at his soul until he was sure it was bleeding.

“The… surface?”

“i let ‘im go, tori. he’s… he’s gone…” he was laughing so hysterically now that it was hard to breathe. “and he’s not coming back!”

Somewhere along the line, the laughing degraded into sobbing. Somewhere along the line, the door
to the Ruins open and Sans found himself wrapped in a giant pair of arms. He couldn’t even be bothered to look up at her and finally see what she looked like. The only thing he saw was a purple robe and a pair of furry, white hands.

...She was warm. There were plenty of warm monsters. So why did it send his thoughts straight back to Lucifer? Maybe his failing memory would be a blessing for once just wipe Lucifer from his mind entirely. Maybe that would make this pain go away.

“That was very, very noble of you, Sans,” Toriel said, stroking his back.

Sans started laughing. “noble. noble? we’re all gonna starve now, tori,” he said. “what i did is the single most selfish thing i’ve ever done in my life.” He started crying again. “selfish is something you’re supposed to do for yourself, right? so why…” his voice cracked, “why does it feel like i’m dying?”

“You loved him,” Toriel said. Such a simple phrase, and spoken so plainly, too.

Sans shook his head, trying to deny it. He knew the words were true, of course. He’d known for a while. But to hear them spoken out loud… it made it too real.

“It is alright,” Toriel said. Sans felt teardrops fall onto his skull. “I loved him, too.”

Lucifer tore a chunk of meat off the bone with his teeth, huddling close to the campfire he’d made. It was almost winter up here, apparently, and the trees had long ago lost their leaves. If he was going to be forced out of the Underground, it could at least be summer. There were a great many things he loved about Snowdin, but it’s perpetual winter cold was not one of them.

Bear meat was okay, but if he was being honest, he still preferred Papyrus’ spaghetti. It really was an acquired taste, he supposed. He finished off the remains of his meal and looked down at the bone that remained.

He’d never be able to look at bones the same way again. The stupid thing just kept reminding him of Sans, and the fact that he was apart from him right now. He tossed the bone in the bag with the rest of his assorted bear parts and crawled into the makeshift tent he’d slept in for so many years. Honestly, he’d rather be out looking for his quarry right now, but rest was important. He’d start bright and early tomorrow.

“SANS.” Papyrus sat down next to him. “EVERYONE HAS BEEN GIVEN DINNER. YOU SAID YOU’D TELL ME WHAT’S WRONG NOW.”

Sans sighed, slumped down into the couch. “he’s gone, paps. he went home.”

“WHO?”

Sans rolled his eyelights. “who do you think? luce.”

“...OH,” Papyrus said. “HE’LL… HE’LL COME BACK AND VISIT, THOUGH, WON’T HE?”

Sans laughed. “...that’s a lot easier said than done, bro. no. i don’t think he will.”
“OH… I… I WISH HE WOULD HAVE AT LEAST SAID GOODBYE,” Papyrus said. He wrapped Sans up in a hug. “I’M SO SORRY, SANS.”

“huh? why’re you…”

“I KNOW HE MEANT A GREAT DEAL TO YOU,” Papyrus said. Sans sighed, nuzzling into his brother’s shoulder. He was exhausted. Exhausted from crying, exhausted from laughing, exhausted from whatever bizarre combination of the two he’d been doing.


Sans hugged Papyrus back. “thanks, bro. that really means a lot to me. which is why, uh… i really hope you’ll forgive me for this later.”

“FORGIVE YOU FOR WHAT?”

Crack.

Sans slammed the blunt end of his axe into the back of Papyrus’ skull and his brother slumped into his arms, unconscious. Sans started dragging him across the floor towards the stairs.

“sorry, bro, but i know you too well. i ain’t letting you starve yourself to feed everyone else.”

Lucifer picked up the distant sound of voices as he got closer to the highway. He smiled, picking up a rock on the ground with a sharp edge on it. He needed to make this look convincing.

He came half-jogging down the hill, bleeding from a deep gash on one arm and covered in fresh scrapes and bruises. There were two cars - one was in the process of driving away, while the second - a police car - remained parked. He must have been writing a ticket.

The man was heavily built and muscular, apparent even under his uniform. Lucifer could feel himself salivating.

This man had so much meat on him.

“Help!” He called out, panting heavily. “I need help!”

The officer turned to look at him, putting away his pad of paper. His eyes widened. “What happened? Are you alright?” He grabbed Lucifer by the shoulders as Lucifer nearly barreled into him, panicked and wild-eyed.

“No. No, I’m not alright, my friend, he’s--”

“No time!” Lucifer said, backing away. “You have to help me. My friend - there was this cave and we went in and there was someone inside and he has him and if we don’t help him soon he’ll--”

“Slow down, it’s okay. You’re safe now. You said something about a cave? Where’s this cave?”

Lucifer grinned internally. Hook, line, and sinker. “I’ll show you. Follow me.”
Lucifer set off at a jog towards the mountain, and the officer followed him to the entrance to the Underground.

“Your friend’s in here?” the officer, trying to look inside. It was pitch black. Now that Lucifer knew the barrier was there, he could tell that it’s invisibility magic made the slope of the floor deceptive. The officer pulled out a flashlight and took a few steps inside.

“Careful,” Lucifer warned as the man slipped and seemingly disappeared into thin air. “...it’s slick.” He let a wide, sadistic smile slip onto his face as he followed the officer down after grabbing his bag of bear parts from the little nook he’d hidden it in. He landed on his feet in the deep mud below - aching with pain, but conscious - to find his new friend out cold. He grinned again and got to work.

Sans sat at his sentry station, one hand tapping on the wood rhythmically and the other embedded in his aching, itching skull. He could feel his spine twisting in knots from hunger. There was a puddle of black drool on the counter, and he stared off into nothing with a crazed look in his eye. His gaze flicked to his fingers as they tapped.

...Bones had marrow in them, didn’t they? He’d survived a hole in the skull. What was a few broken bones? He just needed a few drips. Something. Anything.

All his senses snapped into focus as the door to the Ruins creaked open slowly. A pair of humans walked through, one bulky and tall and brandishing a flashlight and the other shorter and very, very thin.

Sans felt his fingers dig into the old wood underneath them and his grin stretched so wide any onlooker might be afraid it would split his face. He started chuckling to himself. He didn’t have time to think about who these humans were or why there were here. There was only one thought running through Sans’ starved mind now.

Food.
Wants and Needs

Chapter Summary

Lucifer returns with a guest.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“hey there, pals,” Sans said, deathly calm and tapping his fingers rhythmically on the counter of his station. The officer’s eyes widened in fear as Sans’ smile widened in anticipation. Lucifer’s heart skipped a beat when he saw Sans sitting there. He was alright… if, possibly, not in his right mind at the moment. He needed to get this done quickly.

“Run! That way!” Lucifer shouted over the silence, shoving the man towards the thick forest on the side opposite the sentry post. The man immediately grabbed Lucifer’s wrist and began to sprint through the trees, leaping over roots and ducking under branches with a speed only a combination of training and panic could produce. Even Lucifer struggled to keep up, but he managed well enough. He had a job to do.

Lucifer called out the occasional direction, leading the policeman exactly as he planned. He hadn’t spent all his little strolls walking idly; he was pretty familiar with the woods around Snowdin now. After what must have seemed like forever to the poor man, they reached the tiny clearing Lucifer had been looking for, surrounded almost all the way around with trees so densely packed that they were essentially impassible.

Snap!

The man howled in pain as one of Sans’ traps clamped down on his leg and shattered his ankle. Lucifer made no move to help him.

He stopped trying to free himself and whipped out his gun as Sans strolled into the clearing directly in front of him, axe in hand and manic grin plastered on his face. “Get behind me!” the man ordered, voice still strained with pain, and then pulled the trigger.

His heart nearly stopped when he realized there wasn’t a bullet in the chamber.

He reached back to pull more ammunition from his pocket, hands shaking. Lucifer reached forward and grabbed both of his arms, forcing the man’s hands behind his back. “This will be a lot faster if you don’t move,” Lucifer told him.

The man made some cry of confusion and betrayal. Then, there was a schlick.

The man’s head came clean off, dropping to the ground with a dull thud as his neck gushed out his lifeblood like some thick, macabre, crimson fountain. Blood splattered onto Lucifer’s face like spraypaint, and gurgled onto his clothes as he slowly let the body slip into the snow. His shirt had far more red than anything else now, soaked through with the remains of the man he’d just helped Sans murder. The both of them stood there in silence for a brief moment.

His burst of adrenaline spent, Sans’ crazed mind slowed down long enough to recognize the still-
living human in front of him. Bloody clothes, gaunt frame, eyes that revealed malevolence and compassion and madness. His soul skipped a beat. It was the man he was in love with, the man he’d sent away, the man whose absence nearly killed him and yet he hoped he’d never see again. He couldn’t get a single coherent thought to form in his blank mind.

“you came back,” he said. It was the only thing he could think of to say.

“I owed you dinner,” Lucifer replied, a shy smile on his face. He stood there, breathing heavily from the chase, waiting for something.

The words pulsed through Sans’ mind, mingling with the smell of blood, the painful, hungry twisting of his spine, the rush of EXP, and the boiling mixture of elation and confusion and anger. It was all too much. He couldn’t think clearly. So, he just did the first thing that came to mind.

He swung his axe.

It lodged itself in the tree next to Lucifer’s head as Sans stepped onto the dead human’s body and crashed his teeth into Lucifer’s mouth. He shoved the human against the tree, and then snaked his arms around his back and held him tight enough to make him tense against the sharp points of his fingers. Sans could hear Lucifer’s breath catch in his throat as he froze in shock, only to hum against Sans’ mouth as he returned the embrace, clutching at the back of Sans’ jacket.

Sans focused on other things as he bit down onto Lucifer’s lower lip and eventually his tongue, desperately trying to ignore just how good the dead human’s blood dripping into his mouth from the kiss tasted. He focused on the soft, warm feeling of the Lucifer’s skin as his fingers found holes in the battered fabric of the human’s shirt, the warmth of the liquid that dripped onto his hands as he raked them over his back, the way Lucifer greedily arched into the pain. He focused on how Lucifer grasped at his ribs and his spine through his clothes just as hungrily as Sans grabbed at him. He focused on the sweet, rhythmic pounding beneath Lucifer’s chest that just seemed to get faster and faster as they both finally got what they wanted.

Sans pulled away and immediately sank his teeth into the skin between Lucifer’s neck and shoulder, making the human gasp in surprise. Sans pushed him down into the snow, laying on top of him and kissing him again. It was softer this time, less desperate. Sans wrapped one arm around Lucifer’s waist and tangled the other hand in his hair, and his ribcage was rattling with affection to produce a sound halfway between a purr and a growl. Stars above, he was so warm, so soft. For a moment, all Sans knew was that this human belonged to him and that he belonged to this human, and his soul demanded he never let him go again.

It took a while for Sans to remember that Lucifer has lungs that needed to be filled with air, and he pulled away, burying his face in his chest and taking in his scent. It was some combination of blood and sweat and campfire smoke, and Sans found it intoxicating. Once the haze of whatever mad passion had taken him finally cleared out, Sans found himself completely and utterly exhausted. Sorrow and dread started to creep back into his ribcage.

Lucifer gave a soft laugh as he opened his eyes, nothing but pure, unhidden adoration showing on his face. Sans didn’t have any body heat to speak of, but even though he was down in the snow, he didn’t feel cold for once. He’d never been happier in his life.

“i… appreciate the guest here, but…” Sans sighed, holding Lucifer a little tighter while avoiding eye contact entirely, “you shouldn’t be here. you should… you should go.”

“But I just got here,” Lucifer said with a chuckle.
“we both know this doesn’t work, luce,” Sans said seriously. “someone’s gonna find you eventually, whether it’s someone from snowdin or the guard or…” He sighed loudly. “i can’t exactly deny how i feel anymore, clearly. but i just don’t think i could live with myself if everyone found out i’d been lying about you to them this whole time, or if undyne nabbed you and razed the whole town for it. there’s just no room for a human down here anywhere but the dinner table. i’d sleep better knowing you’re safe up there instead of waiting to get butchered the next time i slip up.”

Lucifer gave him a sly smile. “What if I wasn’t a human?”

Sans looked up at him, a little confused. “it don’t matter what you think are on the inside. you’re still a human to everyone else.”

The smile remained. “And if I could fix that?”

Sans tilted his head, even more bewildered. “what are you talking about?”

“I left something right by the Ruins door that might help,” Lucifer said.

Lucifer was probably just grasping at straws, Sans thought, but something latched on to what he was saying. “alright, let’s see it.”

Lucifer started dragging the dead man towards the Ruins door, Sans walking in front so as not to have to look at it. Every time his eyes glanced across the corpse, his body reminded him that he was starving to death and there was food right there. And it was stupid, of course, that he still didn’t want to eat human. There was no other food left. But some irrational part of his mind still told him it was wrong, and on top of that he didn’t want Lucifer to see what it’d turn him into. How ironic that he was worried about the opinion of the cannibal he’d just made out with.

There was indeed a large cloth bag sitting by the entrance. Sans walked over to it curiously.

“What... is this?” he asked, sifting through the contents. There were sheets of messily-cut pelt, more than a few bones, sharp teeth…

“I killed a bear,” Lucifer answered, pointing upward. “Paps told me you made his costume for him. I thought you might be able to help me make one.”

Sans’ eyesockets widened and he grinned, tying the bag back up and slinging it over his shoulder. “i think i can do one better,” Sans chuckled, an idea forming in his fractured skull. “come on. let’s take meathead over here to his new sleeping quarters, and then we’ll, uh… do a little experimenting.”

Chapter End Notes

Yes, I know no one wanted to see them kiss. I'm sorry. It's just where the story's going (note my sarcasm)

On a more serious note, I start college this week and I honestly have no clue how much free time I'm going to have to write. I have a fair amount of plans left for this story and I fully intend to follow through with it, and if I can continue to update weekly I will, but if I find that pace too difficult to keep up with updates will drop to every other week.

Thank you in advance for your patience and to everyone that's followed this story up to this point, it means so much to me.
Chapter Summary

Sans comes up with a way for Lucifer to stay in the Underground without hiding.

Chapter Notes

Warnings in the endnotes!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lucifer finally finished dragging the dead man into Sans’ basement as the skeleton laid out all of the assorted bear parts and started cutting and measuring things.

“my preservative stuff’s in that box over there,” Sans said, pointing. “go ahead and give ‘im a shot of it.”

Lucifer opened the box to find several jars of greenish fluid and a handful of syringes that looked like they’d all been used multiple times. Probably not the most sanitary way of storing things, but then again they weren’t exactly treating live patients here. He filled up one of the syringes with the stuff - it smelled distinctly of formaldehyde, along with a few other things he couldn’t pinpoint - and injected it directly into the body’s chest. He stomped his foot on it a few times as well, some of the settled blood squirting out of the neck and onto the floor.

“you really hate him that much?” Sans chuckled.

“I’m trying to get it to flow into his tissues. You know that’s what my heart does, right? It pumps my blood. His heart’s not beating, so if I make it beat for him, it should spread the chemical quicker.”

“huh,” Sans said. “that’s probably common sense. shoulda guessed that before.”

“So… what exactly are we doing with that stuff?” Lucifer asked, shoving the body to the side and walking over to see what Sans was doing.

“it’s a surprise,” Sans said. “and i’m not entirely sure it’s going to work. but i don’t think a costume is gonna cut it down here - it’s not gonna hold up under scrutiny, and you’re gonna have a lot of that since no matter what i do you’re still gonna look a lot like that human that escaped from grillby’s a little while back.”

“So… what can we do, then?”

Sans finished whatever he was doing with the dead bear parts and stood up, looking Lucifer up and down. “just relax a second for me, okay?”

Lucifer nodded as Sans brought his hand up to the human’s chest and concentrated. Lucifer staggered backwards a little as he felt a strange pull from inside his chest, and a deep blue-indigo heart appeared in front of him. It was surrounded by a white halo of sorts.
“Is that…?”

“yeah, that’s your soul,” Sans said. “now let me just…”

He concentrated even harder, and with a feeling not unlike a door being unlocked, he felt an enormous rush of energy flood his system.

“What… what did you…” Lucifer fell to the ground, completely overwhelmed. It felt like there was acid in his veins; or maybe lava. Or ice. It was hard to tell. It pooled under his skin and in his chest and behind his eyes.

“you still with me?” Sans asked. He looked at Lucifer’s eyes to find them glowing with rainbow hues, and returned the soul to his chest.

“What did you do to me?” Lucifer asked again, trying to catch his breath.

Sans sat down next to him. “i activated your magic,” he said.

“Magic?”

“yup. humans have magic, too. why else do you think we’re stuck down here? a monster just has to unlock it for them, which hasn’t happened for a very long time for obvious reasons. now if i remember right, a human’s magic comes in a big burst right after it’s activated before it mellows out and settles on a color. so, i’m gonna try to use that to my advantage.”

“H...how?” Lucifer was still dazed, and it was hard to understand what Sans was saying. He glanced down as Sans nicked his arm with his axe, leaving a shallow cut.

“try healing that,” Sans said.


Sans rolled his eyes. “it stings a little, right? will it to stop - magic’s pretty instinctual, your body should do the rest.”

Lucifer stared at the cut and tried to do as Sans said. The blood trickling out of his body slowly turned a glowing green, and the wound closed itself up entirely. There wasn’t even a mark.

A sadistic grin spread onto Sans’ face. “welp, that’s a good sign,” he chuckled. “i better get started before your green magic peters out, then. sit on that stool over there and take your shirt off,” he said.

Normally Lucifer would have loved to take the opportunity to tease Sans for being a pervert, but he was too dazed from the rush of magic to care this time. He did as Sans asked and the skeleton came over with some weird clamp thing. He attached it to the nail of Lucifer’s thumb.

“this is gonna hurt,” Sans warned. Lucifer shouted in pain as Sans ripped the nail from his hand and immediately pressed something else to the abused skin. “heal it,” Sans ordered.

Lucifer was beginning to wonder if Sans was just doing this out of sadistic pleasure or if there was actually a point to all this. Still, he used his green magic and the pain stopped immediately. He looked at his hand to find a bear claw there, fused under the skin. He blinked in confusion as Sans pulled on it experimentally.

“well would you look at that,” Sans chuckled, his grin growing even wider. A manic look passed through his eyes and Lucifer found himself going a little pale. “your magic is so strong right now that
it healed into the claw,” he said. “it’s a part of your body now. you see where i’m going with this, right?”

“I… I think so,” Lucifer said. Sans chuckled even more, putting his hands on Lucifer’s shoulders from behind and leaning in close.

“just think about it,” Sans said. “you won’t have to hide anymore. you can walk around town all you want, talk to anyone you want… we can…” He slipped his arms around the human and pulled him close, smelling his bloodstained hair. “there won’t be any reason we can’t have this,” he finished. “that’s what you want, right?”

Lucifer took a deep breath to steady himself. “…Yeah. That’s what I want.”

“i don’t have to tell you this is gonna hurt like hell, right?” Sans said, walking away and grabbing something.

“I know. I can take it,” Lucifer said.

“i know you can,” Sans chuckled. “gotta keep you still, though. don’t wanna screw up this little makeover.” He clipped a set of shackles onto Lucifer’s wrists and then attached the chains to the walls, pulling them taught so the human’s arms were stretched out in a t-shape. “can you move?” he asked. Lucifer tugged on the chains experimentally; he couldn’t budge. “good. and just so you know - i’m not stopping till this thing’s over. last chance to back out.”

“I’m not going anywhere,” Lucifer said, bracing himself. He might have been a bit of a masochist, but he couldn’t say he enjoyed being outright tortured. This was going to be a harrowing experience.

“okay,” Sans said, his voice surprisingly soft. He gave Lucifer a skeleton kiss on the back of the neck, making him shiver a little. Then he glanced over to Lucifer’s hands and his dark grin returned. “i better get to work, then.”

One by one, Sans ripped Lucifer’s nails out and replaced them with bear claws. Then he pulled off Lucifer’s shoes and did the same with his toes. The human shouted with pain with each one, but he held up pretty well all things considered.

Sans’ sadistic side was coming out to play in full force by this point, and he was chuckling and giggling almost nonstop. His mad eyes flicked across Lucifer’s body constantly, as if he was imagining all the different things he could do to him all at once.

“this part’s gonna be the most fun,” Sans said, picking up his axe. Lucifer couldn’t see what was going on behind him, and he suddenly felt uneasy. “i’m really gonna need you to relax for me, okay? you fight me on this and it’s gonna take longer.”

“O-Okay,” Lucifer said. He forced his muscles to relax even though all his self-preservation instincts were telling him to get the hell out of here. He trusted Sans.

The relaxed state lasted all but a few seconds as Sans pressed his axe blade into the skin of Lucifer’s shoulders and started cutting it all away. Lucifer immediately screamed, and the chains started groaning. His eyes flared a bright orange.

“hey! you gotta stop moving,” Sans ordered, a big strip of flesh falling to the ground. Iridescent blood poured out onto the floor and the skeleton’s slippers, leaving red puddles with a shiny surface reminiscent of soapy water. Some of it was intermingled with green.

The words barely registered to Lucifer, who was still screaming at the top of his lungs, but he
focused on his arms and keeping them still anyway. Sans resumed his work, trying to move as quickly as possible, as Lucifer’s screams started descending into sobbing.

The human gasped for air as Sans pressed a large sheet of bear pelt to the raw, bloody flesh of Lucifer’s back and held it there while his green magic did its work. Deciding to get the worst of it over with all in one go, Sans immediately began stripping Lucifer’s arms of skin completely as well. By now, Lucifer was running out of air to scream with and he just shut his eyes tightly, trying to focus on anything other than the horrific pain.

Sans finished with one arm all the way down to the wrist and wrapped a long strip of fur around it before repeating with the other arm. Lucifer was shaking uncontrollably, barely able to breathe. Sans gave him a little break as he prepared the rest of his materials.

“worst part’s over, baby,” Sans assured him. He had to admit that he’d been enjoying himself a little bit, but he felt a little guilty looking at Lucifer quivering on the stool, jeans and the floor beneath him completely covered with iridescent blood. “these are gonna hurt, but they’ll be over in two seconds. okay?” Lucifer had no reply to give him.

Sans grabbed a shard of bone he’d carved into an upward-curved spine and stabbed it into Lucifer’s back like a knife, digging it past his new fur until it hit the human’s spine. Lucifer once again healed it in, and Sans repeated the process all the way down his back.

Then, he grabbed a handful of bear teeth and plunged them into the tops of his shoulders, along his collarbones, and against the vertebrae of his neck. He pushed up his long bangs and put four more teeth on his forehead like small horns.

Lucifer’s jaw and eyes were shut tightly as he just tried to survive the pain, waiting for it to end. Sans’ expression softened a little as he looked at the last handful of teeth he hand.

“i’ve got one last thing to do,” he said quietly. “i need you to open your mouth for me, okay?”

Lucifer finally looked up at him, eyes swirling with several colors at once while streaming tears. Sans wasn’t sure Lucifer had understood him completely, but he opened his mouth slowly anyway, closing his eyes again.

Sans stuck a set of pliers into Lucifer’s mouth and clamped them around one of his canines, ripping it out. Lucifer just whimpered as Sans replaced it with a bear tooth, trying to position it so it wouldn’t be too inconvenient for him. Then he replaced a second tooth, and then a third, and then a fourth.

“hey. luce. we’re done,” Sans said quietly, rubbing the human’s shoulder. “...and you look pretty goddamn sexy, if i do say so myself,” he added, looking up and down Lucifer’s body. He was completely covered in his own blood.

Lucifer slumped against Sans as he undid the shackles, utterly spent. He opened his eyes blearily - the swirling colors were fading, replaced with a deep indigo-blue.

“here. we’ll take a shortcut to my room so you can get some sleep,” Sans said.

“Sans, no… your magic. You need… you need to eat something,” Lucifer said, voice raw from screaming and slightly distorted from the new set of fangs in his mouth. They poked past his lips a little.

“i’m not hungry,” Sans said, shrugging as he helped Lucifer to his feet. He froze as he realized what words had just come out of his mouth.
“...Sans?” Lucifer asked, concerned.

“...i’m not hungry,” Sans repeated, and it was true. He looked down at his hands and clothes - Lucifer’s blood had dried to a dull red-brown on his bones, but the blood on the floor still held its iridescent sheen. His eyesockets widened. “your magic,” he chuckled. Lucifer looked at him. “i’ve been soaking up your magic this whole time.”

Sans focused on Lucifer’s skin - he’d been too wrapped up in his work before to notice, but there was a steady (if faint) glow of magic coming off of him. He pulled Lucifer a little closer, laughing even more. The human’s magic soaked into his hollowed-out bones like a balm, soothing the almost constant ache that had followed him around the last week. Lucifer smiled at him.

“So that means…”

“i… i don’t think i need to eat human,” he said. “while you’re around, at least.”

Lucifer leaned on him. “...I’m happy for you,” he said. He didn’t pretend to know why Sans had such issues with eating human, but he knew it was important to him.

Sans teleported to his bedroom and almost collapsed with relief when there was no flash of pain in his skull. His magic reserves were higher than they’d been in years.

Almost giddy, Sans tossed Lucifer onto the bed, straddled his waist, and kissed him briefly before pulling away.

“you know… there’s some other things i kinda wanna do to you,” he said, sliding his hands up Lucifer’s blood-slick chest. The human hummed tiredly. “...but i should probably let you rest and get all those new parts set in right. besides, everyone else is probably pretty hungry. and paps is gonna be pissed,” Sans said. He smiled - and for the first time in a very long time, it was a genuine smile. No sadistic undercurrent, no falsity to it - just a smile.

“...i think it was worth it, though,” he said, getting up at walking out of the room.

Chapter End Notes

Warning for torture in this chapter (but it’s consensual???).
A Completed Makeover

Chapter Summary

Not an actual chapter, just some (very) amateur art I made from Chapter 42: Colorful. Thought a visual aid might be helpful so everyone knows what Lucifer looks like! The image is bloody, but that really shouldn’t surprise anyone.
Chapter Summary

Sans and Lucifer take care of a few things before they introduce Snowdin's newest monster.

Lucifer stepped out of the bathroom, hair wet from a recent shower and a towel tied around his waist. Sans tossed him his freshly-washed jeans.

“it’s a shame, really. you look sexy covered in blood,” Sans chuckled.

“I’m sure I’ll pick up more from someone eventually,” Lucifer said. “So, what’s on the agenda today? You gonna take me to Grillby’s?”

“that’s tomorrow. i wanna smooth things over with everyone a little bit first - i think they understand, but it still wasn’t fair for me to just disappear for a week. besides, i think we need to go clothes shopping again - you’re gonna need some special tailoring for that body,” Sans said.

“Alright,” Lucifer said. “Lead on.”

The front door opened as they made their way down the stairs and Papyrus marched inside. He froze when he saw Lucifer on the stairs.

“SANS, IS THAT…?”

“yup. luce came back - surprised me too,” Sans smiled.

“Hey, Papyrus,” Lucifer said, smiling.

“SANS, HOW DID LUCIFER TURN INTO A MONSTER?” Papyrus asked.

“turns out he was a monster this whole time, paps,” Sans said, giving Lucifer a look. Lucifer smiled back at him. “he had us fooled this whole time.”

“WHAT?! THAT’S IMPOSSIBLE!” Papyrus said, hands flying up to the sides of his face in an expression of surprise.

“that’s what i thought too, bro. but look at ‘im - he’s got fur and horns and everything. we’ve been duped, bro,” Sans said. He could barely restrain his laughter.

“I CAN’T BELIEVE IT!” Papyrus shouted, dashing up the stairs to invade Sans and Lucifer’s personal space. “THERE IS NO WAY I COULD HAVE BEEN SO THOROUGHLY DECIEVED! SANS - YOU WEREN’T IN ON THIS, WERE YOU?” he asked.

“what? no, i didn’t have anything to do with this,” Sans said. “i’m just as surprised as you. c’mon, bro, you know i wouldn’t lie to you.”

“SAYS THE SKELETON THAT TIED ME TO A CHAIR IN MY OWN ROOM AND FORCE-FED ME CANDY,” Papyrus said, putting his hands on his hips and leaning in uncomfortably close.
“uh... i mean, there are worse things to be force-fed?” Sans shrugged apologetically.

“HMM,” Papyrus said. “AND YOU!” Papyrus whipped around to look at Lucifer, grabbing his shoulders and pulling him so close that his eyes were almost inside Papyrus’ eyesockets. “NEVER HAVE I MET SO WORTHY AN ADVERSARY! YOU ARE TRULY A PUZZLE-TESTER WORTHY OF MY PUZZLING GENIUS! OOOOO, THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS I NEED TO HAVE YOU TRY - THERE’S NO TIME TO WASTE! WE MUST BEGIN IMMEDIATELY!” Papyrus grabbed Lucifer and held him over his head, making a sprint for the door.

“uh, paps, hold on--! i actually had some, uh, plans with him,” Sans said.

Papyrus skidded to a halt and looked at Lucifer’s upside-down face hanging in front of his head. “OH. YOU HAVE… PLAAAAANS, YOU SAY?” Papyrus said, a giddy smile spreading across his face. He spun around and ran back up the stairs, dropping Lucifer directly onto Sans on the way, and then locked himself in his room while giggling like a madman the entire way.

“ow,” Sans groaned as Lucifer rolled off of him. “if he gets any more invested in our relationship, one of us is gonna end up getting killed.”

Lucifer just chuckled. “I think he’s sweet.”

“heh. c’mon, we’ll take a shortcut to the shopkeep. still want you to fly under the radar for a bit.” Sans reached over and wrapped his arm around Lucifer’s waist, and they appeared in front of the store. Sans walked in first.

“hey, bonnie,” he said, smiling. “how’ve you been?”

“...I’m alright,” she said. “I ain’t never seen that one around before. Who’s your pal? And why ain’t he got a shirt on?”

Lucifer had seen the shopkeeper briefly when he’d run out of her store, but this was the first time he’d gotten a good look at her. Her ears were slightly droopy, and her clothes were baggy - no doubt made for a woman that had once been much better fed.

“this is lucifer, my friend from new home. he’s the one that, uh… brought us dinner last night,” Sans said. “anyway, he had to clear out in a rush and didn’t even have time to pack some clothes, so i thought you might be able to fit him for a few things.”

Bonnie looked him up and down. “Sure thing. Though, if you don’t mind me askin’… ain’t it a little dangerous to be harboring a fugitive, what with the queen bein’ all up in our business lately?”

Sans’ first instinct was to lash out and say he could harbor whoever he damn well pleased, but he reigned himself in. He needed to get a handle on those impulses. “luce here has been keeping tabs on royal affairs for me for a long time now. we owe him a lot - least i can do is give him a place to stay and some clothes on his back. if the queen gets huffy about it, i’ll deal with her. you ain’t gotta worry about it.”

“Alright,” Bonnie said, putting her hands up apologetically. “Just wanted to make sure. Follow me, if you’d be so kind.” She led them into her back room and pulled out a tape measure. “So what kinda clothes do ya normally wear, honey?”

Lucifer paused for a second, not sure what to say. Sans answered for him.
“i was thinking some button-up sweater vests,” Sans said. “low-cut so they don’t come over the horns on his chest. And a slit down the back for his spines, obviously.”

“Right,” Bonnie said, measuring various things on his body. “A few more pairs o’ jeans, too, I’m guessing?”

“yup,” Sans said. “maybe a few pairs of open-toed socks and a pair of open-toed boots, too.”

“And some fingerless gloves,” Lucifer said.

“Fingerless gloves, huh?” Bonnie said, pulling out a pad of paper and jotting a few things down. “Alrighty. I’ll have ‘em for you tomorrow morning. Y’all take it easy now.”

“thanks, bon. how much do i owe you?” Sans asked.

“A hot meal tonight. Money don’t mean nothin’ down here anymore, you know that. You know I appreciate you keepin’ me and my family fed, Sans, even if it gets tough sometimes. A few pairs of clothes is nothing. I’ll even make a few new jackets for you, if ya like,” Bonnie said.

“nah, you know i live in this old thing. really though, bonnie, thanks. i really appreciate it,” Sans said.

“No problem,” Bonnie said, giving him a weary smile. Sans and Lucifer left the room and Sans teleported back to the house.

“She works fast,” Lucifer commented.

“she uses magic. come on, you should know how this works now,” Sans chuckled. A sly smile crept onto his face. “but since you aren’t gonna have clothes until tomorrow, i guess you’ll just have to stay in my room… with me… without those clothes…” Sans hooked his fingers through the belt loops on Lucifer’s jeans and yanked him close, leaning up to kiss him.

“Lead the way,” Lucifer said, blushing a little. Sans grinned and led him up the stairs to his room before locking the door. Lucifer wrapped his arms around Sans and leaned in for another kiss.

“wait,” Sans said, frowning.

“What’s wrong?” Lucifer asked.

Sans slunk out of Lucifer’s arms and walked over to his closet, swinging it open.

“what the hell are you doing in here?!” Sans asked. Papyrus was hiding under a pile of clothes.

“OH, DON’T MIND ME. I’M NOT EVEN HERE,” Papyrus said, covering his head with a wrinkled shirt. “ALTHOUGH I SHOULD LECTURE YOU ABOUT DOING LAUNDRY MORE OFTEN.”

“get out!” Sans shouted, dragging his brother out of the closet.

“BUT SANS, I JUST WANTED TO OBSERVE YOUR BLOSSOMING FRIENDSHIP!” Papyrus said. “WHAT IF YOU NEED ADVICE FROM THE HANGOUT/DATING ADVICE SERIES!”

“i don’t want anything more to do with those infernal wastes of paper! now get out!” Sans shoved Papyrus out the door and locked it again. He waited for a moment. “…and you ain’t listening in, either! go recalibrate your puzzles or something!”
Papyrus sighed disappointedly and then proceeded to stomp out the stairs. Sans slid to the floor, embarrassed.

“...you think this is funny, huh?” Sans asked, looking over at Lucifer who was laughing silently. He just nodded, trying not to burst out into a giggle fit. Sans smiled just a little bit and stood up.

Lucifer glowed blue and slid across the floor to Sans, who planted his hands on Lucifer’s hips. The human’s laughter faded, replaced by a blush.

“heh. don’t worry, i’ll teach you how to do that later,” Sans chuckled, giving him a short kiss. His smile grew a little more. “not laughing now, huh?”

Sans kissed Lucifer again, much more passionately this time. He shrugged off his jacket before undoing the zipper on Lucifer’s jeans, leaving him in his boxers as he threw Lucifer onto the bed roughly. Sans climbed on top of him, straddling him as he pulled off his shirt and leaned down right next to his ear.

“don’t you worry, little devil. i’m gonna take good care of you,” Sans whispered, raking his fingers down Lucifer’s skin slowly. Then he pinned Lucifer by his shoulders and started kissing him again.
Shameless

Chapter Summary

Sans introduces Snowdin Town to Lucifer.

Lucifer yawned as he heard a knock on the front door downstairs. It was probably Bonnie dropping off his new clothes, he surmised. He reached back and shook Sans gently.

“mmm?” Sans hummed sleepily, nuzzling into the fur on Lucifer’s shoulders.

“I think my clothes just got dropped off. We should probably get dressed,” Lucifer said.

“no, no leaving,” Sans mumbled, holding Lucifer a little tighter. He had one arm looped around his chest and the other hooked around his waist, keeping their hips pulled flush against each other. “you’re so soft’n comfy. just give me five more… hours…”

“Okay,” Lucifer chuckled. “But when Papyrus comes up here to ask why neither of us have woken up yet, you get to be the one to explain why neither of us is wearing any clothes.”

Sans sighed and nipped at the back of Lucifer’s neck gently. “fine, fine,” he said. He pushed himself away from Lucifer slowly - the spines on his back were placed in such a way that they slipped right into the gaps in Sans’ ribcage when they laid like this, curving up and scraping at the insides of his ribs pleasantly.

Sans kicked the sheets off and grabbed his shorts off of the floor, pulling them on and teleporting downstairs as Lucifer sat up and stretched. He returned a moment later with a cardboard box filled with clothes and started looking through it.

“Well, she did a pretty bang-up job as far as i can tell,” Sans said. “though i kinda prefer the view as-is, if you catch my meaning.” He was staring blatantly, but Lucifer made no indication that he minded.

Lucifer reached into the box and pulled out a fresh pair of jeans and boxers - Bonnie had been thoughtful enough to include those, too - and put them on. Sans pulled out a blood red sweater-vest and helped Lucifer get it on over his spines, buttoning it up in the front.

“I still don’t know if i like red or blue better on you,” Sans chuckled.

“I can always go back and forth,” Lucifer said, smiling.

Sans put his hands on Lucifer’s hips and kissed him slowly, drinking in his warmth. It had been forever since he’d even held someone’s hand, let alone… well.

“…you, uh… wanna go get a glass of water at grillby’s? walk in like nothing’s unusual and see how everyone acts?” Sans asked.

“Is this a date, Sans?” Lucifer said sarcastically.

“nah, it’s a plot to disembowel you and make chips out of your skin for a snack later,” Sans teased.
He paused for a second. “...skin chips. huh. i mean, we’ve got plenty of perfectly good skin sitting down in the basement right now. maybe we can make some chips for you.”

“...That’s a little morbid, even for me, Sans. I’m not eating my own skin,” Lucifer said.

Sans shrugged. “i’ll have grillby fry it up for everyone else, then.” He looked down at Lucifer’s neck and blushed a little. “we, uh, might wanna borrow you one of pap’s scarves first, though,” he said, putting on his t-shirt and jacket and then looking for his slippers.

“Why?” Lucifer asked, looking down at his skin.

“you uh… you’ve got… you know…” Sans said, gesturing to the bruises and bitemarks on and around Lucifer’s neck and shoulders. There were several of them.

“So?” Lucifer chuckled, putting on his new socks and shoes and walking out of the room. Sans followed him.

“...so you get pissed off when i’m acting all possessive, but you’re gonna walk around town with my bitemarks all over you?” Sans asked.

“Everyone else can think what they want to, as long as you know how this relationship works,” Lucifer said, turning around and poking Sans in the sternum. He smirked a little bit. “...Besides, I think we cancel each other out. I had no idea bone could bruise until this morning.”

Sans looked down to see his neck and collarbones covered in dimly glowing red bitemarks and bruises. He zipped up his jacket, embarrassed and blushing even harder. Lucifer just laughed and walked out into the snow towards Grillby’s.

“Ugh, I’m finally warm,” Lucifer laughed, rubbing the fur on his arms. “I love having fur.”

“thought you might,” Sans said. “though i’ve heard it’s a bitch to take care of. we’ll have to pick you up some fur-soap or something later.”

“You mean shampoo?” Lucifer asked.

“you fleshy-types got so many things you gotta tend to. i just scrub myself down with some fluoride cream in the shower and i’m good to go for the week,” Sans said. “you’re probably gonna need some of that for those spines and horns, too.”

“Well, I’ll be the first to admit that I might not take care of myself quite the way I should, but I happen to like this body and I’ll do what I have to. I hope I don’t shed or anything,” Lucifer said, looking down at his fur again.

They reached Grillby’s. “former humans first,” Sans said quietly, holding the door open for Lucifer like a gentleman. Lucifer smiled and walked inside, taking a seat at the bar as everyone watched him in disbelief. Sans sat down next to him.

“grillbz, two glasses of your finest water please,” Sans said dramatically, leaning on Lucifer’s shoulder and trying to resist laughing hysterically as everyone continued to stare.

“...Coming right up,” Grillby said slowly. Sans and Lucifer turned around to look at everyone.

“What’s new, guys?” Sans asked. No one had an answer. “What’s the matter? Do i have something stuck in my teeth?”
The mayor finally spoke up. “Um, Sans…? Who’s… who is…”

“huh? oh, you mean my boyfriend,” Sans chuckled. Lucifer blushed just a little at the word. “have you guys not met him? must’ve slipped my mind. everyone, this is lucifer; luce, this is everyone.”

“It’s nice to finally meet you all,” Lucifer said, trying not to burst out into laughter at their flabbergasted faces.

“W-Wait, Sansy, you… you have a boyfriend?” the rabbit-monster in the corner asked. “For how long??”

“it’s pretty new, but uh… it’s been a long time coming,” Sans said, smiling at Lucifer a little.

“Lucifer, you look… familiar somehow,” the mayor said, squinting.

“he used to live in snowdin a long, long way back,” Sans said. “he’s been living in new home and he’s kept an eye on the crown for me for a while now. things got a little heated there recently though, so he’s staying with me for the foreseeable future. oh, that reminds me - he brought a little present for all of you.” Sans vanished and returned a few seconds with a bucket full of flayed skin as Grillby returned with the water. “thought everyone could use a little pick-me up since we’ve been on a pretty strict diet this week. you still got that deep-fryer, grillbz? I figured some good ol’ greasy chips might hit the spot.”

“…Sure thing,” Grillby said, taking the bucket and disappearing into the back room once again. Sans looped his arm around Lucifer’s waist and they both leaned back against the counter.

“So, Lucifer… what kind of monster are you?” the mayor asked. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen anyone quite like you before.”

“he’s a devil,” Sans said. “his parents must’ve had a real sense of irony, right?”

“You said it,” Lucifer chuckled. “So you’re the mayor, huh? I’ve heard a lot about you.”

“He’s not the mayor!” everyone groaned at once, which the mayor didn’t seem to notice at all.

“Oh, that’s very nice of you,” the mayor laughed. “Good things, I hope?”

“Of course,” Lucifer said. “Hey, that reminds me… what do you call a bear with no teeth?”

“Huh? I… don’t know,” the mayor said.

“A gummy bear, of course,” Lucifer said.

The room was silent for a moment. Then, everyone burst out into hysterical laughter, including Sans.

“Looks like he gets your sense of humor, Sans,” the plant-monster bellowed through her laughter. “Good on you!”

“yup. i noticed,” Sans smiled, leaning against Lucifer. He could get used to this.

Then, the door swung open violently and Papyrus walked into the room. “FROM THE RUCKUS IN HERE, IT SOUNDS LIKE SANS SOMEHOW WOKE UP EARLY AND ESCAPED MY DETECTION. WHERE IS THAT… THAT…”

Sans’ eyesockets widened and he immediately withdrew his arm and leaned away from Lucifer. Papyrus stared blankly for a few seconds before whipping out a book and flipping through it. He
read through a certain page, and then the book slipped from his grasp in shock. “ARE YOU TWO… ON A DATE?!!?!?!?!!?”

“what? no, this isn’t a date,” Sans said, backpedaling.

“Oh, it’s a date,” Lucifer said, a predatory grin creeping onto his face.

“i will hurt you,” Sans growled.

“Promises, promises,” Lucifer chuckled.

Sans looked at Grillby, who had just returned with a basket that smelled vaguely of pork rinds.

“come on, grillbz, back me up here,” he said.

“...It’s a date.”

“fuck you, grillby.”

“I CAN’T BELIEVE THIS! HOW COULD SUCH FEELINGS HAVE ESCAPED MY NOTICE?! AND MORE IMPORTANTLY… WHY WOULD SOMEONE BE DATING SANS AND NOT ME?!” Papyrus said, completely baffled.

“hey!” Sans said, insulted.

“OH, THIS IS A COMPLETE TRAVESTY!” Papyrus screamed. “I WON’T ALLOW IT!” He sprinted toward Sans and Lucifer, picked up the former human, and tossed him behind the counter.

“LUCIFER! PRETEND NONE OF THIS UNDOUBTEDLY HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE EVER HAPPENED! I WILL RETURN SHORTLY!”

“now that’s just uncalled for,” Sans said.

“QUIET YOU, BEFORE YOU MAKE THINGS EVEN WORSE! YOU’RE COMING WITH ME!” Papyrus picked Sans up and ran out of the door.
“...Thanks, Grillby,” Lucifer said as Grillby helped him up off of the floor behind the bar.

“So, Lucifer. How long have you known Sans?” the rabbit-monster in the corner booth said, with just a hint of hostility. “What kind of work did you do in the city? Have you two… nevermind. Are you—”

“I’m not detecting jealousy, am I?” Lucifer said, sliding into the booth next to her and wrapping an arm around her bony shoulders.


“Because if that’s the case, I’d say you’ve already had a million chances at him,” Lucifer said. “Fur sonally I’m not the jealous type, though, so you’re lucky. Sans definitely is, though, so if anyone wants to hit on me, you should probably do it now while he’s away or he’ll get hopping mad.”

The rabbit stared blankly at him for a moment before the room erupted into laughter again.

“You puns are terrible,” the mayor said, wheezing as he tried to get air back in his lungs.

“I learned from the best,” Lucifer chuckled. “So, anyone gonna take me up on that hitting-on-me offer?”

“I don’t think anyone wants to get between Sans and his mate,” said a female dog-monster sitting at a nearby card table. Dogressa was her name, if Lucifer remembered correctly.

“Shame. I might have to get myself into a little trouble then,” Lucifer said. “You’re looking pretty hot over there, bartender. Wanna come over here and warm me up?”

“...I think I’m a little too “hot” for you to handle,” Grillby countered. The whole room ohed loudly.

Lucifer leaned back in his seat, fanning himself with his shirt. “Alright, alright. I got pretty damn singed there. Roasted, one might even say. I think I’ll stick to seducing heartless skeletons.”

The doors suddenly flung open and Lucifer was smacked in the face with a gloved hand, sending him tumbling into the rabbit’s lap. She shouted in pain as his spines dug into her legs.

He got up as quickly as he could. “Sorry. I’m starting to learn that living with Papyrus is a bit of a health risk,” he apologized.

“Trust me, we all know,” the rabbit said.

“EVERYBODY MOVE!” Papyrus shouted, confiscating the card table and shoving everything on it off onto the floor. He whipped out a white tablecloth from somewhere and covered the table, and then ran over to Grillby with a long, half-melted candle. Grillby lit it with a finger.
“YOU!” Papyrus ran over and grabbed Lucifer. “SIT AT THE TABLE!” He forced him down into a chair. “WAIT, NO!” He pulled the chair out from under Lucifer, sending him sprawling onto the ground. “SANS HAS TO PULL THE CHAIR OUT FOR YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON THE FLOOR?!” Papyrus yanked him up by the arm and practically threw him towards the door.

“EVERYBODY, QUIET!” Papyrus whispered harshly, making everyone hide around the edges of the building. “SANS SHOULD BE HERE ANY MINUTE NOW!”

And Sans did appear a few moments later, sloppily dressed in that sexy navy-blue suit and holding a bouquet of very, very dead roses. He was wearing one of his trademark murder smiles.

“you are so going to get it tonight,” Sans said under his breath, glaring.

“Oh, I hope so,” Lucifer chuckled.

Papyrus cleared his throat dramatically and Lucifer could hear the dry rose stems cracking under Sans’ grip. His fingers of his free hand started tapping against his femur through his shorts. “hi, luce. how has your day been?” he said, voice strained as he tried to restrain himself from exploding.

“A little sore, but otherwise pretty well,” Lucifer said, trying to resist laughing.

Sans’ smile relaxed a little, turning a bit more sly. “oh, really? you get worked too hard last night or something?”

“No, I was talking about being manhandled by Papyrus all day. I thought last night was just a warm up,” Lucifer said, leaning in close.

“I’ll have to keep that in mind,” Sans said, pressing one of his sharp fingers into the skin on Lucifer’s chest until a stream of crimson began to drip down.

“I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY’RE TALKING ABOUT, BUT SANS IS SUPPOSED TO ASK HIM ON A DATE NOW,” Papyrus whispered loudly.

Sans’ eyesocket twitched a little and his murder-grin came back. “so, luce;” he began, “would you like to go out on a date with me some time?”

“Hmm. I don’t know,” Lucifer said, and Sans’ fingers began to twitch too. “Maybe you could let me think about it for a while?”

Sans took in a shaky breath to steady himself. “please, take all the time you need,” he said aggressively.

“I think I’m done thinking,” Lucifer said.

“lovely.”

“Yeah, let’s try it. I think there happens to be a conveniently date-ready table right behind us,” Lucifer said.

“that’s great,” Sans said, shoving Lucifer into the room impatiently. “here, let me get the chair for you,” he added.

“Such a gentleman,” Lucifer chuckled, sitting down. “I really don’t know why you make such a fuss about dressing up. You clean up really nice,” he said.

“pfft, you call this cleaned up?” Sans said, gesturing to his untucked shirt and sloppy bow tie.
“I like the messy look,” Lucifer smirked. “Makes it look like I’ve got you half undressed already.”

Sans snorted. “Yeah, well you’re not exactly pristine yourself. I think you got a little something on your neck there,” he said.

“What, these?” Lucifer said, pulling his shirt to the side to reveal even more marks. “Those are basically a permanent thing now.”

“That right?” Sans said, leaning across the table and resting his skull in his hand. “…I’d order us some grub, but I’m kinda on a tight budget right now,” he said.

Lucifer leaned across the table, too, his face just a few inches from Sans’. “The company’s more important than the food, anyway.”

“And how’s that been?” Sans asked quietly.

“I don’t think I could live without it,” Lucifer smiled.

…

“SEE?! ONE AMAZING DATE, COURTESY OF YOURS TRULY,” Papyrus beamed as he followed Sans and Lucifer out of Grillby’s. “I’M GOING TO GET RIGHT TO PLANNING YOUR SECOND! AND YOUR THIRD! AND YOUR FOURTH, AND YOUR FIFTH, AND —”

“Yeah, we need to have a talk about that,” Sans said, stopping him. “I don’t need a chaperone, Pap. …thanks… for setting this one up for me, but I think I’ll be fine from here on out.”

“PREPOSTEROUS!” Papyrus said. “You’ll never get this right if I don’t supervise you! I mean, do you even have a dramatic love poem written yet?!?!”

“Papyrus - look. We are not dating Luce, okay? I am. And I’m gonna do it in the way I wanna do it. If you have to change for someone to make it work, you’re not a good fit in the first place. Stars above, Pap, can’t you have a little faith that if I like him enough, I’m gonna try my best at this?”

“I DON’T KNOW WHAT A MACE HAS TO DO WITH ANY OF THIS,” Papyrus said.

“Don’t. Start,” Sans growled. “Faith, f-a-i-t-h. …but I know that street goes both ways sometimes, and I…” He sighed loudly.

Lucifer spoke up. “I really appreciate what you did tonight, Papyrus,” he said, putting an arm around Sans’ shoulders, “but Sans is right. I like him the way he is. I don’t need you to dress him up for me to make me fall for him - even if he is pretty hot in a suit.”

“I don’t care how it looks. This thing’s strangling me and I don’t even need to breathe,” Sans grumbled.

Lucifer narrowed his eyes a little. “…but you do breathe, though.”

“To talk. Not to live,” Sans explained. “Just becomes a habit after a while ‘cause it’s what everyone else does, anyway.”

“YES, YES, YES,” Papyrus said, shushing him. “SKELETON ANATOMY LESSONS ASIDE…” Sans and Lucifer shared a look and snorted a little, “ARE… ARE YOU SURE?”
“Yes,” Lucifer said. “That being said, I don’t want you feeling left out or anything. I had a few… puzzle ideas.”

“PUZZLE IDEAS?!?!?!” Papyrus screamed. “SANS I’M STEALING YOUR BOYFRIEND GOODBYE!” Papyrus picked Lucifer up once again and sprinted off towards the house.

Sans watched them go with a chuckle before looking down at his clothes and contemplating having Grillby burn them.

“eh. i’ll have luce help me take ‘em off later,” he mused to himself. He snapped his head to the side as he heard the sound of approaching footsteps. A green glow appeared on the path from Waterfall as Fuku jogged towards him, cradling a Temmie in her arms.

“...you shouldn’t be here,” he told her, looking over her. Her clothes, which had already been worn and ragged, had chunks missing out of them like bite marks. Temmie looked pale (how could someone look paler than normal when they had fur?) and was shivering, and had similar-sized bite marks all over her body.

“I-I know, but… something’s happened,” she told him. “Please, I... I need to stay here for a little while.”

“i can’t risk undyne finding you here again. i got plausible deniability last time, but if we get caught a second time the whole town’s in deep shit. sorry, kid, i don’t run a charity,” Sans said.

“Is Lucifer here?” Fuku asked.

“...what does that have to do with anything?”

“He’d at least want to see me,” Fuku said. “Just… take me to him this one time. Please.”

Didn’t she mean he’d want to see us? Sans felt something dark start to creep into his chest, but he couldn’t figure out what it was. “…right this way.”
Fuku returns to Snowdin, and Lucifer goes to see Toriel.

“...you're not exactly inconspicuous by human standards anymore,” Sans pointed out.

“I’ve got my ways - just have a little faith. Though it would help if you started giving me those magic lessons,” Lucifer said.

“...fine,” Sans conceded. “...doesn’t change the fact that greenie over here is a wanted fugitive.”

“I’ll set up a campsite for her out in the woods. She’ll never have to come to town,” Lucifer suggested. “As for Temmie, I’ll take care of her. Sound fair?”

Sans sighed. “...it goes without saying that the whole human thing is just between us, right?” he said, looking around.

“yaYa! Tem is very gud at seekret. No wan no TEM have tastie hoomin fren,” Temmie said. Lucifer glanced down and saw that the transformation had already taken place. Her eyes were red and bloodshot and her teeth had grown sharp and uneven. Whatever happened to monsters that consumed human, it happened fast.

“alright,” Sans said. “you take care of living arrangements for these two. i’ll go and talk to onionsan - he’ll probably make a good distributor. i’ll meet you in a few hours for magic lessons. sound good?”

“Yeah, sounds good,” Lucifer said. “C’mon, Fuku, we’ll go pick up some supplies for a campsite.”
“Thank you,” Fuku said, settling down on the log next to the new campfire. She had a well-constructed and rather spacey lean-to to complete with an assortment of blankets and pillows, a rather hefty box of provisions, and everything else a person would need for a permanent campsite. Lucifer glanced over at the red-colored snow on the other side of the small clearing, smiling to himself a little. What a curious way to mark the spot where Sans had kissed him for the first time.

Lucifer shook himself from his thoughts and turned back to Fuku. “No problem,” he said. “I’m just glad you’re okay. You’re just a magnet for trouble, huh?”

Fuku giggled shyly. “Yeah… I guess so,” she said. “Is it really okay for Temmie to be living with you?”

“Yeah,” Lucifer said. “I just gave her my old room - the size suits her better than it does me.”

“Oh, I only saw two rooms in the house. Where were you staying before?” Fuku asked.

“Papyrus’ closet,” Lucifer shrugged. “Like I said. Probably the perfect size for her. I think she and Papyrus will get along pretty well, too.”

“They… had you in a closet?” Fuku asked. “That must have been so uncomfortable.”

“I’ve had much worse,” Lucifer chuckled.

“Still… it must be hard living with Sans,” Fuku said. “He seems… hm. Intense? I don’t know, I just wouldn’t feel comfortable with him being around all the time.”

Lucifer frowned just a little. “He’s a good guy. I don’t have a problem living with him,” he said, just a little defensively.

“Oh, I’m not denying that he’s done an amazing job with the people in Snowdin,” Fuku said. “My uncle talked about him all the time. I just thought it might be awkward to be, you know, living with him twenty-four seven. But, to each their own. It seems like you’re pretty used to the camping lifestyle, though - if it ever gets to be too much for you, you can always come out here with me.”

“Heh. Thanks for the offer, but I think I’m good for now. Anyway, I should get going - there’s someone I wanted to talk to before I go back to town for magic lessons,” Lucifer said.

“Okay,” Fuku said, standing up. “You’ll be back next week to bring me my supplies, right?”

“Mm hm.”

“Well. Until next time, then.” She leaned over and gave him a kiss on the cheek.

Lucifer stumbled away a few steps, blushing. His skin tingled a little bit from the kiss, just slightly singed. “…Right. Until then,” Lucifer said. He started walking toward the Ruins.

He rubbed his cheek a little - he hoped that was just a friendly gesture and not something else. He hadn’t given her any signals like that, had he? Because he definitely wasn’t interested, for a number of reasons. Lucifer put it out of his mind and knocked on the door.

“W… Who is there?” Toriel said, her voice catching in her throat a little as she recognized the person speaking to her.

“Robin.”

“Robin who?”
“Robin you. Now give me the cash,” Lucifer said.

The door creaked open slowly. “My child… I thought…” Toriel’s eyes widened when she saw him.

“I, uh… got a new look, but it’s me,” Lucifer smiled, fangs poking out of his mouth. “Hi, mom. Sorry I left without saying goodbye.”

“That is an extensive costume,” Toriel said, just a little taken aback. “However did you make such a thing?”

“Not quite a costume,” Lucifer said, moving to rub the back of his neck. He drew his hand back when he remembered that there were little spines there. Toriel reached out and felt where his fur met the skin around his shoulders - solidly attached.

“I… do not know how this has happened, but…” She pulled him into a hug. “You make a very handsome young monster.”

“Thanks,” Lucifer smiled, returning the hug.

“Come inside. I will make us some tea,” Toriel said. “Sans told me that you had returned to the surface.”

“I did, for a little while,” Lucifer said. “...but I belong down here, with Sans. Besides, I could hardly let everyone starve.”

“I see,” Toriel said, entering her kitchen and setting a kettle on the stove. “So, you and Sans are…”?

“...Yeah,” Lucifer said, blushing a little. Toriel didn’t seem at all surprised. “Did you… you know. Figure out that we felt that way beforehand?”

“I may have had a hunch,” Toriel smiled. “Call it a mother’s intuition. Those marks around your neck also tipped me off.”

Lucifer blushed a little harder, regretting not taking one of Papyrus’ scarves for the first time. Maybe he didn’t care what the patrons at Grillby’s thought, but Toriel was… just a little different somehow.

Toriel had a hearty laugh at his expense. “I will not judge you, my child,” she said, setting a cup of tea in front of him. “You are both adults. Though, you did use protection, I presume?”

“U-Um…” Lucifer’s face was lobster-red now.

“Mm hm,” Toriel said in her disapproving-mother tone. “...but that is not a part of your life you need discuss with me. So, have you been able to walk around Snowdin freely now?”

“Y-Yeah,” Lucifer said, grateful for the change in subject. He pulled his vest in a little tighter, trying vainly to cover his skin. “It’s… I feel normal down here, for the first time in my life. Is that silly?”

“Not at all, my child,” Toriel said. “There is no such thing as ‘normal.’ We must all find a place in the world where we are accepted and loved for who we are. It is an honor that you have found that place here with Sans and I. I only wish we had more to offer you than acceptance - I am glad that you are here, my child, but at the same time… I wish you were safer.”

“I get it,” Lucifer said, “but I’ve been away from the luxurious life for a while now. I know how to take care of myself.”

“Of course,” Toriel said. She took a sip of her tea. “I am glad you have come back to us.”
“You and me both,” Lucifer smiled.

“You took your time,” Sans chuckled.

“Sorry. I stopped by to talk to Toriel,” Lucifer said.

“no worries,” Sans said. His gaze zeroed in on Lucifer’s cheek - there was a little spot that was flushed with color, like a mild scald. Vaguely in the shape of a pair of lips. He felt his axe hand twitch violently.

...he was just seeing things. There were a million things that could have been. Lucifer wouldn’t… no.

He was going to talk to Toriel later, just to make sure Lucifer’s alibi was solid. Just out of curiosity. Not because he was being possessive again. He was past that.

“So… magic?” Lucifer asked.

“...right,” Sans said, tearing his gaze away. He needed to stay focused - his thoughts were starting to spiral out of his control again. “we’re gonna try moving that branch around,” he said, pointing. “remember that magic’s pretty instinctual. just kinda… reach out and grab it,” Sans said. “and go easy. this stuff’s a lot stronger than you think, and i have a feeling you’ve got a lot of raw power tucked under that skin.”

“Alright,” Lucifer said, shaking his limbs out. He squinted his eyes and concentrated on the branch. Nothing happened.

“feel free to use your hands if you want,” Sans said. “physical motion can help sometimes. kids that are first learning how to use their magic do it a lot.”

“Okay,” Lucifer said, reaching out with his hand slowly. He concentrated for a little while longer, and the branch glowed blue. “Hey, I got—” He swung his hand to the side as he turned to look at Sans and the branch was thrown violently against a nearby tree, splintering into a thousand pieces.

“geez, i said go easy,” Sans said, backing away from his hand. “…let’s avoid using that little parlor trick i did earlier on me for now, yeah?” he said. “you might tear me in half.”

“To what trick would you be referring?” Lucifer asked.

Lucifer glowed blue and slid backwards through the snow into Sans arms. Sans wrapped his arms around Lucifer’s waist, resting them against his stomach. “that one. don’t worry, we’ll get there eventually. let’s try again - gentler, this time.”

Sans could see Lucifer’s cheek a little from this vantage point, and his hands dug into Lucifer’s vest a little.

...Maybe he should take over delivering food to Fuku.
Green With Envy

Chapter Summary

Sans isn't too happy about Fuku being in town.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sans might have spent too much time alone in the last few days. His thoughts tended to deteriorate into a psychotic mess whenever he was left to his own devices for too long. But, he had important thinking he’d been doing - on Fuku.

That sneaky, conniving little schoolgirl. Well, former schoolgirl. The school system had kind of gone kaput with the Core just like almost everything else, and she was probably old enough by now that she wouldn’t actually need to be in school even if it was still a thing.

Sans didn’t blame Lucifer - that little witch had found a way under his skin somehow, some emotional connection that Sans couldn’t quite place, and she was using it to pull Lucifer away from him. There was also the possibility that she had started blackmailing Lucifer over being a human - or maybe she had something else on him from even before his transformation.

Sans had spent countless hours dreaming up ways to mutilate the green fire elemental - most of them involved water in one way or the other - but the problem was he couldn’t just go into the woods and hunt her like an animal. Lucifer probably wouldn’t take well to that; no, he needed to frame it like an accident or get someone else to do it, as much as he’d love to slowly drip water into her eyes himself until she went blind. Maybe just bury her alive in the snow and let her own body heat slowly drown her in what amounted to acid, or impale her with icicle spikes in just the right places so she’d die over the course of hours. Days, maybe. He was starting to like the icicle idea more and more.

Sans’ torture plans shifted to the back of his mind as he remembered that he hadn’t checked on Lucifer in a while. He was probably with Fuku. What were they doing? That little slut was probably all over him. Burning him, marking him. Only Sans was allowed to mark his human - no, his devil. Sans had made him that, cut him apart and put him back together so that he looked on the outside what he felt on the inside. How dare that green gutter-rat try to steal Lucifer from him. He felt his axe hand twitch violently, and a manic smile came across his face.

...Screw subtlety. Sans was going to hunt Fuku like the dog she was and hack her apart in the snow, Lucifer or no. He’d forgive Sans eventually. Hell, maybe Sans could convince Lucifer to join in and they could dismember her together. Sans could just imagine the look on her face as they tore into her like a sack of meat together. Lucifer was sexy covered in blood, sure, but Sans bet he would look pretty good in ash, too. He needed his axe.

Sans walked into the house to find Lucifer, Papyrus, and Temmie sitting on the living room floor surrounded by what appeared to be crafting supplies.

“THIS IS SO EXCITING!” Papyrus screamed. “CAN YOU EXPLAIN IT TO ME AGAIN?”

“Sure thing, Papyrus. Humans are pretty easy to manipulate - they all want something. Money,
adventure, whatever it is. Now, my idea was that if we made some old-looking journals and books talking about how there’s all those things right under Mount Ebott, we might lure a few humans down here without me actually having to do any work.”

“A DEVIOUS TRAP! A PRE-PUZZLE TEST! IT’S BRILLIANT!” Papyrus said, clapping his hands excitedly. “I CAN’T WAIT A MOMENT LONGER, LET’S START IMMEDIATELY! SO... HOW DO WE DO THIS?”

“Well, first we need to age these notebooks so they look authentic,” Lucifer said. “You can dye the paper to look older - coffee or tea works best, but I used some of the sap from the trees outside mixed with water and it seems to make things sufficiently yellow. They dry in a few minutes if you stick them in the oven on low heat.”

“Ooo, yaYa! Tem will die nothuk’s and drie dem fore u!” Temmie said, hopping up and down excitedly.

“Thank you, Temmie,” Lucifer said as she grabbed a notebook in her mouth and dipped it into a nearby bucket. “Then, once they’re dry, we need someone to finish the aging - creasing, crumpling, tearing off corners or leaving little rips, that stuff.”

“I WILL CREASE, CRUMPLE, AND TEAR THESE MASTERPIECES INTO WEATHERED WORKS OF ART!” Papyrus declared, and Lucifer smiled.

“Then I’ll write in them once you’re done. Awesome team effort, guys.”

Sans backed out of the house guiltily. Of course Lucifer wasn’t with Fuku, just like he wasn’t with her the other fifty times Sans had checked up on him. He was always with Papyrus, or checking on the traps, or sitting by the Ruins door, or joking around with the people at Grillby’s. They’d all taken quite a shine to him, actually - it was too subtle for them to notice, but Sans was fairly sure that Lucifer being around might’ve been taking the edge off of their hunger.

Sans finally reigned in his thoughts. What was wrong with him? He was thinking about murdering Grillby’s niece, for crying out loud. And of course Lucifer wouldn’t cheat on him, after everything they’d been through. He was being ridiculously paranoid.

...and yet Sans was almost positive Fuku was sticking her nose where it didn’t belong. Then it dawned on him - Fuku didn’t know Sans was dating Lucifer. Maybe she did have feelings for him and she was just too stupid to figure out that he was taken. That could be resolved easily enough, if that was the case. Sans walked towards the woods.

“...Oh. Hi, Sans,” Fuku said, just a little coldly. “Did you need something? Is Lucifer with you?” Sans beat back his daydreams of dipping her in the river and watching her crawl through the snow legless. “well, that’s not a very warm welcome,” he said. “and you seem to be awfully interested in what my boyfriend is doing all the time. forgive me if i find that a little threatening.” See, Sans could be reasonable. This was a perfectly normal conversation to be having.

“B… Boyfriend?” Fuku said. “You… and him…”

“yup,” Sans said, accenting the ‘p’ sharply. “so i’d appreciate it if you kept your fingers off things that aren’t yours. capiche?”

To Sans’ surprise, Fuku seemed to stand a little taller; almost defiantly. “Just because he’s a human doesn’t make him your plaything,” she said.
“excuse me?” Sans said, head cocking to the side as his psychotic grin popped onto his face. The nerve of this little brat.

“You heard me,” Fuku said, planting her feet in the ground adamantly. “I saw the bruises. You have no right to treat him that way.”

“just what are you implying, you oversized candle?” Sans growled. He walked towards her slowly. “first of all, how i treat my boyfriend ain’t any of your business. second, ” he said, pulling the collar of his shirt to the side to reveal the marks on his own body, “those are a mutual thing. we both like it rough - not that our sleeping habits have anything to do with you, greenie.”

That made Fuku lose a little of her nerve, and Sans pounced like a wild animal, pinning her to a nearby tree by her throat. She gasped, fear flashing in her eyes. Dark, sadistic pleasure began dripping down Sans’ ribcage.

“listen here, sparks,” Sans said, deathly quiet. Sans grabbed a handful of snow from a nearby branch and smeared it against her face. She squeaked in pain as it sizzled against her body. “lucifer is mine. do you hear me? mine. keep batting those pretty little eyelashes at him and i’ll water-bath your face right off.”

“He… he deserves better than to be treated like your toy,” Fuku said. She was a lot braver than Sans gave her credit for. That didn’t stop Sans’ fingers from digging into her throat, her flames hissing and popping against the bone.

“you don’t know anything about us, you little green gutter-rat,” Sans said. “he is very, very important to me. i know him better than any living soul on this whole goddamn planet, least of all you. do you really think he’d pick you over me? you’re just some poor starving stray he picked up on his way back from the capitol - he probably thinks of you like some kind of pet. besides, he doesn’t even swing your way.”

Sans shoved her down into the snow roughly. “this is your only warning. got it? i see you so much as wink at him and i’ll make you wish you were never born.”

Fuku coughed, rubbing her sore throat as she picked herself off the ground. “Don’t… you think… he should be the one that gets to decide?”

Sans started walking away, trying to keep himself from hyperventilating. “he already picked me.”

Chapter End Notes

heyyyyy sorry for the late update on this one guys, I got swamped this weekend.

In other news, I’ve got the rest of the story planned out all the way to the ending, so I have a (somewhat) reliable estimate of how much longer this thing is gonna be. Anyway, hope you enjoy!
For Sake of Convenience

Chapter Summary

Sans makes a decision he may come to regret.

As much as Sans appreciated Lucifer’s survival skills, his perceptiveness was starting to get on his nerves.

“Hey,” Lucifer said, flicking the base of Sans’ jaw, “my eyes are up here, pervert.”

“huh?” Sans blinked, his concentration lost. He’d been searching for marks on Lucifer’s body - burn marks, specifically. There weren’t any there; just the long, fresh scratches down his sides. “...aw c’mon, it’s not like you’ve minded before. besides, i don’t even have your boxers off yet.”

Lucifer rolled his eyes and pulled the shirtless skeleton into his lap on the bed, nipping at his collarbones. Sans hummed lightly, pressing himself against Lucifer’s bare chest. “Look, I know I’m goddamn sexy, but you’re not usually this distracted. What’s eating at you, babe?”

Sans grunted a little as Lucifer bit down on the vertebrae of his neck. “you, right now,” Sans chuckled. That earned him a punch in the arm as Lucifer licked up towards the base of his skull. Sans tilted his head to the side to give Lucifer more room to work. “...i just wanted to make sure there weren’t any side effects from... you know. no infections, that kinda stuff.”

“Aw. You’re cute when you worry about me,” Lucifer chuckled. “You sure that’s all you were staring at?”

Sans’ back arched a little as Lucifer ran his claws down Sans’ spine. “...well. those ribs are showin’ through pretty nice,” he said. Sans wondered if Lucifer would survive having a little of his skin peeled back so Sans could see exactly how his bones felt. He bet they were smooth, having never been exposed to the elements. Warm blood and flesh clinging to them...

“Mm hm,” Lucifer said sarcastically.

“and who are you calling cute, by the way?” Sans said, shifting his weight suddenly so that Lucifer ended up pinned beneath him. Sans yanked Lucifer’s head to the side by his hair roughly and bit down on his neck. Then he pulled away, watching blood prick up around the fresh mark. It made him feel a little better.

The feeling went away when he saw the doubt still there on Lucifer’s face. One of the drawbacks of letting someone get to know you so well was that it became much more difficult to lie to them.

“what? don’t believe me?” Sans asked.

Lucifer took a deep breath and sighed. “...No. If that’s all you say is on your mind, I trust you. You know you can talk to me, though, right?”

“course i do,” Sans shrugged. That had been an unintentional punch to his metaphorical gut.

“Hey, do you mind if we put a pause on this? I kinda wanted to see Toriel before I turned in,”
Lucifer said, sitting back up and reaching for his jeans.

“...sure, go ahead,” Sans said, using all his concentration to keep his fingers from twitching. “we got all night.”

“I’ll see you in a few, bone boy,” Lucifer chuckled, grabbing his vest and heading for the door. He paused momentarily before heading towards Papyrus’ room to grab a scarf.

_It was just Toriel, Sans told himself. He wasn’t going to Fuku. He just said he trusts you, now show a little spine and return the favor._

This was fine. He was just going to wait here for Lucifer to come back. And then they’d have a little fun and the little devil would fall asleep in his arms, right where he belonged.

...Sans walked out the door a few minutes later. He was going to check up on Fuku. Not because he thought Lucifer would be with her, of course, but because he just wanted to make sure Fuku understood the situation.

It wasn’t Fuku that he found waiting outside his house, though, but none other than the Queen herself. The royal guards were currently dragging everyone else out of their homes.

“How nice of you to save me the trouble of fetching you,” Undyne said.

“thought that would be a job for one of the dogs,” Sans said, putting on his mask of calm. Undyne gave him an unamused glare.

“I have reason to believe that the fugitive doubled back towards Snowdin,” Undyne said. “You wouldn’t happen to have seen any _suspicious_ activity around lately, have you?”

Sans almost denied it on reflex, but something stopped him. Did the universe really just give him a break for once? It was almost too simple. Sans’ eyes flicked back and forth quickly. No Lucifer in sight, and no Grillby either. It took every ounce of will to keep his manic smile at bay.

“...now that you mention it,” Sans said, “i did see this weird green glow over in the northeastern woods the other day. i thought i was seeing things, but the kid was a green fire elemental, right? forgot about that.” She wasn’t in the northeastern woods, but the northwestern part. Close enough that the guards would probably find her anyway but far enough away that Sans could claim he was trying to send them away from her if anyone caught on.

Undyne turned around and barked at a few of her guards, who headed off into the woods. Sans nearly started laughing. This was just too easy. Undyne dragged him out into the town square with everyone else.

A little while later and the guards returned with Fuku in hand, struggling against them violently. She froze as she was set down in front of Undyne.

“You’re just like one of those annoying self-lighting birthday candles, you know that?” Undyne said. Fuku was shivering, but she stood up straighter, clenching her fists. “I’m not afraid of you,” she said.

“Oh?” Undyne said, clearly amused. “Such bravery from a little nobody that’s very clearly out of her depth.”

“And just what am I being arrested for? Do you even remember what you charged me with?” Fuku said, gaining a little steam.
“Not really. Please remind me,” Undyne said, disinterested.

“My best friend tried to stop one of your guards from stealing from a defenseless old man like a petty thug,” Fuku said. “It was that demon right there, in fact,” she said, pointing, “and he beat her to death for it. I didn’t even try to intervene. I just yelled at him to stop, and you threw me in the Hotland labs to rot!” Fuku shouted. Her flames flared near-white as the snow around her melted in a circle like it was candle wax.

Sans was a little too preoccupied with his easy victory to care about Fuku’s little speech, but then he looked over at Grillby. His flames had died from bright orange to a cool red, dark with grief and defeat. Sans felt his soul sink a little. His grin faded.

“You don’t deserve that crown,” Fuku said, pointing at it. “You’re not a queen. You aren’t even a monster, you’re a beast,” Fuku said. “And I’m not afraid of you. The only way for tyrants like you to sit on that throne is when good people sit back and do nothing. I won’t be a victim again. I’m not just going to sit back and watch while you destroy every last shred of hope we have!”

Fuku looked around at the crowd. No one even lifted their eyes from the ground. Some of them even took a step away from her. Her colors faded back to green, a deep resignation coming across her features. She didn’t look scared or angry, just… disappointed. Sans’ soul sank further.

The still air came alive with the sound of Undyne’s hands slowly clapping. Then it filled up with dread, thick enough to cut with a knife.

“A speech for the ages, if I’ve ever heard one,” Undyne said, still clapping. “Don’t you all think so?” There were a few nervous and confused murmurs of agreement in the crowd. “What a promising young heroine. You remind me of myself when I was your age.”

Fuku took a step towards her defiantly. “I am nothing like you,” she said, voice wavering.

“Oh, there are definitely a few differences,” Undyne said. “You see, there are two types of heroes in this world, little girl.” She began walking toward Fuku slowly, and Fuku backed up only for two of the Royal Guards to stop her. Undyne grabbed her neck suddenly and lifted her off of the ground, whispering in her ear so only Fuku could hear.

“All heroes do one of two things - they fail,” Undyne said. Fuku struggled against her iron grip helplessly. “...Or, they die.”

Fuku’s eyes widened as Undyne lifted her up and threw her high into the air. She snapped through the tops of a few of the trees, leaving them to smolder, before she landed in the river with a blood-curdling scream that devolved into a foamy gurgling noise. A giant cloud of steam floated up out of the water, leaving behind nothing but a soggy, tattered school uniform.

Sans turned around at the sound of a branch falling from a tree. To his horror, Lucifer was there, one hand glowing blue and shaking violently. The trees behind him creaked under an oppressive artificial gravity. To Sans’ great relief, though, Lucifer managed to reign in his powers before Undyne could see. His hand still shook though.

Undyne gave Lucifer a curious glance before turning around towards the guard Fuku had pointed out.

“My Queen?” the man said.

Undyne grabbed both of his arms and ripped them out of their sockets, making the monster release an ungodly howl as blood gushed out all over the snow. Then, Undyne grabbed him by the throat
and threw him into the river right where Fuku had landed. The armless creature kicked uselessly for a few seconds before sinking below the waters, and the air grew still again.

Undyne turned back to Lucifer, snapping her fingers. Two guards grabbed him by the arms and dragged him forward to stand in front of Undyne, and Sans’ breathing stopped entirely.

“I’ve never seen you around before,” she said, grabbing him by the face and looking at him closely. “...Has anyone ever told you that you look a lot like a human?”

“...Wouldn’t know,” Lucifer said, not missing a beat. “Never seen one before.”

Undyne pulled on one of his horns experimentally and felt that it was solidly attached. Seemingly satisfied, she let go of him. “Where are you from?” she asked.

“The Ruins,” Lucifer said. “There weren’t many of us who lived there. Our food ran out a few weeks ago, so I came to Snowdin looking for help.”

“Hmm,” Undyne said. “Anyone else come with you?”

“No,” Lucifer said. “I’m the only one left.”

Undyne stared at him for a moment, long and hard. “We’re taking him to New Home for questioning,” she said, turning back towards Waterfall. They all began to move out.

Sans felt utter panic start to set in. He looked at her, wild-eyed. “w-wait, you can’t just… no. no, no, you can’t take him!” Sans shouted desperately. Undyne gave him a curious look.

“Sans,” Lucifer said, still calm somehow. “It’s fine. It’s just some questions. I’ve got nothing to hide,” he said. “I’m sure Queen Undyne is a reasonable woman. I’ll be fine.”

Undyne raised an eyebrow at him, turning around again. Sans started hyperventilating. “no. no, you can’t take him, i won’t let you take—”

“Sans,” Lucifer said, a little more forcefully. “I’ve got this. Just trust me,” he said. Sans just stood there, frozen, as the guards took him away and he disappeared from view.

The mayor put a paw on Sans’ shoulder. “Sans, I—”

Sans smacked his arm away violently and stomped off towards his basement, grabbing his axe along the way.

With a feral scream, he planted his axe into the chest of the dead policeman. Then he ripped it out and hacked into him again, and again, and again. When there was nothing left but mincemeat he obliterated a nearby box with a wild swing. Then he trashed the rest of the basement and anything else breakable he could find, kicking things over and crashing them against the walls with his blue magic.

When there was nothing left but debris, Sans slid to the floor against the door and started laughing uncontrollably. Tears rolled down his face, and his ribs began to ache. He dug his fingers into his head wound until he felt something snap off and blood begin to soak into his sleeves.

When he had no more air left, he just sat there, bones shuddering and rattling together. What had he done?
Chapter Summary

Lucifer and Undyne have a conversation.

Lucifer tried to remain as calm as possible as the guards marched him forward through Waterfall. They were carrying some kind of lanterns, so it wasn’t nearly as dark this time around - this region was actually pretty beautiful when it was actually visible.

Undyne stopped suddenly, holding up a hand to signal the guards to do the same. She turned around, looking Lucifer over again.

“I thought we were doing this in New Home,” Lucifer said. Undyne pushed his scarf to the side to reveal fresh bite marks, some of them still covered in dried blood. She snorted a little.

“And I thought Sans was too lazy to be into this kinda shit,” Undyne chuckled. “So, what are you? Boyfriend? Lover? Pet?”

“...The first two,” Lucifer answered.

Undyne took a few steps back, and a wicked-looking blue-green spear materialized in her hand. “I’ll make this quick if you hold still.”

“I thought you were just going to question me,” Lucifer said, gathering his blue magic in his bound hands as covertly as he could. With any luck, he could deflect the spear into one of the guards.

“Already did. I know all I need to know.” Undyne pulled the spear back, poised to strike.

“...Why do you hate him so much?” Lucifer asked, trying to stall. He was having trouble getting his magic to work properly without having his hands free. Undyne squinted at him a little. “You’re going to kill me in five seconds anyway. Is there really any harm in me knowing?”

Undyne waited a few moments before lowering the spear to rest at her side. The guards released him and Lucifer looked back, confused.

“I’ll tell you what, lover boy,” Undyne said. “I haven’t had a real tousle in ages. Give me some exercise, and we’ll talk.”

Before Lucifer could so much as nod, Undyne’s spear was flying straight at his face. He dodged it by a hair’s breadth, feeling static crackle against his skin; and before he knew it, Undyne was already on him, shoulder tackling him straight in the side.

Lucifer rolled to his feet, trying to regain his bearings, and deflected another of Undyne’s charges with his blue magic. After a quick glance around, he leapt high into the air using his gravity manipulation and grabbed onto one of the stalactites hanging from the ceiling. He snapped it off and sent it hurtling towards his opponent.

She sidestepped easily and leapt into the air after him - surprised, Lucifer could only block with his arms as Undyne helicopter-kicked him against the ceiling several times and then grabbed him by the
shoulders, landing on top of him as they fell back to the ground.

Lucifer shoved Undyne off of himself with a blast of concussive force and staggered to his feet, all the breath knocked from his body. He went on the defensive, deflecting a barrage of energy spears as best he could.

He concentrated, grabbing one of the spears as it passed him and launching it back at Undyne. It grazed the side of her face, leaving a small cut. She looked mildly surprised, before grinning widely.

Lucifer used her distraction as an opportunity to launch himself at her full-force, slamming his fists into her breastplate with a burst of blue magic. She staggered backwards, and Lucifer tried to slash her throat with his claws.

Undyne grabbed his arm and twisted it back until there was a disgusting snap. Lucifer howled in pain and Undyne kicked him in the stomach, sending him sprawling. He barely managed to deflect a boulder Undyne had somehow managed to get a hold of, but then Undyne was back on top of him, a spear poised at his throat.

They were both breathing heavily, and Lucifer braced himself for the spear to implant itself in his skull. Undyne just laughed, though.

“You’ve got a lot of raw power, but you’re untrained and reckless,” she said. “Heh. Man after my own heart.” Undyne got up off of him and offered him a hand; Lucifer took it, barely able to stand.

The fire Undyne’s lone functioning eye faded a little as she looked at him. “…I don’t hate him,” she said.

Lucifer blinked, cradling his broken arm with his good one. “…then why do you keep hurting him?”

Undyne looked over at her guards. “Leave,” she ordered. “I’ll see you in New Home. And if I catch either of you slacking off, it’s the labs for you two.” The guards rushed off, leaving Undyne and Lucifer alone. Undyne went to sit against the cave wall and Lucifer followed her.

“I hurt him to keep him going,” Undyne said.

“…I don’t understand.”

Undyne looked over at him. “The food shortage is getting worse than I let on. I can’t afford to send food to Snowdin anymore - that’s why the shipments have stopped. It isn’t just to spite them,” Undyne said. “Somehow, Sans has found a way to keep everyone fed. And I don’t know what he’s doing or how he’s doing it, but the important thing is that it’s working. I need him to keep going.”

“So you think killing his boyfriend is going to help with that?” Lucifer asked, not following.

“He deserves to be able to hate me,” Undyne said quietly. “I failed him, as his queen - and as his friend. Just like I failed my entire kingdom.” Undyne curled in on herself a little, suddenly seeming less threatening. “…That’s why he keeps Snowdin alive - to spite me. To rub it in my face just how miserably I’ve destroyed everything and flaunt that he of all people can keep his town afloat. And as angry as it makes me…” Undyne looked at her knees, “…those people deserve to live.”

Lucifer felt a pang of compassion for her; who knew the Underground’s spartan queen had such a vulnerable side? But more importantly, Lucifer saw his ticket out.

“You’ve done your best in a situation where no one can win,” Lucifer said. “We’re all sunk here together. You didn’t make the barrier. And… I get what you’re saying about Snowdin, but it’s not
“Do you really expect me to believe that after everything I’ve done to him, he doesn’t want me dead?” Undyne asked.

“Oh no, he definitely wants to behead you,” Lucifer chuckled. “He talks about it all the time. But that’s not why he keeps Snowdin alive - he does it because he cares about them. About Papyrus; about me. You’re the same way, I think. I’m sure you want all the humans dead more than anyone, but I think deep down the biggest reason you want to break the barrier is for your people.”

Undyne gave him a sidelong glance, full of sadness. “...You’re pretty insightful, huh?”

“Nah. I’m just a man that wants his boyfriend to be happy - and that enjoys not dying. If you want him to keep going, send me back. I’ll make sure he does. I can promise you that.”

Undyne looked away. “...It’s too late for me to play nice now,” she said.

An idea popped into Lucifer’s brain, remembering a little conversation he’d had. “You do want to be better though, don’t you?” Lucifer asked.

“Howdy, friend. It’s been a while, huh?” Flowey chuckled. “I have to say, that is an impressive costume.” Lucifer screamed as a vine drilled its way under his fur and through the skin beneath. “Oh, my. That’s not just a costume, is it? Wow - just how sick of a freak are you?” Flowey pulled the scarf aside and laughed even louder. “Oh no. Not with Sans of all people,” he said. “Now that’s just downright kinky.”

“I killed you,” Lucifer growled, unable to move.
“You really think you killed me?” Flowey giggled. “Friend, I have roots across every single inch of this hole. I’m not going anywhere,” he said. Lucifer felt the vine around his hips tighten and he struggled violently. It was no use.

“What do you want, you overgrown daisy?” Lucifer spat.

“Oh, I just wanted to give my good friend a little warning. You might have everyone else fooled, but I know what you really are,” Flowey grinned. “And you might not be so chummy-chummy with the queen if she were to find out.”


“Oh, don’t worry your pretty little disfigured head over it right now. I’ll let you know what errands I need done when it becomes relevant. Until then - keep your mouth shut. If you so much as breathe a word of this to Sans - and I’ll be watching, trust me - and queenie is gonna get an anonymous tip that gets all off you ripped into bloody little shreds. Make sense?”

Lucifer nodded slowly, radiating hatred. “I’m so glad we understand each other!” Flowey said, releasing him. “I’ll see you around - friend.”
Sans blinked back to consciousness when a knock sounded on basement door. He didn’t know how long it’d been, but from the way his bones were aching it must have been a little while. Whoever was knocking, it wasn’t Papyrus, judging by the fact Sans hadn’t been crushed by the door being swung open violently. He stood up numbly and opened the door to find Lucifer standing there.

His eyesockets went wide. “luce, you’re… you’re back. you’re… oh thank god!” Sans rushed forward and knocked Lucifer back onto the basement steps, kissing him and digging his fingers into his shoulders. Lucifer shouted in pain and Sans pulled away immediately.

Sans actually took a moment to look over Lucifer and found that he was very much worse for wear. In particular his shoulder was swollen and discolored, and Sans had just jammed it into the steps. Smooth.

“sorry,” Sans apologized, getting back up. “how did… what did you…"

Lucifer sat up, wincing in pain and avoiding moving his shoulder. It was hard to tell without being able to see his bones, but Sans was fairly sure his arm was broken. “Undyne and I, uh… worked things out, you could say. Long story short, I’m making periodic trips to the capitol to chat with her.”

“that’s… uh…” Sans had no idea how that had happened. “well. you’re here now, that’s what matters. is your arm, uh…”

“Broken? Yeah. The queen is not a pushover in any sense of the word,” Lucifer said.

“you don’t have to tell me. here, bones are the one thing i know how to take care of, let me fix it up for you.” Sans went back into the basement and rummaged around in the wreckage until he found an ancient first-aid kit. Miraculously it’d survived his blind rage. He returned to Lucifer, who was still sitting on the stairs.

“alright, uh… this is easier without the bones being covered in flesh and fur. i have to align this, so… help me out and tell me when it feels right?” Lucifer nodded and Sans began adjusting his arm. Lucifer clenched his teeth to keep from shouting.

Sans was able to make a decent sling for him. There were actually more elaborate materials in the box since a broken bone for a skeleton was dangerously close to limb loss, but Lucifer assured him the sling should work out (especially if he could get some monster food from Toriel).

Sans finished the sling and Lucifer looked past him into the basement, smirking a little. “I can’t even leave you alone for a few hours, huh?” he said.

Sans chuckled a little, but there was no mirth to it. His soul sank in his chest, his mind drifting back...
to Fuku. His conscience was gnawing at his ribcage as his mind set off every warning bell it could find. Against all his better judgement… he was going to be truthful.

“hey, uh… luce?” Sans could practically hear all his sensibilities screaming inside of his skull. “i, uh… i needta… i, uh… i need to come clean about something.”

“…You know you can tell me anything,” Lucifer smiled.

Sans felt his soul beating through his ribcage, but the guilt was eating him alive. “…i’m glad that you’re safe. but… um… i…” Sans closed his eyesockets. “it’s my fault.”

“What’s your fault?” Lucifer asked, confused.

“...fuku. i… i led undyne right to her.”

Lucifer leaned back a little. “...What?”

“i’m sorry. i’m so, so sorry. i just… i thought she… you were… i…”

“What the hell, Sans?!” Lucifer shouted, standing up. “Why? Why on earth would you do that?”

“she was trying to take you away from me!” Sans said defensively, clenching his fists inside of his pockets.

“I thought we’d already established that I’m not your property,” Lucifer growled.

“i know. i-i know, i just… she—”

“Seriously, what the fuck? Are you just gonna kill everyone I talk to now?”

“no!” Sans said, starting to shake. “i didn’t mean to. i… i tried so hard, but… couldn’t you tell that she liked you?”

“Does it matter?” Lucifer asked. “Do you really think that after everything we’ve been through, I’d just go and cheat on you? Does my word really mean that little?”

“no, no!” Sans said. He could feel tears welling up. “i just… couldn’t help myself.”

“That’s not a very good excuse, Sans,” Lucifer said. His tone was a little softer, at least. “...Come on. I need to go hunting again. Probably shouldn’t do any direct pickups in this state, but I can at least put my lures out. You have any giant ropes?” Sans felt something crumble inside of him as he grabbed followed Lucifer towards the Ruins.

“Can you teleport us there or do I need to explain things to Toriel?” Lucifer asked.

...Sans really didn’t want to use that much magic, but he didn’t want to make Lucifer any more angry. He reached for Lucifer’s hand - before freezing and touching his non-injured shoulder instead - and they were back on the ledge leading out of the Underground.

“We’re talking about this later,” Lucifer said. “After I cool off.”

Sans looked up at him. “...you’re coming back?” he said, barely audible.

“Of course I’m coming back, you stupid bonehead,” Lucifer said, walking through the barrier. He walked out of sight, finding somewhere to tie the rope Sans had given him, before tossing it back into the cavern. It tumbled down, hanging off the ground by a few inches. Now Sans wouldn’t have
Sans teleported back - his magic reserves weren’t desperate, but they were definitely no longer healthy. It sapped what little energy Sans had left. He just felt so… tired. He walked by Grillby’s to see it empty, the fire elemental polishing glasses behind the bar.

...Fuck it. He’d already completely ruined one relationship. Might as well go for broke. He walked into the bar.

“hey, grillbz,” Sans greeted him. The air was already dead. Grillby said nothing. “hey, i, uh… i need to talk to you about something.”

“...You’re the one that led them to Fuku,” Grillby said.

“i…” Sans couldn’t make eye contact.

Grillby continued polishing the glass. “...I think it’s better this way,” he said.

Sans looked at him. “g… grillbz… you can’t—”

“...She wasn’t here long enough for the pain to really sink in,” Grillby said. Sans could see his hands shaking a little. “...it never really goes away. Never stops, never gets easier. The only reason I’m not screaming is because I don’t have the strength left to.”

“oh… oh, stars, grillbz… i…” He wanted to put his hand on Grillby’s shoulder, but he restrained himself.

“...It’s alright, Sans,” Grillby sighed. “You have bigger things to deal with than my family life. I can tell how important Lucifer is to you. Don’t worry about me.”

Sans expected Grillby to try to murder him. Why did this feel worse? “grillbz, i killed your niece. that’s not okay.”

“...I’d only met her twice before she came here,” Grillby said. “Why do you think a fire elemental moved to a land of frozen water to sell drinks, Sans? I’m the black sheep of my family. I haven’t talked to my brother in decades. He hates me. So does his wife, in fact.” Grillby stared off into middle distance. “...I don’t even know if they’re still alive.”

Sans had no idea what to say. Grillby knew more about him than most of Snowdin, but it seemed the reverse wasn’t true.

Grillby gave him a resigned smile. “...My own life has been beyond salvaging long before the king passed. The only real enjoyment I get is watching all of you be happy. You’re the only one keeping this town afloat, Sans. Whatever you have to do… know you have my support.” He walked off into his back room.

Sans walked home, collapsing on his mattress. He felt… dead.

He almost laughed at the irony. Right now, he felt more like the old Sans than he had since everything had started. How many times did he wish he could go back to this?

But now that he was here, he was reminded that Old Sans was just as miserable as this new one. The difference was that Old Sans was numb and heavy, barely able to move some days from the apathy that drowned his soul, and New Sans felt like he was almost always being burned alive with rage and hunger and raw instinct, his skull constantly buzzing with unwanted thoughts.
...Had he ever been happy? Was there ever a time in his life where he didn’t feel like he was already halfway dead?

*Seeing Papyrus smile. Hearing Tori laugh. Feeling Lucifer’s warmth against his bones.*

It just came in moments, he supposed. Tiny little moments that he drudged through his life to find.  
...Today, though, he wasn’t sure if he would even be able to manage standing up.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, uh... I made a Tumblr? Go check that out, my name’s phantomdreamshade over there too. Or don’t. I’m not the boss of you.
Lucifer’s first order of business was finding a suitable disguise. He was confident in his abilities to remain relatively unseen, but he had a feeling his current appearance was going to draw more attention than deflect it. Luckily, he knew all the best places in Ebott City to snatch supplies from.

He ended up with an oversized trench coat, a pair of too-large gloves, a turtleneck to pull up over his fanged mouth, and a wide-brimmed hat in his best effort to hide his horns. Unfortunately he couldn’t find any shoes that were both practical and accommodated his claws, so he had to settle for a giant pair of socks under his open-toed shoes. He looked ridiculous, but at least he should be able to pass as human.

Despite everything, the thought that he wasn’t a human any more made him smile a little.

Unfortunately, his broken arm was not making things any easier. It probably would have been wise to get food from Toriel before coming back to the surface, but he just needed to get away from Sans for a while. His head was still reeling from Fuku’s demise and his interaction with the queen. Luckily, sneaking around the city and scouting for places to drop his books afforded him plenty of time to think.

It was more shock than anger, really. He was sad about Fuku, of course - he’d grown rather attached to her since he’d rescued her from the Hotland labs - but now that he was away from the immediate situation he was more confused than anything else. Couldn’t help myself, were Sans’ words. Was that really true? Had Sans just acted on impulse and not even thought about the consequences?

It wasn’t acceptable for him to act that way, of course. Sans was going to have to learn to trust Lucifer. But then Lucifer thought about the time Sans had locked him in the basement and how he’d apologized after; abandonment issues. Lucifer could understand that. He didn’t share the same fear, but he could understand. He just needed to convince Sans that there wasn’t anything that could make him leave, and this whole possessiveness thing should fix itself.

...This was all a lot more complicated than Lucifer had originally thought it would be, but he supposed that was his own fault for expecting it. There wasn’t anything simple about either him or Sans, so it only made sense that their relationship would be equally complex. This was going to take time.

Lucifer’s stomach growled loudly, and he looked at a nearby hotdog stand. There wasn’t anything wrong with keeping himself fed while there was ample food around for once. He lifted a wallet out of some poor fool’s back pocket.

“Three hotdogs,” Lucifer said through the fabric of his turtleneck. He adjusted his coat, trying to hide the horns that had begun to poke through the fabric underneath. The man gave him an odd look but
served him his food.

Lucifer turned around to see a woman and a young girl standing behind him, and they all froze. The woman had her hand over her mouth.

“Xavier?”

Lucifer felt his heart stop beating for a moment. It was hard to recognize her without her dresses and fine jewelry - in fact, her clothes were rather ragged - but he knew that voice. It was his mother. Elena.

“Xavier, is… is that really you?” She walked a few steps toward him, trying to see his face. He tilted his head down so that his hat hid his eyes and horns. “I know that’s your voice. I… Xavier, I thought you were dead!”

“…Sorry to disappoint you,” Lucifer said, turning away. He could feel his heart start beating out of rhythm. He couldn’t process this.

“W-Wait! Please wait,” Elena said. “Please. I… I know you must hate me. But I… I just… please. Let me talk with you. Just for a few moments.”

Lucifer looked around and found that he was starting to catch glances from passerby. “…I can’t be out here,” he said.

Elena looked around as well, and nodded to herself. “…I understand. Here, this way.” She grabbed Lucifer’s arm - he flinched violently, but didn’t pull away - and led him into some seedy-looking back alley. Elena stared at him for a while, unsure of what to say. Lucifer retreated into his clothes more.

“I just… I wanted you to know that I didn’t know,” she said quietly. “About the institution, I mean. Your father never told me anything about it.”

“As if he ever told you anything about anything,” Lucifer said.

Elena chewed on her lip, looking at the ground a little. “I divorced him, you know,” she said. “Your father, I mean.”

Lucifer chuckled just a little. “Well, there’s one good decision you’ve made in your lifetime.” He took a moment to glance at the little girl hiding behind his mother’s legs shyly. She had shoulder-length dark hair, wore a simple dress, and had skin pale enough to suggest a lack of sunlight. “…I guess you have a different husband now, then,” he added.

Elena glanced at the little girl. “Not… not anymore. Charles and I are also… separated,” she said. “He, um… he has a bit of a gambling problem, you see.” Lucifer chuckled again - that would explain the rags she was wearing. She bit her lip and nodded to herself, her eyes growing wet. “Um… Xavier, this is your half-sister, Aliza. Aliza Lucy Campbellton.”

Lucifer felt some sort of fuse snap inside his brain. Some loose stones around him rattled softly. “Well, I’m glad it was so easy for you to replace her,” he said, unable to keep the menace from creeping into his voice.

Elena’s eyes widened. “Oh, oh no! It isn’t like that!” she said. “It’s… to honor her.”

“…Doesn’t ‘Aliza Lucille’ sound better?” Lucifer asked dryly.
“...She always hated that name,” Elena smiled. “I… I know I failed you, as a mother,” she said. “And, I… I understand if… if you want nothing to do with me. But I just want you to know that I’m trying to be better.” Lucifer’s breathing started to get faster at faster. His head was spinning. He felt nauseous. “...You’re on the run, aren’t you?” Elena continued. Lucifer glanced toward the street. “It’s okay. It’s not your fault. Those people who took you, they… you did what you had to.” She dug around in her purse, pulling out a crumpled receipt and a pen. She scribbled something on it and offered it to him. “Here. My phone number and my address. If you ever need anything - money, food, a place to stay - please.”

Lucifer took the paper numbly, barely able to think. He stuffed it in his pocket and walked away as far as possible, back towards the mountain.

“Mommy, I don’t like that man,” Aliza whispered behind him. “He’s scary.”

“He’s been through a lot, my love,” Elena told her. “Give him a chance.”

Lucifer heard some other noise from the alley behind him - some sort of click.


“Aliza, get behind me,” Elena said, staggering backwards a little. Lucifer crept back to the entrance of the alleyway, peering around the corner.

“I said give me the fucking purse!” the man said, waving the gun in his hand at her.

“Alright, alright!” Elena said, pulling the handbag off of her shoulder.

The man glanced at Aliza to see some sort of bracelet on her wrist. “And give me that, too.” He reached for her.

“Don’t you lay a hand on her!” Elena shouted, shoving him away.

Bang.

...Lucifer didn’t know what happened. It was another fuse snapping. The man turned blue and flew against a nearby wall, cracking it. Lucifer marched up to him to see his eyes wide with fear. He pulled off one of his gloves and drove his claws through the man’s eyes, and he made an unholy scream; Lucifer pressed in until the man’s skull cracked and his head splattered against the wall.

Aliza watched him, eyes wide. Elena laid on the ground in a growing pool of her own blood, her breathing ragged and uneven and her eyes blinking rapidly as she stared up into the sky.

Lucifer was, for once, at a complete and utter loss. He jammed his fingers into the man’s chest to hook his claws around the ribs beneath and began to drag him off toward the mountain with his blue magic. If he was followed, all the better. He was too in shock to process anything that had just happened; the only detail he remembered of the rest of his journey home was Aliza screaming “Mom!” over and over and fumbling with the phone that had fallen out of Elena’s purse, trying to call 911.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, uh... I made a Tumblr? Go check that out, my name’s phantomdreamshade over
there too. Or don’t. I’m not the boss of you.
Toriel hummed to herself as she polished her dishes for the thousandth time, hoping to hear a knock on the basement door. Neither Sans nor Lucifer had visited for a while now, and it was making her a little nervous. That was probably just her own paranoia, though.

It wasn’t a knock she ended up hearing, though, but a strange dragging sound coming from outside the front door rather than the back. She found Lucifer with one arm in a sling, dragging a human behind him. The human’s head was wrapped up in a bloody trench coat.

“My child!” Toriel cried, rushing over to him. “What on earth happened?”

Lucifer blinked, as if not truly registering she was there. “...He shot her,” he said.

“Whom did he shoot?” Toriel asked, wanting to help him but not knowing where to begin. She ushered him inside, deciding a pot of tea couldn’t be a bad place to start.

“...My mom,” Lucifer said, looking down at his bloodstained hands. Toriel set a kettle of water on the stove, her hands shaking just a little as she tried to remember what temperature to set it on. She always made it too hot and it burned; she felt a pang in her heart for her lost husband. He had always been better at making tea. It was always easier with someone else around - another set of hands to get things done, another voice to fill the silence while she collected her thoughts. She looked back at Lucifer, his face blank with trauma.

“Your mother,” Toriel repeated, trying to get her thoughts in order. Tea. She was making tea. Lucifer had met his mother. “You found your mother?”

“She’s supposed to be a coward,” Lucifer said. “She isn’t - she doesn’t—”

“Calm down, my child,” Toriel said. “It is alright. You are safe now.” She started rummaging around her cabinet for tea bags. “You said she was shot. Where? Is she alright?”

“I didn’t look. I don’t know,” Lucifer said. “She… she doesn’t care about me. So why would she… I… I don’t know why—”

“Shhh, my dear, shhh,” Toriel said. She finally found the teabags - some were normal, and some were her “special” ones. Lucifer looked so distressed, so haunted. Wouldn’t it be kinder if he didn’t have to think? If he were to just lay on the bed, mind blank and too weak to move, where Toriel would take care of him forever and ever and he would be safe and—

...No. No, that wasn’t the solution to this. Normal tea. Normal tea.

“She’s supposed to be a coward,” Lucifer repeated. Toriel set a cup of tea down on the table in front
of him.

“Perhaps she changed,” Toriel said. She was trying to piece together what had happened, but Lucifer wasn’t giving her much to go off of.

Lucifer finally looked at her. “Humans don’t change,” he said, almost desperately. “They’re all just… nothing. They don’t feel anything, they’re all hollow - empty - they don’t change. She didn’t change, she… she…”

“Drink your tea, my child,” Toriel said, sitting next to him and wrapping an arm around him, careful not to touch his injured side. Lucifer did as she said absently, and the inflammation around his shoulder immediately began to die down.

“I just don’t understand,” Lucifer said.

“That is alright, my child,” Toriel said. “Sometimes we encounter things in our lives that are… difficult to reconcile. But it is in those times that you can turn to the people who love you for comfort.”

“...I don’t understand,” Lucifer repeated.

“I know, my child. I know.” Lucifer leaned on her shoulder and she ran her claws through his hair gently as he finished his tea.

“...Can I stay here for the night?” Lucifer asked. “I just need to… think.”

“Of course you may, my child,” Toriel said. “You are always welcome here.”

Lucifer had trouble sleeping, and it wasn’t just because of the child-sized bed he was laying on. He couldn’t stop thinking about Elena and the things she’d said. Or of Aliza, for that matter. He didn’t know what happened to them. He didn’t even know if the gunshot had been fatal or not. Something told him that the question was going to gnaw at him until he found an answer.

Lucifer tried to shout as a set of thick vines wrapped around his mouth suddenly and Flowey pulled him up into a sitting position.

“Now, now, let’s try not to wake Toriel up, friend,” Flowey whispered. “She needs her beauty rest, after all.”

Lucifer glared at him with his glowing blue eyes as Flowey stared back with his lone one. “I saw that little spat you had with Sans, you know,” Flowey commented. “Trouble in paradise?” Lucifer just kept glaring. “Not in a talkative mood tonight, huh? Well that’s okay, I can do the talking for now. I know just the thing you can help me out with - you should be going to visit the queen in a little while, right? Well, that should take you right by the Hotland labs, and there’s a little something there I’d like you to pick up for me. It’s this glowy red stuff called “Determination” - looks kinda like blood, but you know. Glowing. Doctor Alphys keeps it locked up in the very back of the lab, and… well. Let’s say I’m just not in the mood to make the trip all the way there. But lucky for you, it’s on your way anyway, so this should be a piece of cake!”

Lucifer continued to glare daggers, which Flowey seemed to get no end of satisfaction from. “Say hi to the bone bag for me,” Flowey giggled, disappearing. Wonderful. One more thing to deal with.
Sans sat in the snow outside the Ruins door, waiting. That’s all he had the energy for, really - waiting. Some part of his mind kept telling him that he might wait here forever.

*Lucifer said he’d be back,* he reminded himself. *I might be a dishonest, backstabbing sleazeball, but he isn’t.*

*If he died up there you’d have no way of knowing,* another thought told him. *And the last thing he’d think of was just how badly you betrayed him.*

Sans whimpered and curled in on himself, willing all the unwanted thoughts away. He felt his spine twist up - a week without Lucifer’s magic was taking its toll. If Lucifer didn’t return, at least Sans wouldn’t have to live with it for long. He’d just sit here and waste away.

He bolted upright and hopped to his feet as the door swung open slowly and Lucifer emerged, dragging a dead body behind him. Sans just stood there, waiting for Lucifer to say something.

“Hey,” Lucifer said with a half-smile. Something was… off about him, but Sans couldn’t say what.

“...hey,” Sans said. He didn’t know what he was supposed to say.

Lucifer sighed and shut the door behind him, leaning against it. “So I’ve had some time to think,” he began. “And I just… I’m glad you told me, okay? I really am. That took a lot of guts.” They both snorted a little. “…You know why I’m upset, right?”

“...yeah,” Sans said.

“Good. Then you know where we need to go from here.” Lucifer gave Sans a little smile, and it made him feel a little more at ease. “I just need you to have a little faith in me, okay? You’re the most important thing in the world to me, Sans. There’s just no way some random floozy’s gonna catch my interest and I’ll run off.”

“i know. i know. i just…” Sans sighed.

“...It’s complicated,” Lucifer finished for him. “I get it. I don’t know why I was expecting some sort of perfect little fairy tale ending; real life doesn’t work that way. I mean, even Lucy and I had hiccups we had to get past sometimes. Relationships take work from both sides.” Sans nodded in understanding.

“i never meant to hurt you,” he said quietly. “i just got in this big downward spiral of justifying it to myself. and now that i look back, i know it was all crazy, but at the time…”

Lucifer smiled a little. “We dove into this thing headfirst pretty fast after we figured things out,” he said. “Something like this was bound to happen. Sometimes, I think it’s a good idea to just… stop and breathe for a second, you know?” Sans nodded, staring at his stained slippers.

“Hey,” Lucifer said, grabbing Sans’ chin and making the skeleton look at him. “I love you, alright? I always will, and there’s nothing that can change that.”

“i love you, too,” Sans said, wrapping his arms around Lucifer and nuzzling under his chin. Lucifer pulled him up into a kiss, soft and sweet. Sans practically melted into the embrace, his exhausted body wanting nothing more than to curl up against him and soak up all his magic.

It was too soon when Lucifer pulled away, grabbing the wrist of the dead body and heading back
towards the house. “Come on,” he smiled.

Sans took a look at the body. It almost looked like someone had crushed his head in their hands like an egg.

“you, uh… had some fun with him, huh?” he asked, following behind.

“…It’s a long story.” Lucifer sighed. He wasn’t sure what he was going to tell Sans, if anything at all. He didn’t even understand it himself. Not to mention all the bullshit going on with Flowey that he couldn’t talk about.

“well, we have the whole day to ourselves,” Sans said, just a little shyly. “would you want to, uh… stay home and, you know… let me make it up to you?”

Lucifer smirked a little. “Aw, you did miss me,” he said. “Yeah, that sounds nice. Besides, there was one more condition Undyne had for letting me go that I haven’t fulfilled yet.”

“…oh?” Sans said. He took the mischievous grin on Lucifer’s face as a bad sign as the human kicked the body down the basement steps.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, uh... I made a Tumblr? Go check that out, my name is phantomdreamshade over there, too. Or don't. I'm not the boss of you.
Sans’ ribs rattled in a sound halfway between a growl and a purr as Lucifer sunk his claws into Sans’ bare ribs, gooey marrow leaking out like raspberry jam. It hurt like hell, but it was hard to focus on that when the rest of his body felt so damn amazing. He closed his eyesockets and gripped Lucifer’s skin harder, one hand laced through the spines on the back of his neck and the other through the horns on his chest. He sighed loudly as he felt Lucifer’s fangs ghost against his neck, and sparks of pleasure ran through his spine in both directions to collide somewhere in his ribcage.

Sans almost whimpered as Lucifer pulled away and laid next to him, both of them exhausted and panting and slick with sweat. Sans rolled over, wrapping his arms around Lucifer’s chest and entangling their legs together, pressing himself as close as he could to his lover so he could feel every inch of skin and fur and bone he could get to. Sans kissed him hungrily; Lucifer tasted like blood and sweat and raw magic.

“you know,” Sans chuckled, finally taking a break for some air and nuzzling against Lucifer’s neck, “if it didn’t require you being mad at me first, i’d say we should make up like this more often.”

Lucifer grinned, stroking Sans’ hipbones with a clawed thumb. “You just like it when I top because you don’t have to do any work,” he teased.

“i mean… i’d be lying if i said you were wrong,” Sans said. He sighed against Lucifer’s skin. “...i really am sorry.”

“Ancient history,” Lucifer said. “You already apologized.” Sans hugged him a little tighter, perfectly ready to drift off to sleep against him.

“...I probably need to go on my first trip to see Undyne tomorrow,” Lucifer said.

“...but you just got back,” Sans whined.

“I know,” Lucifer sighed. “But I think we can both agree me staying on Undyne’s good side is in our best interests. I’d rather be punctual.”

Sans buried his face in Lucifer’s skin and hmphed like a child. “...you’ll still stay with me today and help, uh… recharge my batteries, right?” he asked.

“Oh is that what we’re calling this?” Lucifer smirked, kissing him again.

“well, I mean, it’s kind of in a literal sense. for me, at least.” Lucifer chuckled and pushed Sans down against the mattress again.
Sans sighed and gave Lucifer one last hug around the waist as they came up to the entrance to Hotland. “...please stay safe,” he said.

“I’ll be back before you know it,” Lucifer said, giving Sans’ hand a quick squeeze before leaving. Sans watched until he disappeared from view, before turning around and heading home.

The trip to New Home was easier the second time around, especially since the guards seemed to be expecting him and let him in immediately. Undyne sat at her throne, head resting boredly in her palm. She smiled a little when she saw him.

“I was wondering if you’d show up or not,” she chuckled.

“I keep my word,” Lucifer answered.


“Uneventful, punny as ever, lovable goofball,” he answered, mimicking her short questions. “Is that all, your Majesty?”

Undyne let out a hearty laugh, motioning to two guards in the back of the room. They brought out a table and two cups of tea. “Nah, I’d rather you stay and chat for a while. Sorry that the tea’s watered down, but… you know.”

Lucifer took a seat at the table and found himself at relative ease.

Lucifer’s visit with Undyne had been surprisingly pleasant. He could see a glimpse of the woman Papyrus claimed had once been his best friend under the decaying crown she wore; someone fierce and passionate and loyal. She had a fire that ironically reminded him just a little bit of Lucy. It was only a glimpse, though, buried under years’ worth of pain and shame. This Undyne was jaded and cold and her edges made people bleed.

A bitter taste found its way into Lucifer’s mouth, though, as he approached the laboratory once again. He made his way down into the lower levels, where he had met Alphys for the first time. He planned on avoiding her if possible; she would probably be able to recognize him.

Luckily, she didn’t seem to be here at the moment. He made his way to the the back of the lab and pried open a set of doors, slipping his head inside to look around. It was pitch-black in this room; Lucifer grabbed one of the battery-powered lamps sitting around and entered, looking for any likely place Alphys would have stored vials of glowing red liquid.

His footsteps were the only sound to be heard, and it set his nerves on edge. He could sense something was wrong here. There was something in the air.

He spun around at a strange oozing sound behind him to find an enormous, white creature towering over him. It smelled like acid, burning his nostrils as pieces of it dripped onto the floor and sizzled like oil. Its amorphous features formed a giant mouth with jagged teeth.

“Do you think I’m pretty?” it said. Its voice was slurred and shrill, and it sounded almost as if it were several different voices talking over each other. Lucifer did what any sensible person would do.
He ran in the opposite direction.

More of them popped up from the side hallways as he sprinted past, each more horrible than the last. Forget the determination, he needed to get out of here. He could see now why Flowey had sent him instead of going himself.

Lucifer found himself cornered in the room at the end of the hallway; it was filled with refrigerators, as far as he could tell. The whatever-they-weres - they couldn’t be monsters - slunk towards him. A vaguely bird-like one let out an ear-splitting scream and lunged for him, and Lucifer mustered all the blue magic he could to deflect it into a nearby fridge. It broke apart, sending samples scattering across the floor.

Among them were two glowing, red vials. Lucifer dashed for them as more of the creatures tried to grab him, and they all shrieked loudly as soon as his hands touched the glass. He looked around - they all backed away from the glow as if it came from some unholy artifact. Lucifer didn’t miss a beat, sprinting back the way he’d come. The creatures followed him, babbling incoherently.

Whatever this stuff was, it clearly had power. Was he really just going to let Flowey have it?

He skidded to a halt in front of the exit and the creatures paused behind him. Flowey wouldn’t be in here, but he had no idea where else he would be watching. He uncorked one of the vials and chugged it down.

“PSNII LTOTT EOTHB APAUU SDGRR EOATN NNISS O’TN!! !!!!!” The creatures’ voices all melted together into one giant, mind-shattering scream as they all lunged for Lucifer at once. He threw the empty vial to the ground to shatter and slipped through the door, forcing it shut behind himself.

The determination burned like liquor going down, before it spread into his veins. It felt like fire, only just bearable. He made his way out of the lab, wanting to be done with this business.

“You’re an efficient little errand boy, huh?” Flowey chuckled, appearing behind him. Lucifer held out the other vial unceremoniously and Flowey took it.

“Is there anything else you need?” Lucifer growled. Flowey grinned, and Lucifer felt more threatened than usual.

“No, I don’t think so,” Flowey said. “I think we can consider our partnership over, friend. I’ll see you around~”

Flowey disappeared beneath the ground and Lucifer made his way home as quickly as possible.

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact - if you take the first letter from each word in the amalgamates' mashed-together scream, it spells something. Same goes for all the second letters, and the third letters, etc.

Also hey, uh... I made a Tumblr? Go check that out, my name's phantomdreamshade over there, too. Or don't. I'm not the boss of you.
Sans breathed a sigh of relief as Lucifer emerged from Waterfall; he really shouldn’t have been that nervous, but everything that had happened recently had him feeling… clingy. He realized that was part of the problems he and Lucifer were having, and he was trying to work on it. But still.

They smiled at each other and Sans looped an arm around Lucifer’s waist as they headed towards the house, Sans leaning his head against Lucifer’s side. He paused for a second.

“you’re… really hot right now,” Sans said, frowning.

“I swear you’re the thirstiest skeleton I’ve ever met,” Lucifer chuckled, rolling his eyes.

“no, i mean… well, you’re always sexy, but i was talking temperature this time. you don’t have one of those fever things again, do you?” Sans reached up and put a hand on Lucifer’s exposed skin; it was definitely warmer than normal, and damp with sweat.

“I feel fine,” Lucifer said. Sans wasn’t convinced.

“c’mon. you’re coming up to my room so i can check you over for infections,” Sans said, dragging him up the stairs.

“You don’t have to make up excuses to get my clothes off, you know,” Lucifer chuckled. Sans closed the door behind him.

“i’m being serious,” Sans said, pushing Lucifer down onto the bed and unbuttoning his shirt. He checked around his horns and the seams between his fur and skin, but nothing seemed to be inflamed. All of his skin looked… flushed, though.

“...Done admiring?” Lucifer teased.

“something’s wrong and you aren’t telling me,” Sans said, sitting next to him. “i don’t… i’m not trying to be nosy, but your health isn’t something i take lightly. our lifestyle isn’t exactly healthy. if something’s wrong i need to know so i can fix it.”

“...I really don’t know why I’m… warmer than normal,” Lucifer said. “If I knew what was wrong, I’d tell you. Though… there is something else I wanted to ask you.” Sans turned to look at him. “Do you know anything about something called determination?”

Sans’ eyelights went out. “...how… h-how do you know about that?”

Lucifer frowned a little bit. “Some of it got stolen from the Hotland lab, apparently. I was wondering what it was.”
“...it’s the bane of my existence, that’s what,” Sans said, his tone suddenly dark.

Lucifer’s eyes widened a little. “That’s a pretty stiff competition to win. And here I thought it would be the queen.”

Sans snorted. “there’s no contest,” he said, his voice quiet.

“...What is it, then?” Lucifer said, suddenly much more concerned that he had both put it into his body and that he’d given a vial of it to Flowey.

“it’s one of the seven forms of human magic, by far the rarest and most potent. when distilled it looks sort of like glowing blood. bright red.”

“What’s my magic, then?” Lucifer asked.

“we called it integrity,” Sans said. “back in my lab days, anyway. dark blue, stable, lasts a long time, easy to produce if you have the right soul. i don’t know much other than that - i know the chemists used it as a stabilizer in a bunch of stuff, but i was always in the physics department.”

“So then what’s determination do?” Lucifer asked.

“...a lot of things. it’s hyper-volatile and burns through just about any other magical substance like acid, so we had to come up with special glassware to contain it. it puts off massive amounts of power, so we tossed ideas around about using it as a power source or as a way to break the barrier, but nothing really came of it since it’s so hard to get a hold of.”

“What about if it was in a person?” Lucifer asked.

Sans narrowed his eyesockets a little, suspicious. “i don’t know what it would do to a monster. nothing good, though. a human, though? the things they can do with it… heh. that’s the reason i hated my life even before all this shit with the queen happened.” Lucifer looked at him, worried, and Sans sighed. “the only one i’ve ever met that had a naturally red soul - one that produced determination in significant amounts - was frisk. it gave them so much energy, they could literally warp the space-time continuum around themself.”

“Warp… what?”

“they could travel back in time at will,” Sans said. “over and over and over. they’re the only one i can think of that could of done it. i was… stuck in a time loop for years. decades, maybe, i dunno. it just… at that point, nothing i did mattered, you know? all i had were my reports to go off of. i couldn’t remember anything, couldn’t stop them.”

Lucifer felt his soul splitting in his chest. He had his own sordid tale, of course, but this - it explained so much. He wrapped an arm around Sans’ body, holding him close.

“i’m not sure they were even really aware of what they were doing,” Sans said. “...but one day, one run, they came through the underground, killed asgore, and never came back. things started going downhill and i kept waiting for the reset, waiting for the kid to come back, praying for it, but… they never did. i gave up on that hope too, and the irony isn’t lost on me.”

Lucifer looked at him. “...If Frisk did come back; if they could reset everything right now - would you want them to?”

“...no,” Sans said. “as fucked-up as it is, i’d rather live in this hellhole where i know things are actually real than that purgatory. besides… that means i never would’ve met you. if i had to kill
everyone i already have a hundred times over just to meet you, i’d do it.”

Lucifer stared at Sans, trying to read him, but Sans was staring off into middle distance. Lucifer laced his fingers through Sans’. “Hey… I need to tell you—”

He was interrupted by the sound of a deafening knock on the front door. They looked at each other.

“you didn’t piss off undyne or something, did you?” Sans asked.

“No,” Lucifer said, pulling his shirt back on and rushing downstairs, Sans right behind him. The door had been smashed in, and vines laid on the floor.

“no way,” Sans said, grabbing his axe. “we killed that son of a bitch.”

Lucifer took a deep breath. “So… that thing I needed to tell you? Flowey might’ve… blackmailed me into stealing some determination for him.”

Sans looked at him, eyesockets wide. “...no. no, no, no. that’s why he knew who i was - he remembered the resets. that means he… no. we have to stop him before he—”

“I know you’re iiiiiin there~” A voice called from outside. “Come out, come out, Sans! I have a surprise for you.” They rushed out of the door - there was Flowey, raised up in the air like a snake - and Papyrus, tangled up in a mass of vines, his limbs stretched out and near the point of breaking.

“SANS!” Papyrus called. “THIS IS MY MYSTERIOUS FLOWER FRIEND THAT I TOLD YOU ABOUT A LONG TIME AGO! EXCEPT HE ISN’T BEING VERY FRIENDLY RIGHT NOW. FLOWEY, CAN YOU STOP BEING SO MEAN, PLEASE?”

A coil of vines wrapped around Papyrus’ mouth. “Oh, shut up already. I’ve already heard enough of your voice to last a lifetime.”


“Oh, Sansy~. Since when were you ever the one in control?” He grew down until he was inches from Sans’ face, grinning wickedly. “Tell me, Sans - you remember the resets, right?”

Sans glanced at Lucifer, beginning to shake. “no. please, no, just… don’t. please. i’ll do whatever you want, just don’t—”

Flowey laughed again - a horrible, bellowing, grating noise. “I always did like it when you begged,” he chuckled. He leaned in closer to Sans. “Why don’t you—” Flowey shouted as Lucifer slapped him away with telekinetic force. He growled and turned towards him. “You know, sometimes I can’t tell if you’re brazen or just stupid.”

“Next time you talk to him like that, I tear your face off,” Lucifer threatened.

“Go right ahead,” Flowey said. “I’ll just come back. Again and again and again… hehehe. This time, though, I think I’m going to make you watch each other die! Slowly, painfully… but let’s start with loudmouth over here, shall we?” Flowey started pulling on Papyrus’ limbs, and his bones started to creak from the stress. Then they stopped, and Flowey blinked.

Lucifer’s hand was outstretched, his jaw clenched with concentration as he used his blue magic to counter Flowey’s vines. Then, with a shout of exertion, the vines tore and Papyrus fell to the ground, free. Flowey howled in pain.
“I’m just about DONE with you,” Flowey growled at Lucifer, a giant mass of vines growing out of the earth to surround the three of them. Flowey himself rose out of the ground on a stem that thickened to the size of a tree trunk, towering over them and smiling wickedly.


“FLOWERY, YOU AREN’T BEING A VERY GOOD FRIEND,” Papyrus said, picking himself up off of the ground. “AND YOU ARE UPSETTING MY BROTHER! AND MY BROTHER’S BOYFRIEND, WHO BY EXTENSION IS ALSO ALMOST MY BROTHER! I AM AFRAID THAT IF YOU DO NOT STOP… I WILL HAVE TO TEACH YOU A LESSON.”

“Somehow you still manage to surprise me with how stupid you are, Papyrus,” Flowey said.

“...IT APPEARS YOU NEED TO BE TAUGHT SOME MANNERS,” Papyrus said. A ring of giant, sharpened bones rose up from the ground, shredding Flowey’s vines. Flowey summoned more from behind himself and shot them straight at the three of them.

Sans stepped in front of Papyrus and Lucifer and swung his axe in a frenzy, slashing the vines to ribbons. Papyrus used another bone pillar to launch himself into the air after Flowey and then slammed a bone-club into the flower’s face.

Flowey growled and tried to slam Papyrus out of the air, but Lucifer caught the vines with his magic and redirected them back at Flowey. Meanwhile, Sans rushed up to Flowey’s trunk and split it open with his axe; the sap that spewed out onto the ground had a dim red glow to it.

Flowey redirected his vines into a defensive posture. “Well, clearly that wasn’t the right attack strategy. Unfortunately for you, I can just… just…” Flowey’s eyes widened a little. “My save. Why can’t I get to my save?!”

Flowey shouted as Lucifer grabbed onto his whole body with blue magic and started to tear him out of the ground by the roots. He dragged Flowey’s face down to eye level.

“W-Wait, wait! Don’t, I can… I won’t—”

“Who has the upper hand now, petals?” Lucifer growled. Flowey started hyperventilating when he realized one of Lucifer’s eyes had turned blood red. Flowey writhed in Lucifer’s telekinetic grip as more and more roots were pulled out of the ground. Sans looked on in awe.

“I’m going to kill you now,” Lucifer said. “But just in case you somehow survive again - remember this. You’re nothing next to me.”

Flowey’s scream of agony could be heard across the entirety of Snowdin as Lucifer turned his powers into a telekinetic shredder, grinding Flowey’s body into a pulp. It sank into the snow like a bloody mush.

“...whoa,” Sans said, still staring at Lucifer. “i knew mages were powerful, but…” His eyesockets widened when Lucifer collapsed to the ground. Sans rushed over to him, gathering him up in his arms. “babe? luce, what the hell’s wrong?!”

Blood trickled out of his nose and the corner of his mouth, and out of his eyes like red tears. He coughed loudly and Sans found more blood spattered on his face.

“oh god… luce, what… lucifer. luce, can you hear me?”
Lucifer’s eyes looked glazed. “...I feel like I’m burning,” he said quietly.

“why? what did you do?!” Sans said, starting to panic. Then he realized that both of Lucifer’s eyes were now red instead of blue.

“...I drank some of the determination from Alphys’ lab,” he said.

“you did what?”

Something clicked in Lucifer’s head. “I need… to find her. I think she knows what’s happening.”

“¡i’m taking him to hotland,” Sans said, looking up at Papyrus.

“GO. I’LL HANDLE THINGS HERE,” Papyrus said. Sans blinked out of existence with Lucifer still in his arms.

Flowey had little more than a vague consciousness left. A shred was left, a sliver of root underneath the Ruins. It had taken him years to grow all those roots, and it would take him years more to grow them back, to grow back another flower so he could see and move.

Most of his determination was gone, the precious liquid scattered across the snow when Lucifer shredded him. He’d learned a valuable lesson.

If he wanted to kill the skeleton family, the direct route was not an option.

Chapter End Notes

Whew! Finals are done and I finally have time to write again. Sorry it's been a while!

Also, uh... I made a Tumblr? Go check that out, my name's phantomdreamshade over there, too. Or don't. I'm not the boss of you.
Consent

Chapter Summary

Sans brings Lucifer to Alphys to figure out what's happening to him.

Sans nearly passed out as he teleported directly to the Hotland lab. Honestly, he was surprised he had the magic reserves left for such a big jump, but then again Lucifer was putting off massive amounts of excess magic at the moment. Sans could feel it sizzling in the air like an electrical fire, so different from the steady, cool waves of magic he was used to Lucifer having. It felt... wrong. Unnatural. He looked around the dimly-lit laboratory.

“you sure she’s here?” Sans asked.

Lucifer blinked at him slowly, as if he wasn’t fully comprehending the question. “…I don’t know where else she would be,” he said.

“okay, uh…” Sans looked around and saw one of the old operating tables. He lifted Lucifer up as best he could and guided him over to the table, laying him down. “just stay here, i’ll go find her.” He started walking down one of the lab’s long hallways.

“alphys!” he called out as loud as he could, hoping she would hear. He spotted a glimpse of a yellow tail running in the opposite direction. “hey!”

Sans teleported in front of her and she screamed, trying to backpedal but tripping instead and falling on the floor. “what the hell are you running for? i need your help. now.”

“H...Help? Y-You aren’t here to... t-to—”

“i don’t have time for whatever you’re babbling about,” Sans said, grabbing the collar of her lab coat and dragging her towards Lucifer. Something nagged at the back of his mind, like he was forgetting something important, but he didn’t have time to think about it now. Alphys blinked when she saw the unconscious creature on her operating table.

“W-Wait, you’re the… he’s… i-isn’t he the human that—”

“yes, he’s a human,” Sans said, cutting her off. “which is going to stay between us. he drank some determination and now he’s sick, so you’re gonna fix him.” Sans tossed her towards the operating table.

“W-Wait, wait! How… why d-does he have fur and… did you say d-determination? H-How did he… I-I don’t know what to do, what do you e-expect me to—”

She screamed again as Sans slammed her again the side of the table. “fix. him. now,” Sans growled, starting to hyperventilate.

“O-Okay,” Alphys said, barely even a whisper. Sans let her go and she started dragging all her medical equipment over to the table. She hooked Lucifer up to some sort of machine.

“hey, al is here,” Sans said, putting a hand on Lucifer’s chest. “luce. luce?” He was unconscious.
Sans could feel Lucifer’s heartbeat pounding wildly out of control. Thuthuthuthuthuthutu—

“H-He’s in shock,” Alphys said, hooking him up to an IV. “W-When did this happen? W-What was he doing?”

“i came straight here after it happened. he just used a massive amount of magic.”

“M...Magic? W-Wait, Sans, you made him a mage? D-Do you have any idea h-how dangerous that i-is, he could—”

“you’re not here to judge my fucking life decisions, al, you’re here to fix whatever that goddamn determination is doing to him,” Sans said.

Alphys’ hands were shaking, panic starting to take her over. She took a deep breath to calm herself. “What… w-what color magic does he have naturally?” Alphys asked.

“blue. integrity,” Sans said.

“okay, so… u-um, maybe the determination is clashing with his natural magic and he just needs it out of his system,” Alphys suggested.

“he could use any color he wanted when he first got his magic, though,” Sans said.

“They were probably o-only present i-in trace amounts,” Alphys said. “The determination in m-my lab is h-hyper-concentrated. A-And if he u-used a l-large amount of blue magic h-his integrity reserves would be temporarily depleted, m-meaning that there m-might be m-more determination than i-integrity in his system right now. A-And if his s-soul is specifically d-designed to produce and c-contain integrity, the d-determination might b-be damaging it.”

“that’s great, but how do we fix it?” Sans said.

“I-I might… h-hold on,” Alphys said, running to another room. She came back with a vial of blood.

“...what is that?”

“It’s a s-sample of his blood,” Alphys said.

“wait - why do you have—”

“No time,” Alphys said, putting the vial in some sort of fancy centrifuge. She hooked it up to some kind of battery pack and started it up.

“What are you gonna do with it?” Sans asked.

“I-I’m hoping I can extract some integrity from i-it,” Alphys said. She tapped her foot impatiently as she waited for the centrifuge to finish. She glanced over and Lucifer and grabbed an empty syringe, trying to take a blood sample. As soon as the needle touched his skin Lucifer thrashed violently.

“H-Hold him down, please,” Alphys asked. Sans grabbed Lucifer’s arm and pinned him down while Alphys drew blood from him. She put it in yet another machine. The centrifuge finished and Alphys extracted a glowing, cobalt-blue substance from it. There was barely any. She injected what little she had into Lucifer.

The machine she had put the other blood sample into beeped and Alphys glanced at the results on the screen. She shook her head. “This is r-really bad,” she said. “The d-determination is eating through the r-rest of his i-integrity reserves, I-I don’t think what I gave him i-is going to help.”
“then do something else!” Sans shouted, getting frustrated. Alphys checked over Lucifer with some of her medical instruments.

“S-Sans, I… I d-don’t think… he’s undergoing severe internal h-hemorrhaging and and approaching systemic o-organ failure, I c-can’t—”

“i don’t speak human anatomy,” Sans said.

“H-He’s bleeding on the inside and a bunch of his important parts are starting to shut down. I-I thought d-determination only affected m-magical tissue, but his cells h-have adapted to the presence of i-integrity and now the d-determination is compromising their m-molecular structure. He needs i-integrity to stabilize them, but the determination must be blocking production in his s-soul. There’s n-no way for me to d-directly jump-start his soul, e-except…” Alphys trailed off, thinking.

“except what?” Sans said.

Alphys looked Sans straight in the eyesockets. “Sans… you have t-to soulbond with him.”

“...what?”

“Soulbonding is the only time during which m-magic can be directly transferred into a soul, Sans. Y-You have blue magic, you c-can—”

“are you insane!?” Sans shouted. “no. nuh uh, out of the question.”

“S-Sans, I know this i-is probably uncomfortable, but there’s n-no other way to—”

“al, forcing a soulbond on someone is worse than raping them. he’s unconscious, i can’t just do that! i won’t. i won’t do that to him.”

“Sans, he’s dying. There’s no other way,” Alphys whispered.

Sans looked over at Lucifer, panicking. He grabbed his hand and shook his shoulders. “luce. lucifer, wake up, i need to… t-to…”

Lucifer didn’t wake up though. His skin was flushed bright red and he radiated heat, and his sweat stung Sans’ hands like acid.

“figure something else out,” Sans said. The machine Lucifer was hooked up to made a long, droning sound. Sans looked at Alphys. “what was that?”

“...His heart just stopped,” she said, tears starting to roll down her face. “I-I’m sorry, Sans, there’s—”

“...out of the room,” Sans said, climbing onto the table himself.

“Sans—”

“GET OUT!” he shouted. Alphys scurried away.

Sans’ tears started to drip onto Lucifer’s skin as Sans summoned his own soul from his chest. He froze a moment when he saw it - dull, cracked. He had to fight down his own revulsion. Then he drew out Lucifer’s to find it in far worse condition, splintering apart and surrounded by what looked like crimson flames. Sans took a deep breath.

“i-i’m so sorry,” he said, losing all his composure. “but i can’t. i c-can’t lose you. so if you never want to see me again after this i get it, but i… i can’t let you die.”
Sans pushed the two souls together until they overlapped, and then everything went white.

Soulbonding was a trippy experience. Since it was a matter of the soul, the mind couldn’t really comprehend it and thus had to translate it into something it could understand. Sans found himself in the middle of a giant garden. The stonework was all made of sapphire, the greenery was all colored teal and any sort of flowers were bright azure. It would have been the most beautiful thing Sans had ever seen if it wasn’t currently on fire, the foundations crumbling around him as he stood. He reached out with every ounce of magic he had left, trying to smother the flames and keep the ground from cracking apart.

Somehow, despite the immense strain, everything remained quiet here. Sans looked around at everything as he waited for the world to stop ending. Directly in front of him was what could only be described as a shrine; there was an enormous statue of a young woman there, surrounded by ring after ring of blue flowers and cyan candles. To her left was another shrine to Sans, almost the same size, and to her right were two smaller ones to Toriel and Papyrus. Sans turned around to look at the other side and found a miniature Snowdin town to his right, complete with a bunch of happy little villagers frozen in what appeared to be a perfect day. Fuku was there, he could see; so was Undyne, in fact, and Temmie and Onionsan. To his left, a replica of Sans’ house, with the terrain outside outfitted with horns and spines and the wall behind covered in grizzly bear fur.

In front of him, though, was a giant pit, with a few terraced levels leading down into the darkness. Blood poured down the sides like some macabre waterfall; corpses laid strewn around the terraces like rocks. Carved to look like it was either clawing its way out of the pit or falling into it was another giant statue, but this one was grotesque instead of magnificent. It had to be Lucifer’s father.

All around the garden were giant walls that stretched up further than the eye could see; but behind the pit the wall had been shattered as if under siege. Another statue, this one a woman with a large handbag, laid half in the garden and half out; the fountain of blood poured from her mouth. Behind her, peering around the corner of the wall, was a little girl.

The land outside the garden was some bleak, dark wasteland; Sans could make out little cardboard cutouts of humans in the distance, all drawn with cartoonish demon horns and glowing red eyes.

Sans felt the edges of his vision start to go fuzzy from the strain of holding everything together. He didn’t even get to check if he’d been successful before he blacked out.
It was pleasantly hazy, like waking up from a good dream. Sans didn’t open his eyes, trying to savor the moment. There were no troubles in this fleeting state of existence, no heavy burdens weighing on his mind. Just him and the warm body he was using as a pillow.

Right - Lucifer. He must have been sleeping next to his mate. That would explain the furry arm looped gently around his ribcage, though not why Sans was still wearing his jacket. He hadn’t slept in it for a while now - well, at least not to bed. Not that it mattered. Sans could feel one of Lucifer’s horns scraping up against neck and sighed as he nuzzled into it. Maybe he could just drift back off to sleep again.

He blinked his eyes open as a hand grabbed his wrist and pulled up his sleeve. This hand wasn’t warm and soft like Lucifer’s should have been, it was scaly and shook slightly.

“whos’ere?” he slurred. Everything felt dull and fuzzy. He tried to sit up, but he could barely lift his limbs. He tried to pull his arm away from the mysterious scaly hand, but it did almost nothing. Sans shouted as he felt a sharp pain in his ulna and tumbled off of the… bed? He barely managed to stay on his feet as he staggered backward; he was overcome with a tidal wave of energy all at once, shocking him awake instantly.

“holy shiiit,” he said, trying to find his bearings. Everything came back to him at the same time - the lab. Alphys. Lucifer. He looked at the operating table. “luce? luce?!”

“Hey,” Lucifer said, his voice quiet and hoarse. He rolled over onto his side to look at Sans and gave a weak smile.

Sans breathed a huge sigh of relief, before looking at his arm. There was a puncture wound in the bone. He looked at Alphys.

“B-Blue Magic!” she said frantically, raising her arms up as if to show she wasn’t holding anything nefarious, but immediately putting them back down when she realized she was holding some sort of weird drill device. “I, u-uh, needed something a little stronger to get through the b-bone, u-um. L-Lucifer’s integrity levels are back to normal now, so - w-well, I mean, as far as I can tell since I didn’t actually know his baseline before - u-um… I, u-um, distilled s-some more from his blood after he s-stabilized to help you s-since you almost completely d-drained your reserves. Um. A-As a g-gesture of goodwill.”
“goodwill? what do you mean by goodwill?” Sans asked. Some memory started scratching at the back of his skull.

“For, u-um… w-with Und… um. Y-You mean you don’t…?”

“don’t what?”

Alphys’ eyes widened a little. “U-Um, nothing! N-Nothing you n-need to worry about, you’ve, y-you’ve been through a-a lot today. Y-You should p-probably, u-um, g-get headed home so he can rest, and, u-um…”

The faint memory grew more and more insistent in Sans’ mind until it drowned out Alphys’ voice. Then something clicked. An image of a blue flower and an echoed conversation.

You can’t do this to me! You can’t make me choose!

Y-Your majesty. Please try to u-understand. I would never suggest such a t-terrible solution if there was any other way. But the h-horrible truth is there isn’t. H-How could I keep this information to myself, knowing that i-it could be our last hope? Undyne, if you don’t do this, we are a-all going to die.

NO. What you are suggesting is murder. I don’t care what happens. I will NEVER sacrifice one of my own! If we’re all going to die, we are all going to die as friends.

Y-You don’t know him like I do, U-Undyne. Just i-invite him to the core. Sans might—

DON’T SAY HIS NAME! YOU WANT HIM DEAD!

I d-don’t want him dead! I w-want everyone else to live! There’s a difference! His p-power is astonishing, Undyne. If we e-extract it, it can jump-start the core and save c-countless lives. I… I know it’s abhorrent. I l-love him too. But if it’s not now, it will be later. And h-he’s smart. Sans might a-already know about all this. Maybe… he’s waiting for you to ask him. Maybe… he’ll w-want to do it.

Shut up.

H-He’s depressed—

I SAID SHUT UP! After all he does for us - I’ll never hurt him. Never.

Slowly, like the spread of a pool of blood, Sans’ confused expression shifted to something out of a nightmare. The pupil of his red eye shrank until the entire eyesocket looked like a glowing pool of crimson, his smile stretched beyond what the attached face should have been able to hold, and his gaze was so intense that the room seemed to grow dark around Alphys. She felt her blood run cold.

“S…Sans?”

He started off with one, small chuckle. Then a little stream of them. Then they started flooding out of his mouth in a hysterical fit, accompanied by the oddly pleasant sound of bone cracking as Sans dug his fingers into his own skull. It didn’t hurt. The laughter echoed around the empty corridors until it became some demented chorus surrounding them all. Alphys started backing away slowly, beginning to hyperventilate.

“you know,” Sans said, his voice suddenly coming from behind Alphys. She spun around, backing up in the opposite direction. “hehehe… hahaha… i’ve been having some real problems with my
memory lately. but - hehehe - there are a few things i still remember; like that it’s a really bad idea to have private conversations around echo flowers. never know who might overhear.”

Alphys could hear her heart start to pound in her ears. She staggered as she continued to walk backwards, nearly tripping over something on the floor. “S-S-Sans, I-I know w-what y-you’re feeling, b-but—”

“oh you do? what am i feeling, al? depressed? ready for round two with the core, ready to throw my whole fucking life away ‘cause i’m just so miserable?” Sans laughed again, a much darker sound this time. He reached further into his skull to scratch some sort of itch before pulling his hand out and looking at it, covered in his own scarlet fluid. For some reason he hadn’t realized it until now, but bones looked so much better when they were red than when they were white.

“I w-w-as just… I-I n-needed her to—”

“i dunno, al, you ain’t lookin’ so hot yourself. you wanna die, too? you wanna put your head on a pike for a just cause? …’cause i can help you with that.”

Sans appeared behind her and grabbed her with a chokehold before slamming his foot down on her leg until he heard something snap. She screamed at the top of her lungs, but Hotland was all but deserted for miles around.

“you know, raw magic can keep you alive indefinitely but it doesn’t actually replace a good hot meal,” Sans said, his voice still coming out in demented chuckles. “i haven’t eaten one damn thing in months and i am fucking starving. i just want some actual meat for a change. …you get where this is going, right?” Alphys shook her head, starting to sob. “papyrus is the cook in the family, but i think i can manage. i mean, i’m kinda limited options-wise since you’ll dust if you die. oooh - here’s an idea!” Sans dug his fingers in until Alphys’ brittle scales shattered beneath them and he could feel raw, wet flesh underneath. “i’ll start by peeling off each and every one of your scales, one by one, and then i’ll just dig in and eat you alive. that sounds like fun, right?”

“No no n-no no please no—”

“fuck, my mouth’s watering just thinking about it,” Sans laughed. “screw cooking, i’ll just tear as much flesh off of you as i can before you kick the bucket. they eat some kinda raw thing on the surface, i think you told me once - what was it? sushi? damn, i could go for some dino-sized sushi right now... mmm, i can’t wait to get started. first, though - i think i need a little pick-me-up that isn’t too much work to get to. lucky for me, you’ve got some nice bite-size snacks right here.” Sans knocked Alphys’ glasses off her face.

“Sans,” Lucifer said, his voice failing him. Sans didn’t hear. He forced his bloody fingers under Alphys’ eyelids and she screamed the most unholy scream Lucifer had ever heard, drowning out the squelching sound of blood and eye-jelly. It oozed out around Sans’ fingers, deep red a viscous. Sans shoved his fingers in harder so that it splattered onto his sleeves.

“SANS!” Lucifer said at the top of his exhausted lungs, reaching out and clasping a hand over the skeleton’s shoulder. Sans’ manic gaze snapped to Lucifer and softened, but only slightly.

“aw, don’t worry baby, i was gonna share.” He dragged Alphys over by the eyesocket as she continued screaming, her broken leg dragging limply behind her. “you want the other one? i know papyrus is a fan of ‘em.”

“Stop. Let her go,” Lucifer said.
Sans’ smile dropped. “w...what?”

“Sans,” Lucifer said, putting his hand on the side of Sans’ face.

Sans stood frozen in place. “d… do you have any idea what she did? she’s the one that talked undyne into—”

“I know. Soulbond, remember?”

Sans felt his whole body tense up, all thoughts of Alphys banished at once. He looked down at his bloody hands and suddenly felt like throwing up, and the gentle touch of Lucifer’s skin against his face felt like a sting. He looked straight at Lucifer and tears started rolling out of his eyesockets as he remembered just exactly what he’d done to bring Lucifer back from the edge of death.

“Let her go. Please. For me,” Lucifer said, his voice soft. Sans slowly pulled his hand out of the gory mess and Alphys collapsed to the floor, yell-sobbing as she clutched at her ruined eye.

Sans looked back and forth between Lucifer and Alphys, his soul slowly imploding at he came to terms with the situation. He forced a soulbond on his mate. He had been, five seconds ago, fully prepared to commit cannibalism, to give up the singular shred of basic decency he had left. He felt dizzy with nausea as he looked down at the bloody goop clinging to his fingers.

“i’ll… i’ll wait upstairs,” Sans said numbly, walking away.

Lucifer laid on the table as Alphys’ sobbing slowly died away, trying to find the strength to get up. His whole body felt weak. It ached to even breathe, let alone walk.

“...Why?” Alphys said from the floor. “Why… why d-did you save me?”

“...You remind me of someone,” Lucifer said. “...She was a coward, like you.”

“Then… th-then why…”

“She changed,” Lucifer said, grunting as he got to his feet. He leaned heavily on the table. “Who knows. Maybe you can, too.”

Lucifer sat next to Sans by the exit of the lab, grunting with exertion. Sans didn’t move at all.

“So,” Lucifer said, waiting for the skeleton to say something.

“go ahead and kill me,” Sans said, his voice quaking. “however you want. just do it.”

“Sans,” Lucifer sighed, tired. He wrapped an arm around Sans’ shoulders and pulled him close; Sans cursed himself for leaning into the warmth, for taking something he didn’t deserve.

“who am i?” Sans asked. “what even am i anymore? what kind of - who forces a soulbond on one of the two people they care about more than anything?”

“Sans, I was dying.”

“i’ve… i’d never been more scared in my life, but it was still so selfish. that’s the single most intimate thing a monster can do and i just… just…”

“If I’d been awake I would’ve said yes, Sans.”
“but you weren’t awake.”

“Sans,” Lucifer said, more firmly this time. “If I was in your shoes I would have done the exact same thing.”

Sans’ breath came in ragged gasps as he tried to fight back tears. He cuddled into Lucifer’s chest deeply, staining his clothes with blood. “it’s never gonna get easier down here, is it?”

“That’s what we have each other for.”

“...i’m sorry about your mom,” Sans said.

“I’m sorry you’ve been through so much,” Lucifer said, pulling Sans onto his lap completely and wrapping his arms around the skeleton tightly. The few inches Lucifer had on Sans suddenly made Sans feel so very, very small, like a child.

“...don’t leave me?” Sans said, something broken and vulnerable coming to the surface.

“...Never.”

Sans started off with one small, choked sob. Then a little stream of them. Then he sank his fingers into Lucifer’s shirt slowly and sobbed openly against his chest, Lucifer rubbing his back slowly and holding him as tight as he could.

Chapter End Notes

Warnings for eye gore, slight mention of depression and/or suicidal thoughts, and... descriptive threats of cannibalism???

Also, just as a disclaimer, that italicized memory section is more or less lifted directly from the Horrortale comics. Just wanted to let y'all know.

Also, uh... I made a Tumblr? Go check that out, my name’s phantomdreamshade over there, too. Or don’t. I'm not the boss of you.
Through the Years

Chapter Summary

Time passes.

Chapter Notes

If you would like some Feelings, you should listen to Be Ok by Too Far Moon starting after the first horizontal bar-break thing in the chapter. That is all.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The Underground approached a new normalcy following that night. Snowdin grew quiet, secluded - no destructive visits from the queen or from psychotic flowers. Alphys was never heard from or spoken of again; she disappeared, a faded memory, one Sans tried to push out of his mind. Whether she was alive or dead, Sans both didn’t know and didn’t care.

The desperation, the panic one could always feel in the air and that Undyne tried to stamp down, faded - though it never really went away. It just lurked in the snow drifts, under the water like some patient predator, waiting to explode whenever a whiff of prey stumbled by.

From New Home’s perspective, the arrival of new humans ground to a halt. The meager supplies dwindled to a trickle. People fought for scraps in the streets, killed each other over them, and one was just as likely to die from hunger as from being mugged for crumbs and bread crusts. Ironically it stalled the kingdom’s inevitable demise, thinning the herd. New Home was a ghost town, the phantoms who haunted it the few remaining, twisted living souls. All the while Undyne sat on her crumbling throne, clinging to some fragile illusion of control. Whatever compassion, whatever sense of honor and duty remained slowly rotted away. Lucifer watched it happen; it saddened him. He wouldn’t go so far as to say she was a friend, but he did understand her. He respected her. He never said that out loud to Sans, though he was pretty sure he knew. They never discussed it.

From Snowdin’s perspective, the number of humans that arrived increased exponentially. Treasure-hunters, thrill-seekers, runaways, foolish children, lost souls all found their way into the town. Papyrus’ puzzles were near perfection now. No one got past them. In fact, he had to make the rules a bit easier because it was frustrating that no one got to his later puzzles.

Of course, most of those humans had to go through Toriel first. She knew what was going on beyond the Ruins door. She knew what Sans needed. But she just couldn’t bring herself to harm the poor, innocent souls that found themselves at her doorstep. She kept them there, kept them safe for a time. Inevitably, though, strange things happened to them - they would mention something about leaving and the next morning she would wake up to find that someone had lopped their feet off or gouged out their eyes or that their skin had gone pale and reeked of death. She gave the bodies to Sans - he would know what to do with them. He was such a good friend, such a good boyfriend to her dear, sweet child. Lucifer was the only one she allowed to leave, the only one she trusted, because he always came back to her. Every time, without fail.
With the soulbond in place and renewed almost every night, the panic and paranoia Sans had felt so acutely since he’d found Lucifer were gradually assuaged. The trust was complete now - Lucifer wasn’t like Gaster, or like Frisk. He was like Papyrus. He was a permanent fixture in his life, he wasn’t going away. Years passed and Lucifer drifted away from being his obsession to his foundation, his solace. The thing that could drag him out of the pit of congealing blood he waded through and make his soul hum whenever he smiled or whenever their bodies were curled into each other. Of course, whenever he needed a rush, a thrill, he could always wait for the humans to come before Papyrus caught wind of them. The shrill screams piercing the windless forest air, the visceral warmth on his bones, the Jackson Pollock-esque painting of red and white in the snow was always exhilarating. His battered conscience didn’t bother him in those moments, even if it always returned to keep him from indulging the hunger even Lucifer’s raw magic couldn’t hold at bay.

For Lucifer, it was a hair’s breadth short of some perfect happily ever after, some fairy tale ending. He was happy - that much was certain. He just didn’t think a fairy tale prince would be so contemplative after the book ended. Whenever his thoughts weren’t enraptured by his lover’s morbid sense of humor or Papyrus’ ridiculous antics or Toriel’s warm embrace or the ragged breathing of his prey, they circled back to his mother. To Alphys, to Undyne, to Fuku sometimes. To his own view of the world, to himself. The years passed and he never found his answers.

“Guess what I found at the dump?” Lucifer called, marching back from Waterfall with some giant hunk of metal balanced on his shoulder. Sans had just finished a town meeting and everyone was out in the square.

“What did you find?” Papyrus asked excitedly.

“Old radio. The batteries are almost dead, but I think it’s a got a song or two left in it. Come on, let’s all have a little town dance or something,” Lucifer suggested.

“Yes! Yes, that’s an amazing idea! Don’t you think so, everyone?”

The people of Snowdin just murmured quietly. Things had been slow lately - Lucifer hadn’t gone on a surface trip in a while. Everyone’s portions had started to get a bit slim and no one seemed to be in the mood to celebrate for no reason.

“Come on, guys,” Lucifer said, rolling his eyes. “I know it’s been tough, but that’s exactly when you need a little bit of goofing off. Let’s see what we’ve got in the CD slot.” Lucifer pressed play and a soft, melancholy melody began to pour out, broken up by the occasional wave of static. “Guess this is going to be a slow dance.”

Slowly, everyone began pairing off and swaying to the music. Dogaressa leaned against the outer wall of Grillby’s, face hidden deep within her hood. Papyrus walked over to her.

“Would you like to dance with me, my canine friend?” Papyrus asked her.

“Oh, no, I couldn’t,” Dogaressa said, averting her gaze.

“Why not?”

She sighed. “I don’t dance. Not... not anymore. Not since he...”

Papyrus patted her on the shoulder and offered her his hand. “Well, I may not be as great of a dance partner as your husband but I’m sure I can at least try...
“Oh, Papyrus, I don’t…” she looked at his eyes and smiled. “…Okay. One dance.” Papyrus led her out by the Gyftmas tree where everyone had paired up except Temmie. Temmie danced by herself to a beat that was nowhere near what the song would suggest.

“May I have this dance?” Lucifer asked, offering Sans a clawed hand.

“exercise? it’s been years, babe, you think you’d know me a little better,” Sans teased. He chuckled as Lucifer yanked him over by the wrist. He laced the fingers of one of his hands through Sans’ and set the other one on the skeleton’s hip. Sans rolled his eyelights and put his free hand on Lucifer’s shoulder, and they started swaying to the music as well.

“you’re so sappy,” Sans said, his voice soft as Lucifer pulled him close enough that Sans could feel his warmth.

“I can’t help that I’m in love with you,” Lucifer said, kissing the top of Sans’ head. “Besides, this should be a good enough sendoff for me. I think I need to make another surface trip tonight. Probably another two-week one.”

“Yeah, I guess you’re right,” Sans sighed. “you’ll let me say goodbye properly before you leave though, right?” He grinned.

“But of course,” Lucifer said. He glanced at Sans’ bedroom window. Suddenly they were there, the muffled music trickling past the glass and into the room. Lucifer waited for Sans to throw him onto the bed and start ripping his clothes off.

To Lucifer’s surprise, he didn’t. He pushed him down onto the mattress gently and slid onto his lap, kissing him. He started carding through Lucifer’s hair with his fingers softly with one hand and used the other to start undoing the buttons on Lucifer’s vest, but there was no urgency to it. It caught Lucifer a little off guard.

“stars above, you’re beautiful,” Sans sighed as he pulled away, eyes gazing over Lucifer with a tenderness they normally didn’t have.

“Who’s sappy now?” Lucifer said, trying to hide the fact that Sans could still make him blush even after all these years.

“Sorry,” Sans chuckled. He shrugged off his jacket and pulled off his shirt, but the urgency, the hunger he normally had still wasn’t there. “I’m just in a mood. you mind if we take it slow tonight?”

“…Of course not,” Lucifer smiled. Sans kissed him again, pushing off Lucifer’s vest and tracing his fingers along Lucifer’s back. Gently brushing his fingers against his spines, massaging his skin slowly through his fur. He felt the backs of Lucifer’s claws clack against his ribs one by one, giving him little shivers, and one hand cupped against the back of his skull.

There was something different about tonight. Something in the air he couldn’t quite place. It was almost as if Sans knew that after tonight, everything would be different. Not worse, just… different. He wanted to memorize his new normal tonight, wanted to take his time and bask in the glow of Lucifer’s body and memorize every curve and detail with his fingers.

Or maybe Sans was really just a sappy romantic at heart and the music had set something off. He hadn’t heard any for a long time.
“Be safe, my dear one,” Toriel said, giving Lucifer a kiss on the forehead. “Come back to me.”

“I always do, mom,” Lucifer smiled, giving her a quick hug before ascending the rope to the surface. He pulled it up and hid it to make sure any potential visitors didn’t have a way out. Toriel watched him go all the way up, to be there to catch him if he fell.

Whatever mood Sans had been in last night had rubbed off on him. Lucifer pulled a faded, crumpled old receipt out of his pocket and looked at the address that had been scribbled on the back. He’d tried to force it out of his mind for so long now. He didn’t know if he’d like the answers it would bring him. But something told him the time was right.

The house - house was being generous, it was more of a hovel - was in one of the worst parts of town. The paint was peeling, the curtains were drawn on every window, the sidewalk around it was cracked and uneven. Lucifer twisted the knob open with his blue magic and stepped inside. There she was, lying on the couch with a thin blanket draped over her legs. She looked over at him and her eyes widened.

“Xavier? Is… is that you?”

He nodded slowly, closing the door behind himself as he walked over to her. His mother smiled, tears welling behind her eyes.

“I thought you’d gone forever. I thought…” she reached out and grabbed his hand, and he didn’t pull away. “It’s good to see you.”

“You survived the gunshot,” Lucifer said, sitting down on the floor by her. She looked so different from how he remembered her. Her hair was graying, she looked thin and emaciated, her face was taut with age and years of worry.

“…It took some invasive surgery, but yes. I did. You’re the one that stopped the man, aren’t you?” Lucifer nodded. “Aliza said as much, but she was so young then. She made up the wildest stories, she said that you threw him against the wall without touching him and that you had horns and that your eyes glowed. It must have been so traumatic for her.”

Lucifer chewed on his lip a little. He felt compelled by something, a pressure in his chest he needed to release. “She wasn’t making it up,” he said quietly.

“…Xavier?”

“All these years… I’ve lived in a giant underground cavern beneath Mount Ebott. It was filled with monsters, monsters that… didn’t get along with humans very well. So I had to look the part.”

“…Xavier, what are you…?”

Lucifer pulled off his hat and trenchcoat and Elena’s eyes widened. He used his blue magic to toss the clothes aside.

“I don’t believe my eyes,” Elena said. “There were… there were always those silly stories about that place, but I never…” she looked him up and down. “Oh, Xavier. Was… did it hurt?”

“It did,” Lucifer said. “But it was worth it. There’s someone down there. Someone that taught me how to use magic, someone I’ve lived with all this time. Someone… I love with all my heart and soul.”
Lucifer watched curiously as the mild horror and shock slowly faded from Elena’s eyes. It was replaced with a tenderness he’d never seen as a child. She smiled slowly. “I’m glad you found someone. You deserve it, Xavier, after everything you’ve been through.” Her words were genuine, and Lucifer felt tears start to prick up around his eyes. He never knew he wanted, needed to hear something like that coming out of her mouth until now.

“Tell me about her,” Elena said.

Lucifer glanced away. “...Him,” he corrected.

The surprise in her eyes was brief, and not judgemental. “Ah, of course. I’m sorry. Please… tell me about him.”

“He’s funny,” Lucifer said quietly. “He works a lot harder than he lets on because a lot of people depend on him. He has a younger brother that he cares about a lot. He’s been through a lot, but deep down he’s a good person even if he can’t see it sometimes. He can still make me blush.”

Elena smiled as she listened. “What’s his name?”

“Sans,” Lucifer answered.

“What an unusual name,” Elena said. Lucifer looked at her.

“...You’re sick, aren’t you?” he asked.

She nodded sadly. “It turns out Lucy’s condition was… genetic.”

“Incurable?” Lucifer asked.

“...No,” Elena said. “But… I’m still paying off medical debt from the last procedure. The therapy for this is exorbitantly expensive. I... I can’t,” she said. “I just told Aliza today. She locked herself in her bedroom and hasn’t left since.” Tears started rolling down Lucifer’s face. Elena looked at him and put a hand on the side of his face, gazing into the blue of his eyes. “I’m grateful I got to see you again, because there’s something I need to tell you. Something… something you and Lucy didn’t hear enough. Xavier - I love you.”

The next breath Lucifer took in was shaky, and the tears were flowing freely now. They started falling from Elena’s eyes as well. “I love you,” she said again. “And you both deserved so much better than your father and I. And I’m so, so happy that you’ve found someone who treats you like you deserve. Lucy would be so proud of you.”

Lucifer finally let go of the breath he didn’t know he’d been holding and let himself cry. His mother cried along with him. They stayed up talking all night.

The next morning, a text appeared on Elena’s ancient phone. She looked at it.

_I didn’t get to say everything I needed to last night. I needed time to think. I was scared of what you might say to me, scared that I’d show up to an empty house. But you were there. For once, you were there. You told me the one thing I needed to hear from you my entire life last night, so let me return the favor._

_I forgive you._
You deserved better than him. You deserved better than Charles, too. I think, when you finally realize that... you’ll be happy too.

...You might want to check your bank account. Don’t ask questions, don’t look for answers. Just consider it karma for you and your daughter.

Elena broke out in tears again, and eventually found her way over to the even more ancient computer in her room. She pulled up her bank account and she nearly fainted.

There were several million dollars in it, seemingly from out of nowhere. She looked back at her phone, to the text. She ran to Aliza’s room and rapped her knuckles on the door.

“Aliza? Aliza, sweetie? I… I know you’re upset right now, but I have some wonderful news. I… I have a way to pay for my treatments. I’m going to be okay, Aliza. We’re going to be okay! Better than okay!”

There was no response. Elena forced the door open and found the room empty, the window left wide open. Her eyes widened. “Aliza? Aliza?!”

Aliza’s mother was dying. She was dying, and she couldn’t pay for the medicine. It wasn’t fair. Her mother was the sweetest person on earth - she didn’t deserve this. She didn’t deserve any of the horrible things her life had put her through, and now Aliza was going to lose her forever. That is, if she didn’t do something.

She knew her mother didn’t believe any of the stories Aliza told about the night she’d met her half-brother, but Aliza knew what she’d seen that night was real. He had superpowers or could use magic or something like that. And he’d run off towards Mount Ebott - the perfect place to hide for someone like him. Maybe it was a long shot, but she had to do something. Maybe Xavier knew a magic spell that could heal her mother, or could make a potion, or knew someone that could do something. Anything. It was her only hope.

She scaled the mountain to find a foreboding, dark cavern. She peered inside, and as she took her first step into the gloom…

...She slipped.

Chapter End Notes

So I just decided to combine two chapters into one because that's how it flows best *shrug*. But also it's now the second-to-last chapter and I'm getting emotional waaaaaa

Nevermind that, I'll have my emotional breakdown next week for the epilogue. But since I recommended some music at the beginning of the chapter, I would also like to say that if Lucifer had a theme song it would be Pretty Little Psycho by Porcelain Black. Although I wouldn't recommend listening to it during this chapter because... yeah. Moods don't really match.
**Quiet Night (An Epilogue)**

**Chapter Summary**

And they lived happily ever after.

**Chapter Notes**

See the end of the chapter for notes

“It really is a shame, Carol,” Lucifer said. Carol dragged behind him, leaving a trail of blood through the muck as Lucifer began ascending the mountain. “You seemed nice. You just, well… you should learn to stay out of other people’s business. Too late now, though. Snowdin’s gotta eat, after all, and I for one am getting impatient to get back to my…”

The leg Lucifer was dragging Carol by fell to the ground with a dull thud. He blinked in disbelief, not believing his eyes. “…Sans?”

The skeleton smiled at him from a ledge a few feet further up, standing under the stars. Outside. Sans was outside.

“hey, baby,” Sans said. There was someone standing next to him - a little girl in a purple dress.

“Baby?” The girl said. “Wait, wait - you… and him…?”

“i didn’t mention my boyfriend?” Sans chuckled. “what, you know him or something?”

“Sans, that’s Aliza,” Lucifer said, still dumbfounded.

“aliza…” Sans blinked. “oh. oh. you mean that aliza? …goddamn it, i knew i knew that name from somewhere.”

“Wh… How are you… why is she…?”

“it’s… a long story,” Sans said, sharing a knowing glance with Aliza. “i’ll tell you later. right now, i kinda just…” He looked up at the night sky and Lucifer found himself on the verge of tears.

Lucifer turned his attention to Aliza. “Your mother’s been worried sick,” he said.

“I… you saw her? Is she okay?”

“Better than okay,” Lucifer said. “Until she realized you were gone, that is. You need to go to her, right now.” Aliza nodded and started hopping down the trail of rocks barefoot. Lucifer sighed.

“Wait, wait. I’ve seen the part of town you live in - you don’t want to be wandering around at night. I’ll take you.” He glanced at Sans. “I… I’ll be right back, I swear. I just--”

“let me come with you,” Sans said. “show me around.”

“…If you want, I guess,” Lucifer said. “Let’s keep a low profile, though.”

Lucifer led Sans and Aliza back to Elena’s house. He slipped them in the back door quietly. Elena was pacing around the living room, chewing off all her fingernails. She froze when she saw the three
of them, but then immediately ran over to Aliza and picked her up in her arms.

“Thank god you’re safe,” Elena said, practically crushing her daughter with the embrace. “Where were you?!”

“...I was trying to find Xavier so he could help you,” Aliza said, starting to cry a little.

“Oh, Aliza,” Elena said. “That wasn’t… sigh. That doesn’t matter now. I found a way to pay for my chemo.”

“What? How?”

Elena smiled at Lucifer. “I’m not quite sure myself. But we’re going to move out of here, Aliza, to a better part of town with a better school, and… and it’s all going to be okay now.” She set Aliza down and turned her attention to Sans. “You… you’re him, aren’t you? Did… did you help find my daughter, as well?”

Sans glanced away. “…you could say that.”

Sans yelped as Elena walked over to him and picked him up in a hug as well. “Thank you for taking care of my children,” she said.

“...anytime?” Sans said, completely flustered. Lucifer chuckled silently from the side, and Elena pulled him into the hug as well.

“Do you have a place to stay up here?” Elena asked.

“we all just got free of the barrier, so not really--”

“You can stay here until you find a proper place to stay,” Elena said, setting them down and wiping a few tears out of her eyes. “Or in our new house. I’ll look for one big enough for all four of us.”

“...my brother goes everywhere i go,” Sans said.

“Five of us, then!” Elena said, getting a little excited. “I’m going to start looking right away. Wait, have any of you had dinner?”

“YES, please,” Aliza said.

“i, uh, need to get going, unfortunately. got some stuff to sort out. but, uh… we’ll be back tomorrow, i guess?” Elena nodded, bid them good night, and dashed off to the kitchen.

They returned to the mountain to find the monsters slowly trickling out, one by one. Toriel stood overlooking them all, a broken crown sitting on her head. She smiled warmly as they approached.

“It seems it is I that came back to you this time, my child,” Toriel chuckled. She gave both Sans and Lucifer a hug. “Where is Aliza? Is she safe?”

“She’s back home, yes,” Lucifer said. “...What’s with the crown?”

Toriel smiled. “It is about time I resumed my position as Queen,” she said.

“What about Undyne?” Lucifer asked. Toriel glanced somewhere down the mountain. Lucifer
followed where her eyes were pointing. “Can I just…?”

“We will wait for you, my child,” Toriel said. Lucifer rushed down the mountain.

Undyne was there, crown no longer upon her head; carrying an emaciated yellow lizard in her arms. She gave Lucifer a tired smile as he approached.

“It’s been a while, huh?” she asked.

“...I guess it has. What are you…”

“Alphy and I are leaving,” she said. “The real queen has things under control now.”

Lucifer blinked in disbelief. “So you’ve just… given up on the whole ‘revenge against humanity’ thing?”

“...Someone talked me out of it,” she said.

“You... y-you won’t ever have to see us again,” Alphys said. Her voice was thin and weak. It was clear she’d seen better days. “W-We’re going to go... g-go build a little house together out in the woods somewhere. S-Somewhere we can just be alone and t-together and... a-and away from all our mistakes.”

“I think the Underground’s had enough of both of us,” Undyne said. “…It’s time we left them be. So I guess this is goodbye.”

Lucifer nodded slowly. “...Then I wish you both the best of luck.”

Undyne returned the nod and began walking away, carrying Alphys into the shadows of the trees.

It took a while for Toriel to get everyone together in a halfway organized fashion to camp outside for the night. The first order of business had been to start growing magical crops on the magically fertile soil up here - meals would soon be had. They’d done it. They were going to live.

After they were sure they were no longer needed, Lucifer took Sans and Papyrus out to a clearing away from the city so they could see the stars. They laid on the ground in a circle with their heads by each other.

“i never thought i’d get to see ‘em,” Sans said. His voice was quiet, almost reverent.

“Well they’re all yours now,” Lucifer smiled.

“They’re so beautiful,” Sans said. He scooted closer to Lucifer to cuddle close to him, and Lucifer wrapped the skeleton up in his arms. “…still nothing next to you, though.”

Lucifer smiled. “This just… feels right, doesn’t it?” he asked. “Is this it? Our fairytale ending?”

“...i don’t think you know what a fairytale is,” Sans said.

“I need to buy you a copy of the Brothers Grimm stories,” Lucifer said.

“we got time for that now, don’t we?” Sans said. “we can… we can do anything we want now. we’re free.”
“YOU’RE RIGHT, SANS,” Papyrus said. “THIS IS A MOMENTOUS OCCASION! THERE SHOULD BE SOMETHING SPECIAL TO CELEBRATE - MAYBE EVEN SOMETHING, I DON’T KNOW… ROMANTIC???”

Sans rolled his eyes. “I know you’ve been trying to get me to marry him for years now, paps, but I just don’t care,” he said. “I love him, he loves me, and we both know it. I don’t see why we have to prove it to everyone else with monkey suits and flowers and a giant party for no reason.”

“But Sans—”

“You know what? Fine. I’m in a good mood tonight.” He turned to Lucifer. “Hey, luce, will you marry me?”

“Sure,” Lucifer said, grinning.

Papyrus glared at both of them. “That was the worst proposal I have ever seen in my life,” he said.

“He said yes, didn’t he?” Sans grinned. “So we’re engaged now. How about we have the wedding right now, fiancé?”

“Sounds good to me, fiancé,” Lucifer chuckled.

“What?! No! Do you know how long it takes to plan a wedding? We need clothes and food and guests and a venue and—”

“Either right now or never, papyrus,” Sans said. “Not budging this time. Take it or leave it.”

“How are you so infuriating?!” Papyrus screeched. “Ugh. Fine.” He pulled out the final volume of the Hangout/Dating advice series from somewhere. “You at least need to have rings.”

Lucifer plucked two daisies from off the hillside they were laying on and handed one to Sans. They twisted the stems into flower rings.

Papyrus squinted at them. “I suppose that will work,” he said. “Do you want the short ceremony or the formal one?”

“Short,” Sans said.

“Why did I even ask? Ugh. Alright, alright, here we go. Do you, Sans, take this monster to be your husband and soulmate; to cherish and love him beyond hardship and time?”

“I do.”

“And do you, Lucifer, take this monster to be your husband and soulmate; to cherish and love him beyond hardship and time?”

“I do.”

“Then I now pronounce you husbands and partners in this life and the next. You may kiss the groom.”

Lucifer pulled Sans into a kiss. Papyrus sniffed back a few tears.
“and here i thought you were mad at us for doing this so suddenly,” Sans chuckled.

“IT WAS STILL BEAUTIFUL!” Papyrus protested. “ANYWAY, I’M GOING TO LEAVE YOU TWO ALONE FOR YOU HONEYMOON, SO… I’LL SEE YOU LATER!” Papyrus jumped to his feet and sprinted away.

Sans nuzzled into Lucifer’s neck. “there. now he’ll stop breathing down our necks.”

“You aren’t even the least bit happy to be married to me?” Lucifer asked.

“you already knew you were my one and only,” Sans said. “...but i guess so.”

“We’ve got the whole world to explore together now, you know,” Lucifer said. “What do you want to do first?”

“fall asleep on this hill with my husband,” Sans said, looking back at the stars. Lucifer smiled and rubbed his back slowly until the skeleton did just that.

Lucifer looked over at Sans’ sleeping face. There was a peace there he’d never seen before. Maybe that was the detail that had been missing. Peace.

“...And they lived happily ever after,” Lucifer whispered to himself, closing his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

So. First, a little clarification.

My goal with this story was to make it as plausible in the context of the Horrortale comics as possible. I wanted to seem like something that happened offscreen before Aliza fell, and to answer some questions like 'how did Sans survive without food for so long?'. Of course, I realize the canon answer probably won't be that Sans had a psycho human mage boyfriend, but a man can dream, right? I also want to point out that the Horrortale comics were ongoing at the time I wrote this and thus there are probably going to be details that don't match up with them perfectly. Just know that at the time I wrote this, I tried to make it as accurate to the comics as possible.

As for what happened between last chapter and this: This whole story was set before the actual Horrortale comics in case that wasn't obvious. Essentially I wrote everything leading up to the comics, and between chapter 58 and 59 ~Horrortale~ happened. I'm assuming some sort of true pacifist ending that we may or may not get in the actual comics.

Lastly, I would just like to thank each and every person that read this. It's been a huge passion project for me and I'm incredibly happy with how it turned out and how it was received. I've grown so much as a writer and I can't wait to continue writing. You've all made this last year an incredible journey. This story has been such a big part of my life and I think I'm going to cry now that it's over, but I'm ready to move on from it, I think. If anyone would ever like to chat or ask me something, I'm phantomdreamshade over on Tumblr and I'd love to hear from you.

I send you all the warmest thoughts and wishes,
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!

~PhantomDreamshade