A Sick Twist of Fate

by Musecookie

Summary

You and your sick little sister are stuck in a bad position.
Without a home or money, you have no choice to stay at Grimm's Hospital for Youth's Cancer.
For a cost.
When you can't take it anymore, you grab your sister and run to the east side of your city.
Where the monsters live.
You wish you'd thought to learn more about the monsters when they came to the surface four years ago.
Now, you have to survive a world full of chairs with names and super-strong fish warriors.
Oh, the horror.

Notes

This is weird.
Like, any story I've ever really posted before this was either a gift or inspired by someone
else. This story, however, was one straight out of my twisted little head.
*fist pump*
HURRAY FOR INDIVIDUALISM!
Okay- don't mind the little sister's name if you don't like it. I just like Rei. It sounds cool.
Anyway, enjoy this adventure.
AND PLEASE COMMENT IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY!
*Angry cookie noises*
You hate the color yellow.

Yellow was the color of the doctor’s smock when she diagnosed your little sister with cancer.

Yellow was the color of the lamborghini that hit your car and killed your parents, then drove away like it was nothing.

Yellow is the color of the walls in your little sister’s hospital room.

You look down at Rei, her small body resting in the drab hospital bed.

It was only a few months ago that they said she had lymph cancer.

They said she had less than a year.

You had raged terribly that night, while they kept her at the hospital for “further examination.” You’d trashed the broken down apartment you and Rei had lived in for the better part of a year, screaming profanities.

Why did Rei of all people have to get cancer? She’s so vibrant and full of fire. So excited over everything she does.

She’s more than cancer.

She loves puzzles. She always makes sure her bandana that covers her naked scalp matches her outfit. She likes pistachio flavored ice cream and her favorite color is pink. She likes tulips and Christmas and Spring. Rei likes sunny weather. She can’t stand heights but loves the ferris wheel. Her favorite animal is a giraffe, with zebras coming in at a close second.

She’s only twelve.

You choke back the lump forming in your throat and look down at your baby sister, so bright.

She’s listening to you read her a story about a fluffy bunny, but she glances at you worriedly when you stop reading.

“You okay, Y/n?” she asks. Her eyes are full of life right now, not glazed over from the painkillers they pump into her system. You like it when she’s like this- when she’s able to perceive the world rather than stare at it through a drug-induced haze.

You nod. “Hey, Rei…” you start, but you’re not sure how to finish. She cocks her head in askance.

“You wanna go out to the city today?” you blurt. You know you’re not allowed to take Rei out of the hospital, but you know better than anyone how to take care of her. Besides, she needs a change of scenery.

Her eyes light up. “YES!” she nearly screams. You chuckle and hold up a finger to your lips in the universal sign for silence.

“Shh,” you whisper. “We’re gonna sneak you outta here, James Bond style,” you say. Rei giggles intensely and nods. You help her up and attach her IV to a portable pouch that you know is hidden in the drawer under the bed.
She’s already dressed in a cute black and white outfit that had a black vest and pants, and a white t-shirt to go underneath. No need to get ready, then, you guess.

You throw on your favorite grey hoodie and check the door sneakily.

“Coast is clear,” you say to your little sister in your best imitation of Bond.

“Very good, James,” she says with a professional business tone. Was that an imitation of his… boss? You’d never bothered to watch the Bond movies, but you know Rei is a huge fan of them, so you chuckle and play along.

You heave her up onto your back, carrying her piggy-back style, and dash out of her room when you’re sure no one is looking.

Darting down the hallway, you leap along the floor, Rei bouncing on your back, her small boots occasionally brushing your sides.

When you reach the lobby, you have to stop and catch your breath while you think. They won’t let you leave unless you sign out, and if you sign out, they’ll think you left Rei and they’ll check on her. How to…? Ah, there it is. You pull up your hood and kneel so you’re at Rei’s height.

“Listen, kiddo. I’m gonna need you to walk for a bit, alright? I know it’ll hurt, but I need you to do it for the sake of disguise. And, please, don’t look up at anyone or tell them our names.”

She nods, her brown eyes widening in seriousness.

You stand up, taking her hand, and make your way over to the desk, asking for the sign-out sheet in a deep voice.

Of course, you know very well where the sign-out sheet is, but you feign ignorance to make them lose any suspicion of you. The bored RN points you to a corner of the waiting room where the wooden table waits, barren save for a clipboard and a pen. You quickly pretend to sign, hoping no one notices you didn’t write anything, and you walk toward the exit.

Rei is shaking, trying hard to make it look like she’s alright, but you can tell she’s hurting. You’re close to the exit now, and you quicken your pace, hoping no one notices you and Rei slipping out.

As luck would have it, someone does.

Not just anyone.

“Y/n and Rei L/n. Just where-oh-where do you think you’re going?” asks a stern, patronizingly mother-like voice.

Doctor Reynold. Rei’s standing physician. The woman giving her all the tests, radiation, chemo, and worst of all, the experiment drugs. The ones they say might work, but might also kill Rei.

It’s not like it matters, right? Rei’s just gonna die soon anyway, right? So there’s no problem in making her into a lab rat… right?

You heave Rei onto your back again as you turn to face the bitch you have to call a doctor. No point in making her stand now.

You look at the weathered, seemingly kind and wise face of the doctor. A woman of 56 years of age, and with around 30 years of cancer research under her wing, she ought to be the best doctor for
treat cancer. Who wouldn’t want a nice, doting woman like her to care for their sick loved ones?

You wouldn’t.

After they’d told you your sister was gonna die and you’d gotten kicked out of your apartment for destroying it, she’d been kind enough to let you stay at the hospital with your sister. Said she’d even get a room for you. She’d let you stay like that for a month, buying meals for you and paying for classes you took.

Then, one month after the diagnosis, she’d come to you while Rei was asleep and you were reading.

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You look up as Dr. Reynold enters the room. You smile at the woman, thanking her once again for being so generous. She smiles at you, waving it off telling you it was no problem.

“But”, she’d said, “letting you live here didn’t come without expenses.” She shows you a long list of money you have to repay her for letting you stay at the hospital. You begin to sweat.

“Now, normally I’d demand you pay the money for this…” she starts, and she looks at you with pity, that motherly smile playing onto her face. “I’m an understanding woman, darling. I know you don’t have the kind of money to pay me back for all this…” You sigh, thinking she’s letting you off the hook, but she continues on. “But I know a way that you can repay me, dear. Your sister has a very fatal cancer, and while we’re doing everything we can, we know there’s more that can be done. All that I ask is that you let us use some… experimental drugs to try and cure her cancer.”

You shake your head, beginning to tell her that you have a job, you can pay, just please don’t put Rei on those drugs. You’ve heard the horror stories about those things, how they even sometimes make the cancer worse. Her words cut you off.

“Dear, I don’t think you understood. We have right by law to tell the government that you refusing to let your sister take these drugs is harming her chances to live, and therefore you’re endangering her life by extension. We don’t want to have to take your sister away from you, nor you from her....

So please. Try to understand.”

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Ever since they put her on those drugs, her state had gotten so much worse. She started to ache all over, and her already weak immune system was basically killed off, rendering her vulnerable to any virus.

Yeah, so when other people would want Dr. Reynold to help them treat cancer, because she’s the perfect doctor, you’d rather steer clear.

You glare at the woman as Rei clings to your back, like a monkey.

“Are you trying to leave the hospital and endanger yourselves?” she asks in that sickeningly sweet voice. You know that question is aimed at you, but you glare at her defiantly.

“Yeah, we’re gonna go see the city,” you say, an edge entering your voice as you stare the woman down.

You can tell she’s beginning to lose her nerve. No one’s been able to return a glare quite like you do ever before. Nothing is safe from you eyes, and you watch as her hand begins to slowly slip toward
the security call button.

You squeeze Rei’s leg twice, using your secret language from when you were kids and you’d sprint around with her on your back to tell her to hold on tight. Her grip is iron, despite the pain you know must be coursing through her veins.

“Darlings, this is the last strike. I can’t have you hurting your sister, Y/n. Please understand this is all to help you two.”

You turn and sprint before she hits the button. You’ve seen the routine often enough; a doctor hits the button while talking calmly to a crazed patient. The patient looks around wildly before sprinting for the doors. By then, it’s too late, and the security team snatches them.

You just hope you were fast enough to surprise her and the team into missing you as you sprint for freedom.

The alarm rings out when you’re steps away from the door.

Your heart flutters into despair when you see the navy suit of security flash in front of you, but you won’t let that deter you.

You’re determined to make it to freedom with Rei.

You just want that man who’s trying to block to go away. To move out of your sight, to stop blocking your path to freedom.

Something within you is so determined that it stirs a feeling deep within your mind, bringing tears to your eyes.

Your eyes.

Your left eye has been blind since the car accident almost two years ago that stole your parents’ lives. A piece of glass pierced your retina and scraped out your tear duct.

You haven’t even been able to cry out of that eye since.

And yet, in just your left eye, you see a flash, a spark of grey amid the void of blindness, and suddenly, you see the man blocking your path disappear and fly into a wall at a shattering force through your good eye.

You barrel onto the streets as shouts sound from inside.

You dash down the alleys and streets for a long time, putting as much space between you and the hospital as you can, Rei clinging to your back with a mighty grip.

You finally find solace enough to rest in the shade of a skyscraper, next to a big dumpster.

Rei is completely passed out in your arms, so unused to doing anything more than lying down that even holding onto your neck has made her so exhausted she can barely move.

You check the portable IV, and see that it’s actually pretty low.

Man, these things don’t last long.
You carefully pull the tape off of where the needle enters your sister’s skin and gasp at what you see. All around the entrance of the needle, her skin is red and bloated.

An allergic reaction.

You feel anger welling up inside you. That’s why she hurts all over lately! Did they seriously make her IV into one of those damn experimentation drugs?

Whatever is inside that stuff is giving Rei an allergic reaction, so you pull out the needle as quickly and as carefully as you can, making sure she doesn’t wake up. She whimpers, though. You wish there was something you could give her to make the pain go away…oh, wait.

You remember running out of money and food after your parents died. She was just eleven then, before the diagnosis, and you were starving. No money for food, no food to eat. You remember her cries and whimpers as she pleaded to eat anything. You remember seeing a heart shape in front of her body- and begin to crack. The heart- you felt it shouldn’t crack, it just couldn’t, so you did what you had to. You’d tried to force it back together, telling it not to break. As you pleaded with it to stay whole, you’d felt a little bit of energy leave you, and a little bit of hunger enter your already shrunken stomach.

When you’d looked to Rei, you’d seen that she wasn’t crying in her sleep anymore, and in fact, her stomach wasn’t growling so much either.

You’d thought that was a hunger-induced livid nightmare, but you can’t be sure. What if that had happened? Can you really make Rei’s pain go away?

You look at her, and try to call out that little heart you’d seen that day. You can’t remember its color- it was breaking at the time, and you were busy enough trying to fix it rather than notice trivial things like color. You focus on the memory of the little heart…

But nothing came.

You finally give up in frustration. You’re a persistent person, bu you can tell when something’s a lost cause.

So it was a dream, after all.

You glance up at the sky. They sun is almost at the end of its journey to the western horizon. It will be night, soon. The time rats come out to play.

You’re no stranger to the streets after sundown. When your parents died, you needed income. The streets were the best place to go. When Rei left for the school you could barely afford, you’d leave the apartment and go to places your mother would cry about if she ever heard about them.

That was before she got the cancer, though.

You glance at the sky again, gauging the amount of time you have before the stars show in the sky. At least thirty minutes, you tell yourself.

You poke Rei’s shoulder, gently waking her up, and you pull her up onto your back.

“Lezgo, monkey. We got places to go,” you say with false cheer. She yawns sleepily, then promptly lies her head on your shoulder, going back to sleep.

Good. She doesn’t need to see what happens next.
You walk out of the alley, acting like any other pedestrian. Blending in is something you’re good at doing- or were - before the accident that took your eye. Your grey colors make you hard to see, but your time earning money has made grey recognizable.

The whispers start out hushed, sparingly. Then they grow louder and louder until a man steps in front of you.

“Well, if it isn’t the Grey Lady!” you tense, recognizing the voice. Don Mater, the manager of the underground fighting ring that circulates the city, stands in front of you.

The whispering breaks out into full-blown muttering. One woman swoons.

The Grey Lady. A renowned woman fighter dressed in grey, appearing anonymously in the ring and never losing a single fight. She was known for being a hired assailant, beating up and even killing targets at times. No one knows who she was, or why she disappeared a while ago.

They just watch for a woman in grey, fearing her return.

There was just one other thing that people knew about her. She was missing an eye.

You pull up your hood quickly, and turn Rei’s head toward your neck so nobody will recognize her face.

Then you run. In early high school, you’d taken up track, opting to run the 400 meter. You’d gotten pretty fast, enjoying the feel of wind rushing past your face, feet pounding into the pavement.

You dash past shrieking men and women, dodging grabbing hands and jumping over obstacles.

Don Mater has beef with you. You’d shown up to the fights, needing to earn the money for your sister. The desperation of your situation drew you to fight harder than any of the men or women you fought against.

You’d receive your money from an outside source, having told the people who hired you that you wanted to remain anonymous. You didn’t want the fighting ring to follow you.

The crowds began to anticipate the mysterious woman showing up and fighting, dubbing her “The Grey Lady” for all the grey hoodies and clothes she wore. And because fighting her was almost like a death sentence.

She never lost once. You never lost once. You’d needed the money, and decided the fighting skills you’d learn would protect you on the streets.

Then the other requests began to flow in. People asking for the Grey Lady to beat up someone they didn’t like. A man who mugged one too many times needed to be convinced not to do it again. A corrupt banker who needed persuasion to give someone back their money.

The pay for those was… satisfying, to say the least. They gave you more money than the part-time job you had taken up at a McDonald’s. So you took the special requests.

Even the ones that asked murder of you.

The Grey Lady wasn’t known for just her fighting skills any more. People would tell tales of a woman dressed in grey coming to harm them- to kill them.

People began to refuse to fight at the rink, soon. They feared the dreaded colors of grey, knowing
well that they could land in a hospital if they took you on.

So your employers let you go.

But not before Don Mater let out the announcement that he’d wreck his revenge on the Grey Lady for nearly driving him out of business.

You hear the man shouting for the cops, as well as sirens blaring in the distance.

Weaving in between buildings, you disappear down the streets, running at a breakneck pace, yet still looking entirely at comfort. People don’t need to know you’re running from something.

You know you’ve lost them when the sirens fade into nothing, yet you still run until the streets grow unfamiliar.

You want to get to the part of the city where no one will judge you. Where your past will fade away.

The east side of the city.

When the monsters emerged from the underground four years ago, the world was brutal to them.

The government treated them as terrorists, as threats to humanity, and tried to exterminate them.

It didn’t work. Some… red barrier, eyewitnesses had said, had popped up between the frightened monsters and the military efforts to destroy them. You find it hard to believe. Sure- monsters are magic, obviously, but you know enough about military tanks to know that whatever made that barrier had to have been someone so impossibly strong that they could actually create a barrier big and strong enough. And… you’re sure not even the king is strong enough for that.

After its failed attempts to kill the monsters, the government decided to sit down and talk with their king like a civilized government. Then, finally, after much political tension and fear among the humans, a treaty was made, calling peace and equality between the two races.

What a joke. Humans still have trouble over the color of each other’s skin, and they’re expected to treat monsters like everyone else?

So then… racism, which finally lead to what your city has. The west side of the city is the civilized, or normal side of the city, while the east is the integrated part of the city.

Humans and monsters live together there.

Well, the human trash anyway. They say the people who live there are monster lovers and losers that can’t afford actual houses.

You’ve never been there.

Your parents weren’t racist like the rest of the west side- they were just… worried. Worried that the rumors of murderers living in the east side were true, worried that they wouldn’t be able to find jobs stable enough to support their children.

So, yeah. You’ve never seen a monster in real life. Not that you’ve ever particularly needed to. They just never seem relevant to your life.

Your parents would have died in a car accident anyway, your sister would have gotten cancer, and you would have become a murderer, no matter if there were monsters or not.
Bringing yourself back to the present with a shake of your head, you glance around to see the buildings have started to deteriorate, getting smaller and smaller.

The smell of rotten food wafts down the street, but you know you’re not truly to the east side yet.

The east is represented by the enormous sign that separates the city, one side having been written, “WELCOME TO THE WEST,” while the other side screams, “WELCOME TO THE EAST.”

It’s just a block away.

You walk toward it, aching to reach it, wanting to disappear into the eastern city. Once you leave to the eastern part of the city, it’s nearly impossible to find a person. With the small space and large amounts of monsters forced into that section, the population is terribly crowded. It’s easy to lose a person there.

Which is what you want to do. Lose yourself. At least, in the east, you and Rei could live without the fear of the hospital or Don Mater finding you. You’ve made a lot of enemies since ma and pa died.

You squint at the billboard in the distance. Yep, you’ve made absolutely no progress since you last looked, despite your steady walking in that direction.

It’s fully night now, and lights are beginning to appear in the shabby buildings around you.

Curses. Magic. Of course, the monsters wouldn’t want humans intruding on their territory, especially if they were humans of ill intentions.

Is it an illusion? You certainly don’t think so. Otherwise, you’d already be in the eastern side.

Wait… didn’t they say the monsters were trapped underground by a barrier? What if this is a barrier? Not to keep them in… but to keep humans out?

Rei shifts on your back. You glare at the billboard for a few more seconds before continuing toward the sign again.

You’re determined to make it to the eastern side. They might want you to stay out, but you have to get away from the city.
Prologue Pt. 2

Chapter Summary

The reader and her sister get judged.

Chapter Notes

I'm dead.
I'm... surprised at all the love this story is receiving, from all the views, and kudos, and hits.
Oh, yeah, I have a tumblr now, so you can either look at my GREAT pictures of cookies (don't ask) or post fan art!
HUZZAH!

Your feet ache. You feel as if you've been walking for hours. At some point, you'd shifted Rei in front of you, so she could get more comfortable and throw her arms around your neck.

You'd given up looking at the billboard every few minutes in hope of it being closer. You just keep walking, on and on, telling yourself you're going to go to a place where you and your sister will be... er, not exactly safe, but safer.

Not many people occupy the streets around here, you notice. This middle area of the city is mainly abandoned, making the rift between the east and west sides even larger.

Light is infrequent, and you have to keep your eyes trained on the ground to avoid falling over.

Your ears are muted, only taking in noises as background noise, just as your eyes blur as you gaze at the ground below.

You stop walking.

Noise?

...No one lives in the rift between the east and west cities. Noise doesn’t exist out here.

Your head snaps up to the sky, and your seeking eyes find the infamous billboard. That stands directly above you. You look around wildly, noticing the lights and figures moving down the suddenly crowded sidewalks. Since when were there people!?

The streets are lit up in various colors that flood from the windows of shops that are open this late in the night. Neon greens and reds wash over the people walking down the sidewalks.

Your eyes are blurry, but you can tell the people aren’t... human shaped.

Men and women with swaying tails and towering horns walk past. They have fur, and scales, and colors. So many colors. A man with red skin and small wings hurries past as a woman with blue...
skin and a shock of red hair sprints past. Did she have fins for ears?

Your jaw has dropped to your chest right now, as you take in the marvels of the eastern city.

You’d been told that the east side was broken down, full of scumbags and monsters that looked like they would murder you.

This looks… the opposite. The atmosphere is cheery as the figures laugh and talk to each other, and the buildings look anything but battered. They arch up into the night sky, coming in all sorts of different colors.

You stand away from the colorful world, crouched in a dark alley. To anyone outside the alley, you’re invisible.

You set Rei down gently on the ground, waking her up so she can hold your hand.

She mumbles sleepily, ignoring the colorful scene before you. You crouch down to speak to her, speaking quietly.

“Hey, kiddo. How ya feelin’?” you ask. She yawns and rubs her eyes.

“Fine,” she says. You blink. You’d have thought that taking her off of her IV would have made her feel worse, but she seems to be okay. Was the IV seriously hurting her that bad? A ghost of anger threatens to wrack your body, but you shake it away. New place, new you.

“Alright. You’re gonna have to hold my hand, now, okay?” you speak to her slowly, knowing she has a hard time following directions when she just wakes up. She grabs your hand, her eyes clearing enough to look past you and out into the street.

She lets out a half-shriek and runs out of the alley, dragging you behind her. She looks around her at the colorful buildings and people as you sweat nervously.

So much for being subtle. Humans are rare, you know, in the eastern side, and the arrival of new ones will certainly draw attention.

Sure enough, some of the monsters walking down the streets are already staring at you and the excited Rei. Frowns cross some of their faces while others look excited.

Rei wants to dash from store to store, looking in each of the windows and marveling at the exotic items they sell. Your eyes, however, watch the monsters who look at you. Some of them ignore you, while others frown or let fear flash across their faces as you and Rei walk farther down the street. Of course, monsters would be angry at humans showing up in their home… but why are they afraid? They have magic abilities strong enough to tear you and Rei apart.

It isn’t until you try to get a room in a hotel that you realize why. Rei had eventually gotten tired, and you, exhausted from walking to the eastern city, had suggested finding a hotel.

When you walk into the closest hotel you can find, the bunny woman at the desk refuses to help you. Says it’s too dangerous to let a human in her hotel.

“What do you mean?” you ask. “We mean no harm, ma’am. We just need somewhere to stay. Please.”

She seems to see how tired you and Rei are, gazing at you and your sister in pity, but she shakes her head.
“I’m so sorry, human. Most of the time, any human coming to the monster’s side of town is someone bad, trying to escape the police, or something like that. You need to go straight to the judgement hall,” she instructs. You feel like crying. You haven’t gotten rest since at least noon today, and now it’s probably two in the morning, and you still haven’t gotten to just rest for a moment. Rei looks at the woman imploringly, but you know that she won’t give. You should have guessed criminals would come here to escape their pasts.

After all, you’re a wanted criminal, coming here to escape her past. You just hope they’ll take Rei. She’s done nothing wrong- the fault lies entirely in her stars. You’ve heard that there are places that will take in young children- hell, their ambassador is an orphaned kid, you’ve heard. They’ll understand if Rei needs someone to take care of her.

It’s going to kill you to have to leave her behind here, where everything seems so safe, while you go back to face the crimes you’ve committed. Maybe one day you’ll have paid enough for your sins to come here and meet her again.

You turn away from the woman, ready to go to wherever the judgement hall is, ready for the heartbreak that is sure to come, but the bunny woman’s voice stops you once more.

“We’re not allowed to keep humans, but I’m sure I can find space for two humanoid monsters…” her voice says from behind you.

You whirl around, and the woman is looking at you. Or, rather, Rei. Ah, yes. Children always strike pity into the hearts of people. You walk toward her quietly, a small smile beginning to form on your face.

“Sure,” you say. “Did you hear about those humans appearing on the streets today? Weird.”

Rei’s grin is the widest you’ve ever seen it as the woman nods in mock surprise.

You wake up early, looking around the small room the woman had given you. She’d managed to fit you and Rei in the only room she had open, a single with enough elbow space to just fit two people in. You’d claimed the half of the bed closest to the door while Rei curled up on the other side of the bed, falling asleep instantly. She’s always been good about going to sleep fast. You’ve always had trouble getting to sleep, spending long nights looking up at the ceiling and thinking. Last night, though, you fell asleep as soon as your head hit the pillow.

Reading the clock on the nightstand next to the hotel bed, you see it’s 7:30 AM. Good. Five hours of sleep is good for you.

You shake Rei’s shoulder, pulling her out of her sleep. From all the sleeping she did on your back yesterday, she’s surely gotten enough sleep.

You pull yourselves into the main lobby, keeping your faces hidden as you rush outside. The woman had told you that when you left in the morning, you couldn’t let anyone know that humans had been staying in her hotel. Then she’d proceeded to give you a map and directions to the judgement hall.

As you step out into the early morning light, breathing in the smells of the morning, you look down at the map. The judgement hall is only a block away. You look up seeing a tall, brick building the bunny hotel-owner had described as the judgement hall.

You tug on Rei’s hand as you walk toward the building in the distance, feeling dread pool in the pit
of your stomach.

This will be the part where they turn you into the police, where they let Rei stay and turn you away.

Walking down the street, you keep your head down, staring at your shoes.

You bump into someone.

You don’t look up, just mutter an apology and keep walking. You don’t know who you bumped into, a flash of blue being the only indicator of who they were.

Finally, you reach the Hall, and you walk through the doors without hesitation, keeping your grip on Rei’s hand tight. Your breaths seem louder, your blood rushing through your veins. You’re hyperventilating, fear coursing through you as you imagine all the ways you could be turned away.

Then you calm yourself, and close your eyes. Around you, your steps echo, and you can tell the room is large. Light filters past your eyelids lazily, and the chirping of birds can be heard. The room is warm.

You open your eyes and look up.

In front of you stretches a long hall. Stained glass windows line either side of it, and ancient columns are strategically placed down the sides. The light that filters in through the windows is stained a soft yellow, reminding you of happy summer days. At the end of the hall, there is… a monster. Sitting in a plastic chair.

You blink. You’d been expecting an interrogation room of sorts, with monsters ready to drag you out of town. You weren’t expecting this… comfy sort of environment.

Yet, as you’re perceptively good at doing, this hall… has a bad past. Not just from the past four years of keeping criminal humans from moving into the city, but… something before. Something dark.

You shake off the feeling of foreboding and walk toward the seated monster. As you draw closer, you can see its grin grow wider.

It’s a skeleton, short of height and round of head. It wears a blue hoodie and black basketball shorts. You figure it must be a man. His grin seems to be permanently etched into his features, and white pinpricks of light move around his eye sockets. His eyes, you think.

“i’d heard a human showed up,” he says. He has a deep, rich voice, a permanent lilt hiding behind hit, almost as if he were telling an eternal joke. “i didn’t mind. humans don’t really get under my skin, ya know?” he continues.

You blink. Was… was that a pun? Your hand flies to your mouth to stifle the snort that escapes you. It wasn’t that funny… it was just how he delivered the joke. He totally deadpanned it. His grin grows wider as he sees you laugh. “welcome to the east side. we’ve never had a pair of humans show up before. usually just a fugitive running from something.”

And that’s where you see the real threat. The skeleton in front of you, sitting in a store-bought plastic chair, smiling at you as if he’d just told the world’s best joke- behind his eyes, the blue spark of wrath lights up the inside of his skull. You shiver.

Rei doesn’t notice, just grins at the skeleton man. “Me and Y/n are special, then!” she cries, her eyes widening in childish delight.
The skeleton man smiles more warmly. “darn right, kiddo. now, let’s get to the point.” You just watch nervously as he stands up, hands in his pockets. “we have to check every human that comes here, for our safety and theirs,” he says. “before i check you, there are a few things you need to know. first, the name’s sans,” he grins, winking. “second, when i check you, you’re gonna feel a bit of a sting- and then a heart’s gonna appear. don’t panic when ya see it. that’s your soul.” You nod, and Rei jumps up to… Sans? He said his name was Sans.

“Me first!” she says in excitement. Sans lets out a laugh and grins.

“alright, kiddo. let’s check ya,” he says, then the deja vu washes over you.

A small heart-shaped object floats in front of her. It’s magenta colored, and you realize why this feels so familiar.

“That dream!

So it was real after all! You look closely at the heart as the skeleton named Sans seems to look at it with a prying gaze.

It looks healthy, full- not shriveled and weak like the time you’d once seen it. Sans seems to get what he wants out of it, because he straightens and smiles down at Rei.

“you’ve got a good soul, kiddo. the soul of perseverance- you’re a trooper, i’ll give you that.” You nod at what he says. Rei has always been so brave when they give her cancer treatments. She just pushes through with a sort of determination that you know you could never match.

Sans walks over to the front of you. “you ready for your turn, kid?” he asks. You set your teeth, steeling yourself against what is to happen next. Nothing happens. You open your eyes to see Sans peering into your eyes. “y’alright? you don’t look too good, there, kiddo,” he comments. You nod.

“I’m fine,” you say. He shrugs, and before you can screw your eyes shut again, you feel a sharp sting in your chest. You see the little heart Sans had said would be your soul.

It’s grey. No color. Just… grey. You glance at the skeleton’s worried face before you.

“Is that… bad?” you ask.

Sans shakes his head slowly. “no. no… it’s not bad. it just means you don’t have a soul trait. or…” his voice fades away.

“Or what?” you ask worriedly.

“or you have a monster soul,” he says. You glance at his face, but his eyes are trained on the grey heart. Then they dim a little, and you know he’s doing whatever he did when he stared at your sister’s soul.

He stares at it for a long time. Not saying anything, not flinching or yelling at you. Just staring. Finally, he speaks. He’s not loud, just… quiet. Carefully neutral.

“…it’s complicated, isn’t it?” he asks. You look down, nodding as your eyes blur. This is it. This is where they tell you that you’ll have to leave. You’ll have to leave Rei behind.

Sans puts a gentle but firm hand on your shoulder. “hey, kiddo, your mom and i are gonna go for a
walk, ‘kay? i need you to stay here.”

You shudder. “I’m not her mom,” you mumble. “Just her big sister.”

Sans’ grip on your shoulder tightens, but Rei agrees and he leads you down the hallway to a back door.

He pushes open the door, and all of a sudden, you’re looking at a beautiful garden. Birds flit from tree to tree, and blooming flowers shower the ground in every color of the rainbow.

“When monsters check people,” Sans begins, “we look for something called LOVE, which means level of violence.” He looks at you. “You have a lot of it, buddy.”

Your shoulders slump. A voice in the back of your head screams at you. Murderer, it hisses. You don’t deserve anything.

Sans continues. “Normally, I’d kick you high and dry back to where you belong,” his voice grows dangerous at that word, but quickly relaxes as he resumes. “But I have a feeling there’s more to this story. Cold blooded murderers don’t usually walk all the way here with little girls on their backs.” He shrugs, but all you feel is fear. “So, I’m gonna give you one chance to convince me to let you stay with your sister.”

You only feel a bit of relief enter your system, and you know your story won’t be enough to convince him, but you tell him anyway.

“Two years ago, my family was caught in a car accident.” You don’t hear him suck in a breath like most people do when you tell them how your parents died. There’s no reaction from him. You continue. “My parents were killed, and my left eye was destroyed.” You turn to him, brushing the hair you’d let fall over the left side of your face away to show your wound. “It was just me and Rei. I was going to sell the house we’d lived in, get some extra money from it, but some family members said they wanted to check it out. Then they stole it from us. We were left without a home and without money. We were starving. Rei almost died. But I… I knew there was somewhere I could go to earn money. Lots of it. There was a fighting ring.” You pause, taking in a breath. “And there were requests. To hurt people. To kill them,” you choke around the lump forming in your throat. You’d numbed yourself to the shame of becoming a murderer in the west, but here, in front of this skeleton that you know is judging you, you feel angry with yourself as you remember the pleading cries of those you killed. They had families to go home to. And you killed them. Perfect strangers, and you killed them with hard eyes.

You deserve to die.

“The money was good… so I did it. Only for the hope that me and Rei could get enough money to live well. I was able to put her through school, see?” You cut yourself off, only to start again. “And then when someone gave us a place to stay, I stopped. I didn’t want to… no.” You take a deep breath, and turn to the quiet skeleton before you. “I take full responsibility for the criminal I am. I won’t say I didn’t want to do it, because I did. I needed to do it for the money. But please, please, don’t turn my sister away. They were gonna kill her there. Just find somewhere safe for her, please.” You stop, feeling your hope die out, feeling like the world hates you. You just wish you can die. But, no. You have to stay strong. At least until you know Rei will be safe. Then, maybe you’ll take your own life.

Boney arms wind around your limp ones, and you blink in surprise. The short skeleton, who’d listened to your story in silence, is hugging you. Not in any sort of important way, just a sort of awkward hug from one stranger to another.
“don’t kill yourself,” he says. “somewhere out there, someone really cares about you. so don’t kill yourself, for them.”

Oh, had you thought that out loud?

“yep,” he says. Then he hops away from you, looking at you with all the wrath and justice in his eyes as a real judge. Then, in a creepy, almost terrifying voice, he says, “you have been judged.”

You shiver, awaiting your fate.

“You can stay in the east, if you want. monsters are good at telling rotten apples from fresh ones, and you, my human friend, are a fresh apple,” he pipes.

You blink once. Then again. He’s… not throwing you out? After hearing how you’d murdered people for money?

“Don’t… don’t you think I’m a murderer?” you ask. He grins.

“oh, there’s no doubt about it, you’re a murderer. but, I don’t think you’ll ever kill for the fun of it, nor will you ever really even do it again, and if you did,” He leans in close, his voice dropping so low you can barely even hear it, “don’t think I’ve never killed before either.”

You shriek, jumping up in mid-air. You’d felt something sharp poke your back, like a knife, while he’d told you he’s murdered someone before, too.

You look at this man, who seems so comfortable.

To others, he might look like a lazy monster with an up-to-no-good smile, but you can tell the difference.

Nothing really can escape your perceptive eye.

Sans is dangerous, someone to be watched. He’s someone with hidden strengths, and unknown intelligence. You can see his bright mind from the way his eyes gauge your reactions.

Then he frowns, and you feel it’s the first time you’ve seen his lazy grin fall off of his face.

“that’s weird,” he mutters.

“What?” you ask worriedly.

“your lv and exp just disappeared,” he says. “it looks like… you’ve never killed anyone at all.”
To Start Again

Chapter Summary

You find yourself looking for somewhere to crash. What you don't expect is the complete confusion that comes in the form of a very scaly, very blue fish monster.

Chapter Notes

Fuhuhu...
Yes, I like this a lot.
Also,
Come see me.

That’s not possible. You stare at the skeleton dumbly. You’re pretty sure you remember killing other people.

It’s not like the people you killed were exactly innocent. You’d always refused to kill people who’d done nothing wrong—no matter how much they paid. You’d research your victims, making sure they were actually people who deserved to die, and then you’d carry out your dirty work.

You’d only kill people who deserved to die.

Like you deserve to die.

You shake your head, clearing your thoughts, and look at the skeleton again. Finally, he speaks.

“i’ve never seen this happen before. lv stays with a human forever, no matter how much they regret it.” You shiver, knowing well how much you’ve regretted killing people over the past month you’ve had to reflect on.

And yet, you’d do it again, if only to Rei live a normal life.

The birds in the garden chirp as Sans continues to stare at your soul, seeing something only he could see. It hurts your eyes to focus on it, but you can see that it isn’t as healthy as Rei’s. It has a shrunken, broken look to it, like it’s been through the worst of what the world has to offer.

You want to reach out, to touch it, see if it feels as weak as it looks.

Your hands are halfway to it when Sans grips your hands in an iron hold.

“don’t,” he says. “you could kill yourself if you touched that.”

Kill yourself?
Oh, boy.

Finally, Sans sighs and the heart disappears. You feel relieved and tired, almost as if having your soul out in the open for that long was dangerous and exhausting. You hadn’t even noticed how uncomfortable having your soul out in the open had made you.

“let’s go back inside the hall. there’s still some talking we need to do.”

Sans had taken you inside to hall to talk about living options, explaining to you about all the apartments available, not to mention the townhouses located sparingly throughout the city. He also mentioned the full-on houses located near the outskirts of the city, but you’d immediately dismissed the idea. A house would be way too much money.

He’d even mentioned jobs, giving you a knowing look as he told you that they had sustainable pay- he’s taken a few odd jobs himself, he said, but they were all safe jobs, he’d assured you.

Now, you listen to him as he rattles of a list of different parks and other points of interest recommended to visit.

Funny, it almost seems like Sans has become a tour guide, you muse.

Finally, after long talks and giving you options for places to crash before you have yourself a stable job, Sans releases you back into the city, laden down with armfuls of brochures and magazines. He pats you on the back as you walk out the door.

Stepping out onto the sidewalk, you let out a breath of relief, looking back at Sans with silent gratefulness.

He hadn’t mentioned anything of your past to Rei, respecting your wishes to not have your sister’s image of you ruined.

Walking down the street with your luggage, you notice monsters acting differently than how they’d been last night. Instead of frowning at you, they smile. Some monsters even manage to stop and congratulate you.

What’s that all about?

there was a girl and her kid sister that showed up in the judgement hall today. the kiddo was alright, but the one in grey…

i could tell. she’s done bad things. she had a high lv.

not nearly as high as when frisk decided to go on a genocidal route, but still high.

when i’d told her, though, that was where i was surprised.

she hadn’t burst into fake tears and pleaded for mercy, like all the others did. she hadn’t wailed that she never had wanted to do it- no, she’d taken full responsibility for it.
then she pleaded for me to not kick her sister out of the city, back to where they came from.  
not a single regard for her own self.  even said she’d probably kill herself.  
reminded me of myself, not too long ago.  
that was where i snapped.  i’d been suicidal once- all i’d needed was a hug.  so i hugged her.  
it was only for her sister, i’d told myself.  she can’t kill herself, only so she can see her sister grow up.  just like i’d held on for my brother.  
she still has yet to appreciate the stars and the rest of the world around her.  
yep, that girl was interesting alright.  even went straight on to show her monster of an eye to me.  
undyne would love that.  
but it was weird.  
her soul was unhealthy.  shriveled and scarred.  yet, it also had a strong aura to it, potent enough that i knew if she was any other normal human, she’d already be dead.  
if her hope wasn’t enough to go by.  3 hp.  i’ve only ever seen a single hp stat lower than that.  
i’ll have to keep an eye socket on that champ.  

You check the bulletin board outside the activity center a block away.  Upon it, advertisements for tutoring and jobs are posted.  
You rifle through sticky notes and flyers until you find what you’re looking for.  

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO CRASH?  

Need a totally rad pair of roomies?  

Call us at xxx-xxx-xxxx.  

We’ll be holding roomie TRYOUTS!  

Perfect. You just need a place you can stay until you’ve got enough money for you and Rei.  Your sister is by your side, full of energy from all the sleeping she got yesterday.  Honestly, she already looks better.  
You’d been worried that she’d start to ache… but she hasn’t even complained.  It’s a little to good for you to be completely unworried.  
“Hey, Rei?”  you ask.  “Are you… okay?  Like, you’re not hurting or anything, right, kiddo?”  you ask as you begin to punch the number on the flyer in.  
“I feel great!”  she says.
Your brow furrows. Okay… That’s odd. She has lymphatic cancer, and she’s able to talk without her throat hurting. After two days of no treatment. That’s not just weird, it’s unheard of.

You frown in thought. There has to be some sort of connection here. You pull her out of that hellhole of a hospital, and suddenly she’s able to run and talk like a normal kid her age, even though she’d only been able to lift her head off of her bed for the past month?

Rage builds up, turning your vision red.

_Just what were they doing to your sister._

_Slap_!

You blink from the sting, and see that your hand has come up of its own will and slapped you. Rei’s looking at you with a shocked expression on her face. While you’re mildly surprised at yourself for unconsciously slapping yourself, you’re glad that you’d been able to pull yourself out of your anger. With what you’ve done in the past… you shudder. Who knows what you would have done in that ireful state. Way to make a good first impression, Y/n.

“Y/n… are you okay?” Rei asks. Oh, right. She just saw you slap yourself. You rush to tell her you’re fine, then hit the call button on your phone for the potential roommates before she can question you further.

You don’t want your little sister to see how messed up you really are.

_Ring… ring…_

_Beep!_

“Hello?” The voice that picks up at the other end of the line is deep but definitely feminine. Perfect. Female roommates are a lot less likely to do anything weird.

“Hi,” You say sheepishly. “I saw your roommate flyer… I was wondering if you still had the space?”

“HELL YES!” The voice exclaims. “We’ve been waiting for SO LONG for anyone to respond to that ad!” Uh, wow. Gee, that person really is… excitable.

“Oh, uh… do you have room for one adult and one kid?” you ask.

When the voice speaks next, it sounds dubious. “A kid? I dunno…” You hurry to speak.

“She can take care of herself- we just can’t be separated, a- and we only need to live there for a short time before we can buy a house for ourselves. We’re sisters,” you rush.

“Sisters?”

“Yeah.”

“COOL! It’s like, SUPER hard to find siblings nowadays!”

“Oh, uh…”

And then she proceeds to give you an address and directions. It only occurs to you as you put the
phone down that you forgot to tell the other side that you’re human.

You hope she’s okay with humans.

You stand before the door numbered 33. You’d been able to find a map and navigate toward the apartment building in no time, pulling Rei along with you as she marveled at all the different monsters.

So far, the monsters had been… well, it had been a mixture of reactions. Some of them were scared, even angered by you, yelling at you to leave- but they’d stopped when they got closer, for some reason.

Other monsters beamed at you as you walked past.

Now, you stand in front of the door to the apartment, swallowing. You’d forgotten to tell the residents you were human, and chances are, they’re most likely not human.

You take a deep breath and knock.

_Shuffle, shuffle._

The voice from the phone call speaks.

“Who’s there-” She stops speaking, and you see there’s a peephole in the wooden door.

So she’s seen that you’re human.

The door swings open to reveal a terrifyingly tall blue monster.

She’s scaly, with a shock of red hair cascading down her back. A black eyepatch covers her left eye. You double take- her left eye is blind, like yours?! Her right eye is red, while the “white” of her eye is yellow. Her ears look like fins. So cool. She has scary-sharp teeth poking out of her lips as she frowns down at you.

“We don’t want humans here,” she snarls.

Your shoulders collapse in disappointment. Of course. Monsters have every right to hate humans. Rei, however, doesn’t get the memo.

“You eye is like Y/n’s!” she yells.

The tall woman glances down at Rei, her gaze softening… but she looks back up at you with a hard expression.

“What do you want?” she asks.

You fidget. “You, uh… said you needed roommates?” you say.

“Not anymore.”

_Slam!_
The door shuts in your face as your chest caves in despair. You don’t know what you’ll do now-hers was the only flyer advertising people who needed roommates.

All of a sudden, a squeal comes from behind the door, and it swings open again.

“H- humans!” This time, it’s another monster speaking. She has yellow, scaly skin, and she looks like a dinosaur. Glasses rest on her muzzle, balanced almost precariously.

She wears a cute pink dress adorned with fuschia polka dots. She stares at you with an obviously excited expression on her face. “W-wow! Undyne n-never told me t-that there’d be humans!”

The tall monster from before appears behind the shorter dinosaur monster, still scowling, but the more excitable of the two keeps talking.

“This is so cool! Come in!” She steps out of the way, ushering you and Rei in while the taller monster looks on in anger.

Inside the apartment is… well. It looks like one of the people who live here is quite messy, while the other is a neat freak. As you pass the small kitchen, you can see every surface is scrubbed clean, but it looks like the wall above the stove is scorched black. You pass an office, and every surface is cluttered, papers scattered throughout the room. A random cup of ramen can be seen here and there.

You’re guided into what looks like the living room, and instructed to sit down on the couch. The taller monster drags in two wooden chairs and sits across from you with a huff. She’s obviously not happy about this.

The other monster woman comes rushing in, carrying a tray full of mugs filled with tea. She places the tray on the coffee table in front of you, then plops down next to the tall woman.

“So you’re here for the roommate ad, right?” she asks. You nod, and her eyes actually sparkle. Literally. “EEE!” she squeals, and then she faints.

The other monster seems to take this as an opportunity to speak. “If you’re gonna move in, you have to be okay with us being monsters,” she says.

You can’t help it. You let out a laugh and gesture to the space around you. “We’re literally the only humans we’ve seen all day?” you say. “We probably would have been kicked out of here if we weren’t okay with monsters, right, Rei?” you ask your sister.

She beams and nods. “Monsters are cool!” she says.

The tall monster grins at her before remembering herself. “Darn right we’re cool, punk. Anyway, I’m Undyne,” she says, then points at the smaller monster. “And that’s Alphys. We’re girlfriends.” Her tone dares you to challenge her. You shrug.

When you were in middle school, one of your best friends had been gay. He was nice- but you’d lost contact with him after high school.

Undyne speaks again. “So… you are…?”

You start, realizing you haven’t introduced yourself yet. “U-uh, I’m Y/n. Y/n L/n, and this is Rei, my little sister,” you say quickly.

Undyne leans in toward Rei. “‘Sup, punk,” she says as she holds up a fist for Rei to pound. They fist bump. Undyne looks back at you. “So, uh, I heard your sister say something as having an eye
like mine?” She gestures at her eyepatch and you grin.

Shoving your hair away from the left side of your face, you bare your eye at Undyne, making sure Rei can’t see. It’s a pretty gruesome wound.

Undyne’s face twists in what looks like a look caught between fascination and disgust. “If you live here,” she says, “You’re going to at least use some of my eye patches. I’m not letting you walk around with that where everyone can see it.”

The interview went great. When Alphys finally came to, she’s enthusiastically questioned you on what shows you liked (to which, of course, Rei launched into a rant about James Bond. The two had their own little conversation after that). Undyne took over telling you things that you’d have to be okay with- and rules you’d have to follow. She’d asked questions about your personal life, but then she asks about Sans.

“So, I’m guessing that if you’re looking for places to live here, you’ve already been to the judgement hall,” she says. You nod, remembering the oddly terrifying skeleton called Sans. She continues. “So… how’d you manage not to run away screaming after meeting Sans?” she asks.

You shrug. “He didn’t seem all too bad. Just checked us and told us points of attraction- then sent us on our merry way.” You don’t tell her about the garden conversation. No one needs to know about that.

“Really? Usually, any human who comes here is scarred by meeting Sans. He’s usually a pretty laid-back guy, but somehow, for all his laziness, he makes the best judge,” she thinks aloud.

You nod, thinking at how well he’d been able to understand your position, and Rei’s ability to persevere.

“Well, if you managed to get past Sans, you’re probably a good person,” Undyne huffs. “You’re welcome to stay with us- as long as you don’t do anything stupid!” she adds.

Rei, who’d heard your conversation, screams and jumps on your lap. “Y/n! We can stay! We can stay! I can talk with Ms. Alphys about anime!” You beam at Rei.

“Yeah, kiddo.” You give Undyne and Alphys a silent look of gratitude.

“Well! I better show you your rooms,” Undyne announces.

She shows Rei her room first, watching as the girl bounces into the room with gusto, gushing over the view of the city from her window, and how comfortable the bed is.

She shows you your room next. It’s a small room, but it’s fine for you. Used to sleeping in chairs because of the past month of living in a hospital room, the bed looks like the most comfy thing in the world. The window is clothed by heavy blue curtains, and as you push them aside, you can see a perfect view of the city skyline. The walls of the room are painted a calming pastel blue, and the wood of the furniture is bleached white.

It feels like… like the sea? No, like the sky on a clear summer day.

You turn to the fish monster, grinning like mad. “Thanks,” you say.

“No problem,” is her reply as she plops down on a chair in the corner. “Since we’re gonna be living
together, I might as well get to know you better. What’s your favorite color?” she asks.

“I might have said grey before, but I’m thinking blue after seeing this room.”

“Yeah?”

“Yep.”

“Alright. How about this? Are you more into shows and books, or working out?”

You think. You’ve always loved reading- but going to a gym and working on your strength and endurance has been fun, you’ve found. “I like both, but I’d probably go work out, if I had the choice.”

“NEAT! We’re gonna be besties, punk!”

Undyne’s previous reservations about you are gone. She seems to have accepted the fact that you’re human- and is now excited about the fact that you like to work out.

“You like to work out?”

“LIKE TO? I LOVE to!”

“Huh.”

“FUHUHU! Let’s go! As your new roommate, I have to show you around town- I’m honor-bound! First, let’s get you an eyepatch!”

You’re dragged from your new room and into Undyne’s.

Cool.

You haven’t really had a friend since high-school.

Maybe things will start to look up for you, now that you’re somewhere where you can start anew.

Chapter End Notes

It seems like you just might have to spend some quality time with your new best friend next chapter.

How will that end out?

*shudders*

You don’t wanna know.
You find yourself having a day out with Undyne, your new best friend, and find that spaghetti is a dish best served...
Burnt?

I AM SO SORRY FOR DISAPPEARING FOR A WEEK!
I feel really bad, but I had to go on hiatus for a multitude of things, including a vacation (with absolutely no internet).
So... sorry.
On the bright side, I got a lot of time to think and write.
Enjoy!

Being dragged around the city by an enthusiastic fish lady has its benefits and not-benefits.

For one, your wrist hurts more than it should, having been gripped by Undyne as she dragged you out of your new home.

She’d pulled you onto the sidewalk, commenting on different buildings as you passed them.

You’re still walking down the road as she talks.

“Oh! That bar over there- Grillby’s- is like, the BEST place for burgers- my friend Sans- wait, you know him- doesn’t matter- Sans goes there ALL THE TIME!” She speaks in a rush, skipping from thought to thought, leaving you dazed and confused. You like listening to her though. Even if it hurts your head to try and keep up with her words, her enthusiasm is infectious, and you listen to her words with interest. You’re usually quiet around new people and places, so her talking is perfect for you to relax.

That is, until she grabs your arm and starts sprinting.

“C’mon, punk! I gotta show you the gym! It’s NEAT!” she yells as you practically flop around behind her, struggling to get your feet on the ground so you can keep up. Her grip is iron, and it’s starting to hurt your arm.

Once your toes hit the sidewalk, you’re off and running, fearing being left behind.

You catch up to her, breathing hard- man, this woman is in shape! She’s practically sprinting, and yet she’s running long distance. She hasn’t even broken a sweat yet!

Your mind steels itself, competitive as always. You need to be faster than her.

Your competitiveness is what had you working harder than all your classmates in high school. You
got good grades- you made state for every sport you played.

You always worked yourself until you passed out.

When you and Undyne finally reach the large grey building that’s signified as the gym by the depiction of weights on the front, you’re almost completely burnt out, breathing hard from all the running.

Undyne’s gazing at you impressed. “You kept up with me?!” she asks in bewilderment.

“Why… why wouldn’t I be able to?” you wheeze in annoyance. Does she think you’re not able to keep up with her? Pfft. As if. You can do anything.

Undyne lets out a laugh. “Monsters are made out of magic, dumbass. We have a higher stamina and energy threshold, since our bodies aren’t entirely physical. To be honest, we don’t even need to breathe, so we don’t get tired when we lift weights or run.”

You blink at Undyne. “WHAT?!” you practically shout. You’d totally thought that she’d been beating you out of pure fitness level. Then a thought occurs to you. “Then why do you have a gym in a monster-populated city?”

“I said our bodies weren’t entirely physical. We have some needs, such as the need to eat food- but it’s special food- but we also need to keep our bodies strong. It takes concentration to focus on the stability of our bodies. Some monsters choose to amplify the power of their magic- leaving their bodies weak, since they don’t have much power left to focus on it. Some monsters rely heavily upon the state of their bodies, and instead have weak magical abilities.” Undyne gives you a toothy grin. “And others still decide to WORK and focus on both- so they are STRONG EVERYWHERE!”

The tall fish woman grabs your shoulder and drags you into the gym.

Through the doors, you see… a typical gym.

Turf takes over one half of the floor space, while the other half is filled with treadmills, weight machines, and other fitness-contraptions. There’s a second floor, where, by the tone of the shouts, you can guess a class is taking place. Monsters are scattered here and there throughout the gym, some using the machines, others running on the mini-track that circles the turf, and others resting on benches.

Undyne pulls you over to a bench press, instructing you to put 300 lbs on each side of the bar and spot her.

Your eyebrows must have raised into your hairline, because Undyne gives you a look that clearly says, “what?” You sigh and heave three of the hundred-pound weights onto each side of the bar. Then you stand at the head of the press and hope for Undyne’s sake that she doesn’t drop it.

She climbs under the bar, raising her hands to the metal, and lifts the bar with no problem.

You watch in growing awe as she does fifty reps before standing up and pointing at you.

“Your turn, punk!” she says.

You glance between her and the weight. Nope. You’re noping out of this. Usually you’d be up for a challenge, but that will break your arms.

Undyne isn’t having any of your tomfoolery. She grabs your retreating shoulders and shoves you
onto the press.

God save you.

“UNDYNE!” an enthusiastic voice coming from the entrance of the gym is your god today.

Seriously. All hail the voice that just prevented a human death in this gym.

The voice that shouted Undyne’s name was slightly nasal, with a bit of a rasp to it that you know it’s an adult male monster.

You practically leap off the press to see two monsters walking toward you.

The first is a tall skeleton, which reminds you of Sans, the terrifying skeleton monster who’d judged you.

The tall skeleton is clothed in a loose t-shirt that doesn’t meet his waist, baring a thin, white spine for all to see. Around his hips, short red basketball shorts hang down to his knees. He wears a baseball cap, and, oddly enough, a red scarf is wrapped around his neck, the tattered tail fluttering heroically behind him. You furrow your brows. Isn’t it warm out? Why would he be wearing a scarf?

A huge grin is plastered on his face as he envelops Undyne in what seems to be a warm hug.

“I HAVEN’T SEEN YOU AT THE GYM IN SO LONG!” the skeleton says. The fish woman straightens to talk to the friendly skeleton.

“You saw me yesterday, Papyrus,” she reminds him.

“Oh, yes. Well, it’s been a while since I saw you... hanging out with another person!” the skeleton says as he notices you. Then he notices that you’re a human person. “Let me rephrase that; it’s been a while since I last saw you with a human.”

You immediately flush. The skeleton is quite loud; you look around to see if anyone’s attention has been caught by the commotion, but they’re all ignoring the ruckus, fortunately. It seems as if they’re used to this type of behavior.

Finally, the second monster you’d seen with the taller skeleton moves into view.

You blink in surprise. It’s Sans! You hadn’t taken him for much of a gym attendee.

So much so, in fact, that you voice this thought. “Fancy seeing you here,” you address the smaller of the two skeletons.

He gives you a slow grin. “You got it wrong, toots. My brother’s the workout guy. I’m just here to get keep track of him.” To throw emphasis on his joke, Sans gestures at the track.

The taller skeleton, who you’d presume is Sans’ brother, groans audibly. “Please excuse my brother’s horrible sense of humor, human. Not all of us skeletons are like that,” he says.

You giggle. “No, no. It’s quite alright, sir. In fact, I’ve been weight- ing to hear a good joke all day,” you quip, a sly smile forming on your lips.

A choked laugh of surprise escapes Sans as the tall skeleton groans in exasperation. “I see. He has already gotten to you with his wretched behavior.”
You’re about to laugh when Undyne’s hand clamps down on your shoulder.

“ALRIGHT, punk! Since my buddy Papyrus here showed up, I’ve decided he’d be a much better workout partner! Go… do stuff with Sans!” she bellows, and shoves you at Sans.

With your back turned to the fish monster, you don’t see the wicked smile on her face.

You glance at Sans, taking in his blue hoodie and black basketball shorts once more.

You scratch your head head the awkward silence that ensues. “To be honest, I thought I wouldn’t see you ever again after today,” you say.

The skeleton’s grin widens ever-so-slightly. “indeed,” he says. “the east side is very small, bucko. chances were you were gonna see me again at some point. i’m unavoidable.”

Your easy smile becomes not-so-easy at the subtle threat.

Glancing back at the taller skeleton and Undyne, you see that the skeleton is doing quick reps with the weights Undyne had been using earlier.

You swallow. “Can all monsters do that?” you ask. It looks so natural to Undyne and the other skeleton.

A hollow laugh is heard from your side. “hardly. as far as i know, paps and undyne are the only monsters that can do that.”

You let out a sigh of relief, having feared all monsters had the ability to pick up a horse with no problem. “Why can they do that, then?” you ask, gesturing at Undyne and the skeleton, who you assume to be the one everyone calls Papyrus.

“undyne was the strongest monster in the underground, before we moved out. paps trained under her for a couple of years, so he got pretty powerful too.”

“I bet,” you observe. It’s not hard to imagine Undyne as a powerful figure to the monsters, she has an ambitious nature. One full of energy so strong it’s nearly violent- she fits the role of strongest perfectly.

You study the tall skeleton beside her. He is of tall, athletic stature, though he bounces around the blue-skinned Undyne endlessly, a bundle of bursting energy that doesn’t seem to have a start or end. He helps Undyne with weights and other tools, and you can tell he’s one of helpful character, perhaps even a kind soul. He grins and laughs with her, his smile seeming to be made of eternal happiness.

“watching my brother?” a calm voice from directly next to your left ear has you jumping. Sans stands at your side, his faux-grin tighter than usual.

You grab the hem of your hoodie, pulling on the fabric nervously. “Yeah. ‘M trying to see how he could ever manage to keep up with Undyne without passing out.”

His grin falters a bit before he beams again. “yep. don’t know how he does it.”

…

The two of you sit in terse silence until Undyne decides to end your suffering her workout by coming over to you.
“Alright, punks! You ready to go?” she asks as she wipes her face with a towel. Why does she do that? She’s not sweating.

You cast aside your silent questions, deciding monsters are complicated and it’s better to leave it at that, and nod quickly.

Practically leaping off the bench you’d been content to sit on and watch the monsters work out, you hurry to Undyne’s side, giving a small half-wave to Sans without looking back at him. You may be terrified of him, but that’s not a reason to be rude. Waving is the least you can do.

You may not have had a rich childhood, but at least you were taught some manners.

And good riddance!

By the time you reach the apartment, Undyne has dragged you all over the town, pointing out various tea and flower shops, schools, and other buildings. When you finally pull yourself into your new home, it’s dark out, and everything hurts. Your feet are sore from walking, your arms are sore from being pulled around by a certain blue monster woman, and you have a major headache.

You drag yourself inside to see Rei and Alphys asleep on the couch, leaning on each other. Scattered around them are various mangas, and the tv is turned on, an anime playing at low volume. You let your face soften for a rare genuine smile, then you weave your way around the back of the green couch to grab your baby sister.

Whew, that is one ugly couch, you think as you gather Rei’s sleeping form into your arms. You’ll have to ask the Scales x2 where they got it.

As you lift your little sister, you see Undyne is doing the same for her (albeit larger) girlfriend. The two of you exchange a knowing look before carrying each of your respective charges to their own rooms.

Both of you know what it’s like to have only one person in their life that they love more than anyone, you guess.

You step into Rei’s room, marveling for the first time how the citrus-orange color is perfect for her. The color reminds you of clementines, and how their refreshing taste remind you of Rei’s refreshing personality. She has the wood of her furniture bleached white as well, but you can tell that something has been done to make the smell of citrus waft through the air.

Setting her gently on her bed, you let the drafty canopy close around her, leaving her to rest in her room.

Softly shutting the door to her room, you let your feet drift over the carpeted floor as you tiredly walk to your room.

Marveling once again at the light blue colors and calming aura of the room you now sleep in, you notice for the first time the faint smell of sweet spring.

The smell prompts you to close your eyes as you lean into the fresh linens of the bed, remembering days of childhood past, before you moved to the city.

Images of rolling green hills flash through your mind as you collapse into the bed.
Shrugging out of your hoodie, you pull yourself to the closet long enough to pull on cotton pajamas before tugging on the sheets of your bed.

The covers cover you with a final *whoosh*, and you’re asleep within seconds.

Somewhere in the middle of the night, your tired mind is aware of a soft blue glow filling the room with soothing light, the dim light washing over all the items in the room.

You dismiss it as a dream.


“WAKE UP, PUNK!” a shout wakens you from your slumber.

Undyne gives you but moments of heads up before she bursts into your room, bringing the smells of breakfast with her.

She’s fully dressed in a tank and dark blue shorts, her hair pulled back into a french braid that sways behind her as she walks across your room to your window.

Pulling the drapes wide with a flourish, Undyne lets the late morning light burst into your dark room as you groan.

“Yeah, yeah. You’ve had enough time to sleep, human,” she says. “It’s almost noon, for god’s sake!”

At her words, you bolt upright in the bed. Almost noon!? You *never* sleep that long. Usually, you keep yourself up all night, worrying about Rei, and sleep fitfully, when-if- you do.

Except… this time you didn’t have to worry about Rei.

You jump out of the bed, still in the blue PJs, and rush over to Rei’s room, pushing past a startled Undyne.

She’s not there.

You begin to panic, thinking she’s run away, or they found her, or-

“Sup, Y/n?” her voice comes from behind you, muffled by the enormous red scarf thrown around her.

Red scarf? Since when did she have one of those?

Nevermind that. You rush to her, throwing your arms around her in a large hug, feeling your fear drain away.

She’s not in her bed, groaning in pain like she used to. If fact…

You hold your slightly protesting little sister in front of you at arm’s length, taking in her face. It’s not drawn, or pale, like you’ve grown accustomed to seeing.

Her cheeks are rosy, color lighting up her face. Her eyes aren’t sunken, but rather glitter in the light of the room.

“Ew, Y/n why are you staring at me like that?” she says.
You can’t help it. You let out a sob of laughter. “You okay, kiddo? You’re not in pain or anything?”

Her eyes grow serious for a second, as they seldom do, and she gives you a nod, acknowledging your question. “I’m okay, sis.”

Then she runs out of the room, giggling, and you hear her feet pitter-patter all the way down to the kitchen, where you can Undyne and Alphys moving around. You know Rei is hardly as innocent or idiotic as she likes to act- in fact, she’d never come home with a grade lower than an A when she went to school. Your little sister is brilliant, but she constantly feels the need to hide it.

You sigh and stand up, walking out of the room and down the hall.

Undyne’s head pops out from the kitchen, and she visibly sweats at the sight of your PJs, which you haven’t changed out of yet.

“Uh, you might want to change,” she says.

You grunt a dismissal at her words. You haven’t had coffee yet.

You hope monsters have coffee. Do they? You step into the kitchen, ignoring everyone, heading straight for the coffee maker you spot on the opposite wall.

The pot lets out a lovely smell, and you thank your lucky stars someone has already made coffee- and left some over for you to take!

You glance at the cupboard, trying to figure out where the mugs are. Taking a guess, you open a random door, seeing plates and bowls stacked on the shelves.

Try again.

After a bit of trial and error, you find the mugs, and grabbing a blue one to match your PJs, you pour yourself a cup of coffee.

You don’t take any sugar or cream in your coffee, preferring the bitter taste over the sweetness of the condiments.

You finally turn to acknowledge your housemates.

“heh. didn’t know you liked blue, toots,” a now familiar voice says.

You gasp as you finally see the pair of skeletons sitting at the counter of the kitchen, Undyne and Alphys fidgeting behind them. Rei sits next to the one you recognize as Papyrus, giggling into a red scarf.

You slowly lift the mug, taking a long sip without looking away from the skeletons.

Finally, you put down the mug. “Why do I feel like I keep seeing you too often?” you ask Sans.

He shrugs.

You sigh and shuffle toward your room, muttering that you’d have to get changed.

The guests begin to turn to each other when you leave, Undyne and Alphys sharing a knowing-and-also-slightly-mischievous look, Papyrus and Rei talking, and Sans watching the hallway you’d retreated down, seemingly deep in thought.
When you finally come back to the main part of the apartment, you’re greeted by Undyne, Rei, and Papyrus cooking in the kitchen while Sans and Alphys sit on the green couch, watching some anime on the TV.

A shouted “heads up!” draws your attention to the cooking trio as you hear a large crash and boom. The sight that greets you makes you want to laugh. Red marinara sauce has boiled over a pot and exploded, splattering red sauce all over the wall above the stove, and covering the three forms standing in the kitchen.

You know the marinara is harmless, and it’s quite comical, how it managed to make the entire kitchen red, but you tense as you see Rei freeze.

Her shoulders start to shake, and you hold your breath, willing her to stay calm.

No such luck.

Rei lets out a loud wail, and you rush forward as all the monsters in the room turn to look at her.

You envelop her frail form in your arms, pulling her to the floor, sitting with her and whispering soothing words into her ear.

“OH NO! THE SMALL HUMAN IS WAILING! WHAT DID WE DO, UNDYNE?” Papyrus asks from his spot in front of the stove.

Rei looks at him, absolutely covered in the red marinara sauce, and cries even harder.

“Out!” you yell. “Everyone out of the kitchen!” You wave your hand at the living room, where Sans and Alphys watch in bewildered silence, gesturing to both Undyne and Papyrus, who are drenched in the red spaghetti sauce.

The two tall monsters leave immediately, heading toward the bathroom to wash up and leaving you with your sobbing sister.

“It’s okay,” you say to Rei. “You’re fine. It happened a long time ago, Rei. It’s not gonna happen again. Everyone’s fine, okay?”

Rei clutches your shoulder and sobs into it, staining your hoodie with her tears.

“the kiddo alright?” asks a deep voice. You jump. You hadn’t even seen Sans come into the kitchen.

“She’s just… jumpy,” you say. You want the skeleton to leave desperately right now. You just can’t deal with Sans and Rei at the same time right now.

“related to the car accident?”

You frown. “Where did you hear about that?”

“you told me about it.”

Oh. When he checked your soul, you’d told him your parents died in a car crash. “...Yeah. It’s about the car accident.”

“can i talk to her?”

You look up to see Sans hovering over you and Rei, looking at the kiddo with concerned eyes.
How two pinpricks of light in inexpressive eye sockets can look concerned escapes you.

“...Fine,” you reluctantly agree. To be honest, you want to keep Sans as far away from Rei as you can, but you feel as if you’ve got to give the guy some credit. He’d been kind enough to hear you out, and even after listening to your crappy excuses, he’d let you stay with your sister. Besides, it seems as if he and his brother are friends with Undyne and Alphys, so he’ll eventually have to be near Rei at some point.

He sits in front of Rei with his legs crossed. Rei pulls her head away from your shoulder long enough to glance at him, then presses her face into your chest again, her wailing renewed. You cringe, knowing that looking at a skeleton might be a bit insensitive.

“Hey, kiddo. Wanna hear a joke?” Sans asks.

You shoot the skeleton an incredulous look. Seriously? This is hardly the time for jokes. He just shoots a look back at you that says trust me.

Rei clutches your arms, but nods into your hoodie.

“Chefs always have the hardest time choosing what type of noodles to cook. The pastabilities are endless,” Sans

A nasal scream of exasperation can be heard from down the hall, along with a deep chuckle from Undyne.

You let out a chuckle of your own. Okay, considering the situation, you have no choice but to laugh.

Feeling your chest jump from your laughs, Rei lets out a little giggle, and lets out a cute little snort as she giggles.

You laugh harder, the snort seeming funny to you, for some reason. Rei laughs harder too, until you’re both a snorting, laughing mess.


Once your laughter dies down, you and Rei sit up, wiping tears from both of your eyes.

“Feeling better, kiddo?” Sans asks. He’d laughed a little too, but now he’s grinning at Rei, who nods.

Rei jumps up and runs out of the room and down the hall. A few seconds later, you hear Papyrus shout.

“NOOO! LITTLE HUMAN, DON’T HUG ME! I JUST FINISHED WIPING MYSELF OFF!”

You snort at the thought of what must have just happened, but then you realize you’re in a room with Sans.

Alone.

You look at the skeleton, who’s looking at you.

Oh hell nah.

“Would you look at that! I have to go search for... jobs!” you say, jumping up quickly.
“wait.”

You freeze at the sound of San’s voice.

“y/n, we need to talk.”
A Pub that Doesn't Serve Pizza

Chapter Summary

You and Sans have a "talk."
No, not that type of talk.
Get your minds out of the gutter.

“y/n, we need to talk.”

You turn to see him standing, looking at you with determination in his eyes.

You desperately want to nope out of this situation, but you know that that’s not what a responsible adult would do. Screw being responsible.

“What?” you snap, perhaps sounding a little too annoyed, because the skeleton grimaces, then he straightens and stares into your eye.

“you’re avoiding me,” he says.

You blink, then narrow your eye. Seriously? “You’re a stranger,” you say. “I don’t know you, except for when we met in the judgement hall.”

He laughs. “i suppose. though, most people don’t do everything they can to avoid talking to a stranger or be left alone with them.”

You scoff. “Yeah, I guess. Unless that certain stranger managed to scare the shit out of them when they first met.”

“i scared you?”

“Have you even heard that scary-ass voice you used? Plus, you basically threatened to kill me if I decided to become a mass murderer.”

“it got the point across.”

“Well, yeah.”

“look…”

“Yeah, yeah. Sorry, it’s just… life was hard, before. If someone used that voice on you, you either killed them or lived your life in fear that they’d be coming to kill you at any given moment, and I’m not planning on killing anyone anytime soon.”

“humans are like that.” Flat tone. Not a question- an observation. A truth.

“Yeah. We suck.”

“no argument there.”
“Asshole monster.”
“dirty human.”
“...”
“Screw you.”
“i’d screw me too.”
“Dammit, Sans!”

Sans and Papyrus eventually leave, and Undyne and Alphys leave to do something called “cosplay.”
They wear funny costumes as they leave.

That leaves you and Rei home alone to clean the remains of Papyrus and Undyne’s chaotic cooking session.

You set Rei up in the living room to watch movies while you scrub the counters clean of red sauce and stray noodles.

Undyne and Papyrus had cooked noodles while Rei, Sans, Alphys and you all played monopoly in the living room on the green couch.

Or rather, Sans watched as Rei, Alphys and you all played monopoly.

The finished dish of spaghetti had been served at the wooden table found in the kitchen.

The food was… indescribable?

Needless to say, you’ve volunteered to take over the cooking for the household. Rei and Alphys, who’d struggled to swallow the food had looked at you with faces of gratitude.

Once you grow tired of trying to rid the kitchen of the smell of burnt noodles, you open a window and join your sister on the couch.

She’s watching one of the newer Bond movies. Mission Impossible plays as an impeccably-dressed man jumps over buildings, aerial shots capturing the long drop he has to make if he falls.

“What’s going on, monkey?” you ask Rei, patting the scarf wrapped around her head. Apparently, Papyrus gave her one of his scarves when he learned Rei lived with the Scales x2 and announced she could use it as a bandana.

She hisses at you, pulling your hand off her head pushing it away. “ Shhh, James is gonna get the bad guy!” she says.


You notice too late the glint in her eyes as she turns to you. Uh oh. Time for a James Bond rant.

It’s not a rant. Or even anything regarding James Bond, for that matter.

“What do you think about Mr. Sans, Y/n?” she asks, a mischievous glint in her eyes.
You shrug. “He’s… nice?” you try.

“Do you… like him?” she inquires, her voice getting lower.

Your eye narrows. Where is she going with this? “...Yeah?” you say.

She practically squeals. “I SHIP IT!”

What the hell? You squint at your little sister. What is she talking about? “Are you okay, Rei?”

“BETTER THAN OKAY!”

“...What is ‘ship?’”

Rei has been giggling ever since you talked to her on the couch, and when Alphys and Undyne got home from their “cosplay,” she’d whispered in their ears.

When she whispered to Alphys, the nerdy monster screeched and let out giggles, muttering something about “OTPs.” Undyne’s just been shooting you odd looks and laughing creepily.

You leave the apartment at around six at night, looking for take-out.

Apparently, the east side doesn’t have any food delivery services.

You’d shrugged off the apologies from Undyne and Alphys when you found out, and decided you’d just go out and get some food for everyone.

It’s funny. If someone asked you a few days ago if you’d ever trust anyone enough to leave Rei alone with them, much less live with them, you’d have laughed in their face.

Now, only after two days, you’re okay with leaving Rei in an apartment with one scary-ass monster and one nerdy monster, who you’re pretty sure is a genius.

You’ve seen the weird contraptions Alphys makes before. One time, you’d been walking past Alphys’s room when you’d heard a man’s voice coming through her door.

“Alphys, darling. You simply must move closer to me! That way, we can do the checkups much more frequently. Hm?”

“I designed you to be more stable than that, M-Mettaton. You know I only have to check on you once a year. Y-you’re lucky I’m l- letting you come once a m-month.”

“But my robot parts ache!”

“That’s gonna happen until you fully bind with your body!”

“Fine…”

Later, you’d seen a tall, robotic looking creature leave the apartment when Alphys thought no one was looking. He’d been wearing a lot of pink.

You bring yourself back to the present. Across the street, you spot a pub- Grillby’s. Pubs have pizza, right?
You certainly hope so.

Crossing the street, you hurry down the sidewalk, until you’re just outside the door of the pub.

The neon lights advertise popular brands of beer, as well as signify to the world that the building is open.

You open the door, hearing a bell chime, and step inside.

The place is packed.

Monsters fill every table, and even the bar is almost full. The only seat left open is one near the center of the counter. On the right of the seat, a dog in a… tank top… sits hunched over. On the left, a bunny has collapsed onto the bar, several empty cups of beer surrounding her.

You wade between the crowds of people, making your way up to the bar, where a fire elemental polishes glasses behind it.

You wave to catch his attention.

“Hey,” you say. “Do you guys serve pizza here?”

The elemental doesn’t say anything, just crackles and pops, like a… well, like a fire.

“he doesn’t speak english.”

You turn, incredulous. “Seriously, Sans? How many times will we keep meeting each other like this?”

A shrug. “hey, if i didn’t know any better, i’d say you were stalking me. this is my favorite hang-out.”

You snort, but you remember vaguely Undyne mentioning to you how much time Sans spends here. “Whatever. Do they serve pizza here?”

Sans smirks at you. “do you think my old friend grillbz here would stoop so low as to serve that stuff?” he asks. “nah. he does have good fries, though. and burgs.” He leans past you, at the fire elemental behind the counter. “hey, grillbz. can i get…”

“Four burgs,” you say, knowing that Sans is struggling to figure out how many you need.

“make it five burgs. oh, and a ketchup.”

The monster, who you’d suppose is Grillby, crackles and disappears into a back room.

While you and Sans wait, the latter plops himself in a chair. “so what’s with all the accidental meetings? can’t get enough of me, toots?”

“Hardly,” you say.

“ouch, that stings.” He grins at you with a smile that screams trouble. You’re about to respond when another voice cuts you off.

“Hey, you’re that human, right?” asks a voice from right behind you. You turn to see two dog monsters, both wearing matching black hoodies, staring at you. They seem to be a couple.
"I suppose," you say.

"We just want to say…" starts the female.

"That it’s pretty cool to have another human in town," finishes the male. “It’s not often humans ever make it over here, and if they do, they don’t stay for very long.”

You smile. “Well, unless anyone plans on kicking me out, I guess I’ll be staying here for a while.”

The dog monsters grin, and give you their names; Dogamy and Dogaressa. Then they bid you farewell, mentioning a poker game they have to return to.

In the time you’d been talking to Dogamy and Dogaressa, Grillby had come back with your order in a bag, and a bottle of ketchup for Sans.

You start to pull out your wallet to pay, but Sans stops you.

“i’ll pay, toots.”

Nuh uh. You shake your head and hold out your hand, full of money, to the fire elemental. Before Sans can try to stop you, you give Grillby your money, having pre-calculated the cost.

You’ve seen that move before. Do something for someone, and then they owe you, no matter how small the favor. You’re already in debt to Undyne and Alphys for letting you live with them. You’d been in debt when you were at the hospital. You don’t like having to owe anyone anything.

“Bye, Sans,” you say, grabbing the food, but leaving the ketchup and one of the burgers for him. You only need four, so giving him one might make up the fact of your rude departure.

He watches you leave in silence.

◆◆◆

The burgs had been delicious. Alphys and Undyne had practically squealed when they picked up on the heavenly scent you brought home with you, and immediately both dug into their burgers.

You and Rei take tentative first bites, but the rest of the burgs had quickly disappeared after that.

You sent Rei to bed, telling her that she could watch anime in the morning when she complained.

With your little sister all tucked in and ready for bed, you start to walk out of her citrus room.

“Y/n! What about my bedtime story?”

You turn to see Rei peeking out of her covers.

“There a specific one you wanna hear?”

“Fluffy Bunny!”

“I don’t know if they have it here.”

“Ms. Undyne said that Papy brought a copy one time and left it with her!”

“I’ll see about it.” You walk out of her room and down the hall to Undyne and Alphys’ room, knocking on the door.
You hear frantic scrabbling inside the room, along with a few hissed commands such as “hide the drawings!” Finally, Undyne opens the door. Behind her, Alphys is on the bed, sweating nervously and hiding something behind her back.

“What is it, punk?” Undyne asks quickly.

“Um… do you have the book Fluffy Bunny? Rei wants me to read it to her,” you say.

At this, Alphys’ eyes light up, and she grins. “Y-yes! We have F-Fluffy Bunny r-right here!” She reaches over to a shelf next to their bed and literally throws it at you.

You catch it, just before you’re pushed out of the room by Undyne, who unceremoniously slams the door shut in your face.

What’s all that about?

You ignore the hushed whispers and giggles coming from behind their door as you make your way back to Rei’s room.

“So, are we ready to hear a bit about Fluffy Bunny?” you ask as you plop down on Rei’s bed.

She giggles from beneath her covers.

“Neat,” you say, and you open the book.

…

It’s funny. Everything was the same as it usually was when you read Fluffy Bunny, you recall later. Rei fell asleep halfway through, and you finished the story anyway, leaving her to sleep afterward.

It’s just…

You could have sworn you felt like someone had been watching you the entire time you read the book.

●●●

You wake up to the sound of an alarm. You’d decided to ask Undyne if you could borrow an alarm from her, and she’d given you one, saying she had too many alarm clocks to count.

Why does she have so many alarm clocks?

You slam the sleep button and pull yourself out of bed, heading for the closet.

Today is the day you go job and school hunting.

To be honest, you’ve done some research, asking Undyne and Alphys what jobs there are to take, and it seems as if there’s a job opening for either the “Libarby,” or some tortoise-like monster named Gerson.

When you look for each of the jobs on the map, you immediately ditch the idea to apply at the Libarby. It’s twenty miles away, meaning at least an hour’s walk. You don’t have enough money to afford a car, and you can’t just expect Undyne to drive you to work every day.

The next option is to work at Gerson’s shop, a small, old style shop at the corner of two main streets. It’s about five minute’s walk away. Perfect.
You ask Alphys if you could borrow her computer, to which she screeches, “I HAVE TO CLEAR MY BROWSER HISTORY FIRST!” and dashes out of the room.

Twenty minutes later, you’re situated at Alphys’s computer, emailing Gerson about a job application. The reply comes immediately, accepting you and telling you when to meet him for an interview.

Tomorrow, 3 p.m.

Closing the email, you switch tabs and search for school options for Rei within the area.

**Dreemurr Academy- the monster academy where every student of any shape, size, color or race can feel at home.**

You click on the website for Dreemurr Academy. It’s within a walking distance from your apartment.

You read the description.

Apparently, there aren’t many kids amongst the monsters, because the attendance for this school year is around 75, and there’re only three teachers; Mrs. Dreemurr, Mr. Snowdin, and Mr. Dreemurr.

After having left the underground, Toriel Dreemur- you’ve heard the name somewhere, but can’t quite seem to remember- decided that monsters need education, too, so she started a school to teach the youngest generation of monsters about the humans and other things like math and reading.

You find the email of Toriel, who seems to be the principal of the school, from what you can tell.

You contact her, asking her of any complications of finding a space for another child in the school.

Her response comes a twenty-or-so minutes later, as you begin to prepare lunch while Undyne is out at her job and Alphys and Rei watch television.

**Dear Y/n,**

Why, of course, we have plenty of space for another child! If you could give me a time of day that would be appropriate for you and your child to come in, I’d be all for showing you around the school!

**If you have any concerns regarding the matter, or questions, please contact me again.**

**Thank you,**

**Toriel Dreemurr**

You send back that you’re free any time before 3 p.m. tomorrow.

You sit back and sigh.

Tomorrow will be a full day for you, certainly.

You just hope that everything goes well.
Schools and Chandeliers

Chapter Summary

Rei meets her new principal, and you get some new clothes...?

Chapter Notes

AHH!
I am SO sorry for disappearing for so long.
My laptop broke, so it's not as easy to get to my writing anymore, and on top of that, my schedule got a WHOLE lot busier, so... time constraints.
I have a few more ideas to write down for my story, though.
I might have to go on hiatus for a month, so you won't be seeing much from me... right now. I swear once I get back though, I'll give you guys much more of our lady in grey.
One thing for sure, updates will be REALLY slow for the time being. Sorry about that.

“Let’s go, Rei,” you say for the fifth time this morning. Rei groans and grabs her bandana, tying it around her head before following you glumly out the door.

“Y/n, I think I got cancer again. I can’t go to school!” she complains. You stiffen.

“Hey, don’t joke about that,” you snap, the memories of her cancer still fresh on your mind.

You’d figured it out after the first night you’d stayed with Undyne and Alphys. The night you brought her into the hospital, she’d been retching blood, her throat was sore, and she couldn’t swallow.

It had been like that for days, and you’d been worried she’d starve. You’d taken her into the hospital, hoping that they’d be able to help, and all they’d given you were serious faces.

They said they’d have to look closer, take x-rays, make absolutely sure that she had what they thought she had.

The longer she stayed there, the worse she got.

Then, finally, they broke the news. Rei had Lymphoma.

…

Except she doesn’t. She never did, you’d realized. The hospital had seen you as young, inexperienced kids who were perfect to farm money off of.

And when they figured out you were broke, well, what better excuse than to use the sick one as a guinea pig for experimentation drugs?

You’d been lied to, you and Rei.
You’d looked up her symptoms from before the hospital got a hold of her, and she either had a really bad cold, or some other sickness in her throat.

…

“Okay, okay, geez,” Rei mumbles, pulling you out of your brooding thoughts. “What’s so important about school anyway?”

“Books,” you say as you pull her into the elevator leading to the main level.

“Ew, books are evil,” Rei says.

“They are not!”

“Are too!”

“What’s so bad about books?”

“They suck out your soul in the form of words running across a blank page as you struggle to understand what’s going on.”

“That was… descriptive.”

“Hmmph.”

“Well, what would you rather do instead of reading?”

“Draw. But the school doesn’t do that.”

“No?”

“My old school said drawing was bad.”

“I think things will be different here,” you say as you walk out into the early morning. Birds are chirping from the trees-

Wait, no, that’s an old couple of monsters sitting on a bench, chirping at each other.

…

What?

You and Rei continue down the sidewalk, marveling at the colors and people as you walk. So many people… the city you now live in looks like a dream.

Bright colors fill the streets as people with wings and horns hurry past. Your human bodies look drab and dark compared to them.

It isn’t long before the brick building you recognize as Dreemurr Academy from the online pictures.

A bus is parked idly in front of the doors, and a few monster kids straggle around the front doors. As you and Rei grow closer to the school, Rei shrinks back, her normally excitable personality being replaced in favor of a much more timid and shy one. Your grip on her hand tightens as you enter the school grounds.

The children vary greatly in size and shape- some are fairy-like things, no larger than your hand,
while others tower over you at heights of at least six feet.

You and Rei start to attract their attention as you move for the front of the school. Children gather in groups, streaming past you as they gaze at Rei. You attract some attention yourself, but not nearly as much as Rei. She seems the same age as them- she’s a much more interesting human to look at than an adult.

You find yourself in a huge hall when you step inside the doors. A few of the later arrivals stream past you with purpose, following their own paths to classes of their own, leaving you and Rei alone in the main hall of the school.

You gather your wits after gawking at the obvious wealth of the school, looking about yourself for the office, which you’d suspect would be near the front entrance.

Sure enough, a door that has the word, “OFFICE” advertised on it is just to your right.

You begin to lead Rei, who is still staring at the massive chandelier that hangs from the tall ceiling, toward the door.

Just as you’re about to enter the office, you hear a shout, and two kids burst through the front entrance. The first is a monster child in a striped sweater, as all monster children seem to wear. His tail swings behind him as he bounds into the hall.

His sweater doesn’t have sleeves. He doesn’t have arms.

It doesn’t bother you. You have a habit of adapting to things pretty quickly, and it’s not unusual to see monsters without arms.

The kid turns and shouts at the second figure that stumbles in, breathing heavily.

They’re about the size of a regular human child, with a mop of brown hair on their head. They wear a blue and green striped shirt and brown boots.

You can’t tell if they’re male or female, but it’s not that you particularly care.

“C’mon Frisk! We’re gonna be so late!” the first kid yells. Frisk? That name seems familiar…

The second monster seems to notice you, as they turn to look at you and Rei.

Upon closer inspection…

The second monster child actually appears to be a human child.

They turn away again, having quickly dismissed your presence as a loud bell rings and they shriek in the terror of being late for class. The two children sprint away, and you’re left alone with Rei again.

Well, that was- Oh, wait.

Wait, it’s coming back to you now. Frisk is the name of the human ambassador for the monsters. You’d heard that they were a child living with the queen. So that was Frisk?

Hm.

You finally push the door to the office open.

Inside, a mahogany desk is set up, and a monster stands behind it.
She seems to be... a hand? Her head seems to be a blue hand with red nails. Apparently, she’s the secretary, so you shake your... confusion, and walk over to her.

She seems to be doing paperwork, but she looks up when you stand near the desk.

“Hey, um, could I see the principle?” you ask timidly.

“Oh! Why yes, of course, if you have an appointment,” she responds.

“Yeah, we have an appointment”

“Then go right ahead. Her office is the third door down the hall on the right,” the secretary says. She stares at you a bit longer than necessary.

“Is there something wrong?” you ask.

“No! Heavens, no, sorry. I’m just not used to...”

“Seeing humans?”

“Er, yes.”

You give the woman a small grin, then lead Rei down the hall.

Toriel’s door isn’t hard to find. On the outside of the door, various drawings are taped to the wood, and to the left of the door a shiny plaque reads, “Ms. Dreemurr”.

You knock.

A woman’s voice calls out. “Come in!” she says. It’s a motherly voice, caring and warm and not hostile at all.

You push open the door, Rei at your heels.

Inside the room is... homely. The walls are all a warm yellow color, nothing like the synthetic color you’d grown used to at the hospital. The chairs look like mini sofas, and every surface is filled with either a trophy, a picture, or a book. A tall goat woman sits behind the desk.

Even she looks like someone you’d expect to spend a lot of time baking, or something. She has white fur and short horns, and her purple wool jacket looks comfy. A pair of thin glasses are balanced precariously upon her nose as she reads a book about... snails?

“Um, hi,” you say.

She looks up.

She jumps at the sight of two humans in her office, and her eyes narrow the tiniest bit before softening. “Why, hello. You’re Y/n, I assume?” she asks.

You give an affirmative nod, and she gives you an assuring smile.

“I’d heard a few humans showed up. I should’ve expected they’d want to go to school,” she laughs good-naturedly. “Sans doesn’t let just anybody walk around here.”

You shift nervously.
“Ah! Excuse me forgetting the reason you’re here! You want to enroll, right?” Toriel shakes off her initial surprise at the sight of two humans and looks at you inquiringly.

You push Rei in front of you. “Ah, yes. My little sister, Rei, needs somewhere to go to school.”

Rei gives the female monster a little nod.

“Of course! Well, I suppose we should talk about plans for enrolling her then,” Toriel says quickly.

You blink. Isn’t she supposed to reject you for the fact that Rei’s a human child? “Uh… now?” you ask timidly.

Toriel nods enthusiastically. “Yes, unless you have somewhere else to be? Then I could send you the information over email. A useful thing, email…:"

“Oh, no. We can talk for a while,” you respond. You can’t help the small grin that forms on your face. So far, so good. You’d expected her to turn you away immediately after finding out that you were human, but she’d been open to letting Rei enroll. Perhaps your job application will go well too?

Two hours later, you walk out of the school, arms overflowing with books and papers.

Toriel had given you the basics. seventy-five kids, three teachers. Toriel teaches literature, Mr. Dreemurr teaches gym and history, while Mr. Snowdin teaches math and science.

Occasionally, a special teacher comes in for magic arts training. At first, you’d wondered who it was, but then Toriel mentioned that the special teacher had once been the strongest monster, when everyone was underground.

You’d asked if it was Undyne, remembering Sans telling you that she had been the strongest monster, and Toriel had nodded.

So, that’s two teachers you won’t have to worry about. Toriel had seemed disapproving of Mr. Dreemurr, so you have some worries, but she had apparently approved of Mr. Snowdin, so you’re relieved that maybe Rei will be accepted at her new school.

The walk home is one full of talk. Rei chatters the entire time, apparently excited at the thought of starting school again. You had tutored her when she was hospitalized, but there was only so much you could ever teach her.

“Y/n! I’m gonna make awesome new friends!” Rei yells as she hops over the cracks in the sidewalk.

“I’m sure you will, sis. You’re too cool not to,” you respond distractedly, thinking. After you drop Rei off to spend the day with Alphys, who works from home, you have around three hours to go anywhere you please.

Undyne and Alphys had lent you some monster currency to start with, refusing your weak attempts to give it back.

“I am your BEST FRIEND, punk! What kind of friend would leave you broke?!?” Undyne had
explained.
You’d just barely gotten her to agree to you paying her back once you got a job and enough money.

You glance around the apartment when you enter it, seeing Alphys sitting on the couch, completely absorbed in her work.

You quietly tell Rei not to interfere, but Alphys notices you anyway.

“O-oh, Y/n! Rei! Y-you’re home,” she says.

“Yep. Sorry to bother you,” you respond timidly.

“N-no problem!”

You watch as Rei runs over to jump up on the couch with Alphys and lean into her side as she peers into the computer, chatting away with the former scientist.

Undyne had boasted to you of Alphys’ smarts, stating that she had been the royal scientist. Now, she works as a jack-of-all-trades engineer, creating different machines and gadgets completely on her own.

You give the two nerds a rueful grin and speak up. “Hey, you guys want anything from the shop?”

“I need you to get some new clothes,” Rei says, and Alphys lets out a distracted hum of agreement.

“What’s wrong with my clothes?” you ask, looking down at your grey hoodie and old jeans. You hadn’t been able to take much clothes with you, so you’ve nabbed a few of Undyne’s clothes while you’ve stayed with them.

“They’re smelly and gross. And you could use some style management,” Rei says matter-of-factly. You look at your little sister in amazement. Since when had she gotten so sassy?

“Fine. I’ll get new clothes.”

“I’m going to burn your old ones.”

“WHAT?!”

“Kidding.”

“Where did you get this humor?”

Rei laughs as you walk out of the door in a huff. Rei is growing up too fast. Just the other day, you’d felt like she was still the innocent little bean you’d always want to protect, but suddenly, she’s giving you fashion advice.

The streets are bright and cheerful as you walk out into the late morning. The loose cash in your pocket sums up to about 100g. Undyne had said that would be enough to get you through a week at most, two days at least.

Looking up at the building across the road, you see it’s an MTT brand clothing store.

Well, it couldn’t hurt to try on some new clothes.

uida
It *hurts* to try on new clothes.

You walk out an hour later, with three bright pink bags, all full of outrageously cute clothes.

When you’d first walked into the store, it looked like something out of hot topic, but the moment one of the employees saw you, he pulled you farther into the store, revealing the legions of beautiful dresses and other outfits.

He had been a small, pinkish ghost, with what must have been a ghostly version of hair covering his left eye. He had a nervous grin and an amazing eye for style. He’d insisted on you calling him Metta, like the world-famous monster celebrity, Mettaton.

The ghost had quickly thrown you into the dressing room with various styles of clothing. You’d walked out in each outfit, and he’d decide whether or not he liked you in them. Some of the dresses were so tight, you though your ribs might burst, but you ended up leaving with a few new outfits, and less than 50g in your pocket left.

Two hours left until your interview.

You’ll have to get dressed in something suitable for an interview.

Hehe, *suit* - able.

…

You need new friends.
Rubber Knives and Hentais

Chapter Summary

You apply for a job with the oldest monster you'll probably ever meet, watch a disturbing movie, and have a talk with one of Rei's teachers.

Chapter Notes

*Huff*
Okay, I stayed up until, like, 4 in the morning trying to finish this the other day.
SLEEP IS FOR THE WEAK!
Also, HOLY COW, over 100 kudos? That might not be much, but it's still awesome, so okay.
I just hope you enjoy the latest chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The first thing you think when you see the pawn shop is, “whoa, cozy.”

It’s a small one-story crammed into a corner of a much larger building that juts out into the street. Large windows display the ironically human shaped mannequins that wear all sorts of odds and ends. Which isn’t particularly surprising, you figure. When the monsters came to the overworld, there obviously weren’t any monster-shaped mannequins, so they had to make due with human figures.

Aye, a rough life is lead by the monsters. A rough life indeed.

The clothes you wear are a little bit more formal than your usual outfit, but not too outrageous. You know that Gerson’s shop is a pawn shop—he probably won’t care that you’re not in a suit.

It’s dark inside when you walk up to the door, and a merry bell chimes when you open the door.

You let it shut behind you.

It’s eerily quiet in the shop, so much so that you think perhaps you’re not at the right place, but you’re sure you followed the directions perfectly. And you’re on time.

A shuffle from behind you, and that’s when it begins.

The whoosh of metal slicing through air is your only heads-up, and you duck in time to see a knife sail over your head, right where your neck had been moments before.

You hit the ground at a roll, launching yourself behind a shelf and crouching in the temporary cover it provides.

Had he just tried to attack you?
You peer past the edge of the shelf into the darkness of the shop, trying to make sense of the pitch-black, but all you get is a knife that lodges itself into your cover.

You shuffle between shelves, trying to get away from the light that seeks through the door. You can’t leave the shop—the path to the door is unprotected, and whoever’s throwing knives would make an easy target out of you.

You’ll need to find another way out.

Your eyes adjust to the dim light, and you see boxes scattered throughout the room, shelves blocking your view of the back wall.

You scan the darkness for movement.

Another knife whizzes past you, and you track its movement to a shelf on the other side of the store. You see something dart out from behind it before disappearing behind another shelf, and your eyes narrow. Danger located.

The question is; what to do? You’d promised yourself you wouldn’t kill anyone in the east side, but whoever this is is set on harming you.

Think.

A knife blows past your ear, dangerously close, and you leap from your spot into another hiding place. You glance over the top of the shelf before ducking as another knife flies at your head.

The second you’d had to look had been enough. On a wall not too far from you, you’d spotted a light switch. If you could get to the switch, you’d be on even ground with your assailant. Chances are they’re a monster, and they’re bound to have better night vision than you.

The problem is, the switch is where your attacker is.

Well, it’s not as if you’re a stranger to dangerous positions. Getting stuck between a rock and hard place is almost comfortable to you at this point.

You hardly make any sound as you weave between as many objects as you can, moving fast so your opponent has a hard time targeting you. Your beeline route to the switch is sure and quick.

You lunge for the light once you’re a foot away, and your hand flicks the plastic piece into the “on” position, letting the shop flood with light.

Somehow, your enemy had snuck up on you in the dark, because a huge hammer swings at you out of nowhere as you blink to adjust to the sudden brightness. You dodge and use the hammer’s motion to send your attacker sprawling into the floor.

You place your foot on his back as you get a good look in.

A turtle monster is lying on the ground, dressed in some safari clothes. He looks like an old man, but you can’t be sure.

He groans a little, and you snap out of glaring at him to check and see if there’s anyone else planning on hurting you.

Not another monster in sight.

“I’d like to give you the benefit of the doubt here, but that’s hard, seeing as you just tried to brain me
with a warhammer, so I’m going to give you one chance to explain why you just tried to kill me,” you say as calmly as you can when you look down at the turtle. You’d told yourself you wouldn’t hurt anyone when you came to the east side- and you won’t.

You feel his shell jump as the monster chuckles and mutters something, and you lean down.

“Got something you’d like to share, there, buddy?” you ask.

The turtle responds, louder this time. “I said, ya passed the test.”

“What test? Test? Test? Did he just throw knives at you and try to smash your head in with a hammer, and call it a goddamn test?”

The turtle is out from under your foot and standing in front of you so fast you don’t even see him move. “I heard a human was a-comin’ my way, so I decided to set up a test! See, I don’ want no idiot workin’ for me, so I thought, ‘what can I do to see if this human’s smart an’ all,’ an’ I came up with this! You gotta be smart to figure out what’s goin’ on!” He taps his head with a forefinger.

You jump back from the man, all senses hyper-alert, but he gives you a toothy grin.

“No need to be scared, lass. Never meant to hurt ya.”

You frown. He’d just thrown knives at you.

The turtle gives you a big grin again. “The knives are fake. I jus’ wanted to see if you could survive in a life-or-death situation.” He walks over to a fallen knife and picks it up, poking the sharp metal, and bending it with ease. When he pulls his hand away, the metal pops back to its original form. “Foam, see? You sure did good dodging them.”

“Liar.”

“Pardon?”

“I said, you lied. Those knives weren’t fake. One embedded itself in a bookshelf when you threw it at me. Foam doesn’t cut wood.”

“Aye, it’s like playing cards. Throw it right, and it’ll cut anything.”

“Including human skin.”

The turtle ignores your words and drops the toy, facing you once more. “Ah, well. Jus’ know that ya didn’t get hit, and ya didn’t try ta kill me, so you passed my test.”

By the stars, this man is nuts! You stare at the monster incredulously. You can’t believe he actually set up a deadly test- on the whim that a human was in town! He was just lucky it was you, who had actual experience with near-death situations, that happened to pop into his store.

“Anyway, yer Y/n, right? Here to apply for a job?” The old man turns away from you and walks behind a counter, grabbing a rag and scrubbing the surface. He doesn’t wait for an answer. “I’ll interview ya, since I like ya. I’m Gerson, by the way.” He gestures at a wooden chair in front of the counter. “Or, you can walk out now, if ya want. Not many humans like having knives thrown at them. Wimps, humans are.”

Wimp? You? You sit down in the chair with a huff. You’re not scared of a couple of foam knives. Gerson chuckles. “You remind me of another young monster. Golly, she couldn’ ever turn down a
His southern drawl slows as he slips into a memory, but he quickly shakes his head pulls himself out of his memory with a nostalgic chuckle. “A’ight! So, you think you wanna work at my pawn shop, do ya?”

You give him a fervent nod. As dangerous as you first thought this monster was, the way he’s acting proves to find him a different personality. One of a kind, old man who has seen everything, and still hasn’t seen enough. If he ever leaves this world, he’ll make his departure one to be remembered. You like that.

“First- wait, no, I have your name. Er… right! Favorite color?” He asks, pulling out a clipboard and scribbling something down.

“Blue… I guess,” you say, and he stops scribbling.

“You guess? YOU DON’T GUESS WHAT YOUR FAVORITE COLOR IS! KNOW WHAT YOUR FAVORITE COLOR IS, GIRL! SHOUT IT!” Gerson roars.

Hmph. Challenge accepted.

“MY FAVORITE COLOR IS BLUE!” you yell back, not to be outdone.

“Good. Do you like children?”

“Yep.”

“SHOUT IT!”

“SIR, YES, SIR!”

Well, you’ve answered all my questions in a satisfying way,” Gerson sighs after a long time. “And I like ya. Dreemurr told me to get an apprentice anyway, after not having Undyne to train anymore.”

“Wait, you had Undyne as an apprentice before?” you ask in disbelief.

Gerson chuckles merrily. “Of course, girl! How do ya think she got so good at fighting? She only could have learned it from the best, the Warhammer himself! Anyway, I have one more question for you before I decide whether or not I want ta hire ya.”

“Ask away.”

“Have you ever fought before? And no, not the sissy fights I’m sure you’ve had with other girls your age, but an actual battle.”

“...” You have been in battles before. Gruesome ones, where you were the only one to walk away unscathed. Sometimes, you left with bruises and cuts, which drew Rei’s attention when you got to the apartment. Ring fights. “...Yes.”

“Aha! That settles it. I’ll hire ya. And be your mentor.”

“Mentor?”

“YES! I WILL TEACH YOU TO BECOME ONE OF THE GREATEST HUMAN
“WARRIORS!”

“No. I don’t fight anymore. Just hire me.”

Gerson looks at you, a terrible sadness flashing across his features. “Ah, I see. You’ve seen a few things before yer time, haven’t ya?”

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“We will, one day. For now, you’re hired!”

When you finally make it home, you’re ready to fall into your bed, but it seems Rei and the Scales x2 have other plans for you.

The moment you open the door to the apartment, Rei is upon you.

“Movie night!” she yells as she drags you across the floor and toward the green couch.

“Movie night?” You look at Undyne and Alphys imploringly, but they smirk as they settle into the couch.

“We always watch movies on Sunday night,” Undyne explains.

“And by movies you mean…”

“Anime!” Alphys cries. “I have a-a really good one f-for tonight! I-it’s about a girl who g-goes to space an-”

“AND FIGHTS SUPER AWESOME ALIENS!” Undyne finishes.

You can tell both of your new friends are terribly excited about the movie, so you agree as you collapse into the cushions between Undyne and Rei.

“How was your day, monkey?” you ask Rei, tugging at her pink bandana.

She groans. “Alphys said I couldn’t touch any of her machines, so I had to watch TV all day.”

“Sounds like heaven to me,” you say with a chuckle. What you wouldn’t give to have enough time to sit around and watch TV all day.

Rei shrugs as the television flickers to life. The starting scene is of some city, where a tentacle slips out of a sewer or something, and that’s the start of the alien invasion.

Rei falls asleep halfway through the opening, and you prop her up against some pillows so she doesn’t lean on you. You love your sister dearly, but you don’t love it when she drools on you. And she’s done that a lot.

You’re glad, later, that she had fallen asleep so quickly.

Undyne and Alphys watched with a sort of fervent delight as the heroine rallies a small group of humans to go up to space with her and fight the aliens.

It isn’t until the girl and her team are on the mothership of the tentacle aliens that you notice something terribly wrong.
The main character is dressed in a terribly revealing space-suit, and she’s split up with the rest of her team, so she walks alone down the sci-fi corridor.

“Hey, Alphys, this isn’t one of those—” you’re cut off by the show as the main character is cornered by the leader of the monsters.

Alphys lets out a guilty giggle as Undyne finally catches onto what’s happening.

“Al! You said you wouldn’t this time!” Undyne says as the alien advances on the human.

“Last t-time was your turn though! I thought you l-liked hentais!” Alphys complains.

In the movie, shit got weird. Suddenly, the girl was devoid of clothes and the tentacle-like alien was doing… rude things.

You throw your hand over your mouth and cover your sleeping sister’s eyes. Your eyes stay glued to the screen as the girl lets out lewd noises.

“Off!” You say. “Rei’s here! If she wakes up and sees, I’m blaming you!”

Undyne lunges for the remote, happy to comply, and the TV shuts off with a blink, leaving the room in darkness.

“S-so…” Alphys begins. “You i-into hentai, Y/n?”

You’d gone to bed immediately after that, tucking Rei in and falling into your own bed. Tomorrow is the day your new schedule starts. You walk Rei to school, then you walk to work. You’ll finally have an actual life, devoid of the hopeless situation you’d been forced into before. You have a real home, friends, a safe job. Rei can go to school. You don’t have to worry anymore.

That night, for the first time since your parents died, you went to sleep without fear of the day to come.

“BAGEL!” Rei screams as she chucks the breakfast pastry at your head. You snatch it from the air before it can find its target and shove it in your mouth.

“Let’s go, bug. You’ve got school,” you say around the bagel. Rei heaves on her backpack. Undyne had run into the storage room yesterday and grabbed an old backpack out of a corner. It’s old, a bit dusty, and kind of fragile-looking, but it’ll do.

You drag your sister down the street toward the school, laughing at the face she makes when you tell her to be on her best behavior.

“Sometimes you act more like my mom than my sister,” Rei comments.

“Sometimes you act more like a four-year-old than a twelve-year-old,” you retort.

Dreemurr Academy comes into view quick enough, and you start to leave, knowing you’ll have to go to Gerson’s next.

The old monster is funny enough. Sometimes he’ll scream nonsense, and other times he’ll actually spout wise stuff about things. You suppose that’s what it’s like to be old. Senile half the time, wise
the other half.

He has enthusiasm, for sure. He kept telling you to throw your body into your work the other day, telling you to *sweep harder!* He reminds you of Undyne sometimes. He tells you of how Undyne came to him when she was a little tadpole, and he worked with her to be strong.

They’re basically like father and daughter, you muse.

It’s been a few days since you were hired, and you’ve grown fond of the old monster. He’s a funny character. Apparently, Gerson doesn’t need you for more than seven hours, so he lets you off at the perfect time to pick Rei up from school.

You’ve found a couple hangouts around town that you enjoy when you have time to explore. Your sister has settled in well, too. Rei is ecstatic about her school, having learned that there was an art course. She’d immediately jumped into the class. She’d even made friends, telling you all about her friends MK and Frisk when you pick her up from the school.

When Frisk (who you recognize now as the ambassador for the monsters and child of Toriel) had learned there was another human attending their school that was their age, they and MK had jumped at the chance to make a unique new friend. Now Rei has two best-friends.

You’re content.

And you know that just when everything is going well, something always has to wrong, doesn’t it?

Nope. For now, you can just be happy.

“hey, bucko. ready to do the maths?”

Rei squeals and spins around. “Mr. Snowdin!”

Wait, Mr. Snowdin?

You turn around to see Rei’s math and science teacher.

“oh, hey, it’s you, too. long time, no see, toots,” Sans says.

“It’s been, like, five days,” you chuckle.

Sans looks surprised. “So, the statue smiles,” he says, a mischievous smirk crawling into his features.

“Ah, no, you’ve seen through my stone-cold facade!” you say dramatically. “I thought you wanted to be friends?” you ask after straightening up.

A light dusting of blue crosses Sans’ features. “Oh, right,” he says, suddenly much more quiet than his usual confident self.

You quirked an eyebrow. What’s this? Is someone embarrassed? You’re about to tease him when someone intervenes.

“Uncle Sans!” calls a voice. Rei, beside you, yells and runs at Frisk, who just appeared out of their mother’s old subaru.

Sans hastily turns away from you and crouches down to receive Frisk’s attacking hug. “what’s up, kiddo? oof, you’re getting big, kid.”
Frisk giggles, then runs off with Rei to find MK, leaving you with Sans.

“Mr. Snowdin?” you muse out loud. Sans looks at you. “I didn’t know you were into math and science.”

“i didn’t know you were into hentais,” he teases.

“Hell no! Alphys has some fucked-up movies,” you quickly respond. “That stuff was so disturbing.”

“she’s made me watch some of them with her. sometimes, there are things you can’t unsee,” Sans shudders.

You let out a responding noise of sympathy before looking at your watch. Shoot! You’re going to be late if you don’t get going soon.

“Ah! My work!” you say, before making a quick departure with Sans.

Honestly, it’s weird, you think on the way to Gerson’s. Normally, you never make friends with someone so fast, especially someone like Sans, but something… something in his body language speaks of rough times. Places you’ve been, but they also speak of happiness, like when he saw Frisk. He really loves that kid.

You’re gonna need to keep an eye on Sans.

There’s something about him that you haven’t deciphered yet.

Chapter End Notes

By the way, our lovely Grey Lady is CLUELESS.
Like, ridiculously clueless.
Never have I ever...

Chapter Summary

Parties can be exhausting.

Who ever thought going to another one would release stress?!

Chapter Notes

*inhale*

I'M BACK!

Yes, yes, I know, it's been nearly a month and a half, but I've gotten some great Ideas for where my story will lead.

Honestly, it's nice to get to see the story unfold once more. I'll try to keep updating, since my schedule isn't chock-full anymore.

Anyway, tell me what you think of our Grey Lady's endeavors in our latest chapter!

*Forgive me if there are any mistakes. I didn't get much time to review as I finished it.
Enjoy!

Another child runs past you, shrieking in delight as you weave between the guests. Undyne and Al had been surprisingly cool about letting you throw a party for Rei when you brought up her birthday.

Rei is a fall baby, born in September. When you had arrived at the city, it had been late August, just right around when school started. Her friends had convinced her to throw a party, inviting over a couple of friends to stay and eat cake.

She’d pleaded with you to have a party, and you’d finally relented, saying you’d ask the Scalesx2. It’s been about two or three weeks since coming here, but you and Rei have sort of been accepted by the residents as one of the humans. No one is terrified of you anymore, at least.

You’d promised to clean the apartment up after the party, but now you almost regret the decision. Monster children are messy, it seems. Cans of soda spill onto the rugs, cake somehow got thrown at the wall, and… who took out the knives?!

A human child in a green and yellow striped shirt giggles at your bewildered look as you stand over the knives scattered on the kitchen floor, then runs into the other room.

Huh. You could have sworn Frisk was the only other human in this town.

Wait, was that the little bugger that pulled out all the knives?! Darn kids.

You put all the utensils back into the drawer as you sigh, and go to make sure no one has stabbed themselves.

It’s going to be a long party.
Every wall is scrubbed clean of cake projectiles, every rug has been drained of liquid, every child has left the building, and Rei is safely asleep in her bed, happy after a long day of partying and opening presents.

You stand up from the last bit of garbage and wipe sweat from your brow.

Finally. All the cleaning is done. You collapse onto the ugly green cough with a sigh. No matter how tired you are, though, you feel proud. You managed to hold a birthday party for Rei. Back when…. before you moved to the eastern city, you’d never been able to do that sort of thing for her, but things have turned out surprisingly easy to do where you are right now. The monsters, after having been caught underground in such a small place for so long, gave up trying to be greedy, and lowered prices for everything in monsterkind. No matter how much money you have, a small amount can get you anywhere. With the money you’ve acquired from working with Gerson, you can buy a new wardrobe, food enough for a week, and still have enough money to buy a new couch.

You’ve pleaded with Undyne and Alphys to buy a new one, but they refuse any attempt to get rid of it.

The door to the apartment bursts open as Scales x2 walk in from a day out shopping. Undyne is laden down with heavy-looking bags, and Alphys flits around her in an excited manner.

Upon seeing you, Undyne frowns.

“Hey, punk!” she whisper-shouts. She’s conscious of your sleeping sister. “You look like you need a break.”

“If that includes a nap, I’m in,” you grumble.

Alphys has receded into her room, but Undyne just gives you a silent laugh and a powerful clap on the back. “Nah, you need to get rid of your stress! And get more friends than just me, your bestie, punk,” Undyne grins. “Which is why I’ve gone through the liberty of inviting you to an outing with peers.”

You groan. You want nothing more than to curl up into a ball and sleep, but the beam on Undyne’s face is just too hopeful for you to ignore.

“That’s it, Y/n! You’ve lived here for a couple weeks now- you should have a couple more friends.”

And so you get ready to go to Grillby’s.

You’d just thrown on an old hoodie and a pair of jeans initially, but Undyne had grabbed you by the shoulders on the way out and steered you into her and Alphys’ room. There, the latter had been working on some small machine, but had gotten up when Undyne directed you in.

The two had pulled you into an outfit that consisted of new, tight-fitting jeans, and a white tank-top underneath a grey sweater. Before you could escape, Alphys had pulled your hair into a ponytail using surprisingly nimble fingers.

If you’d stayed any longer, they would have gotten out the makeup.

For now, a borrowed outfit is just fine to meet new friends in, you decide.
Two scaly figures watch a much more human figure leave the building.

“D’ya think we got the right outfit for her today?” one asks.

“Y-yes! She l-looks killer!” the other exclaims.

“Geez, Mettaton has really good memory. I honestly though that he’d forget her size from when she first went to his store.”

“He h-has photographic memory.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah.”

“So… you think he’ll like it?”

“It’s n-not blue, but she m-might’ve gotten suspicious if we g-gave her blue clothes. B-besides, grey looks g-good on her.”

The two monsters giggle.

Behind them, a young girl grins and tugs on her bandana.

You thank your lucky stars that Grillby’s isn’t too far from the apartment as you walk the sidewalk. Monsters have become more accustomed to the sight of a human on the streets, and no one looks at you in fear anymore. A few jerks will yell and spit at you every once in a while, but that’s something you’ve grown accustomed to.

The fluorescent orange light of Grillby’s comes into sight after a few blocks, and you hurry to get inside. It’s gotten colder out, the warm summer nights gaining chilly breezes that strip away the warmth of the day.

The atmosphere of the bar is bright and loud as always, glasses tinkling and people laughing with each other.

You walk up to the bar and greet Grillby warmly. Despite his unmoving and quiet appearance, Grillby has a kind personality, you’ve come to realize.

“I’m, uh, here for ‘Dogi’?” you say, but it comes out as more of a question. Grillby nods and points behind you at a large booth.

Seated around the table are an assortment of monsters, most of them dogs.

There are two empty seats, next to each other, but what catches your eye is a certain skeleton sitting at the table.

You sidle up the the group and sit next to him. “I hope I’m not intruding or anything, but this is the peer get-together, right?”

Every eye at the table turns to you, but it’s the skeleton next to you that answers.
“OF COURSE YOU’RE NOT INTRUDING, Y/N! UNDYNE AND ALPHYS TOLD US YOU’D BE HERE!” Papyrus pipes up. You grin at the tall monster.

“So Undyne and Alphys planned on me leaving the apartment,” you say lightly.

“THEY SAID YOU’D NEED A NIGHT OUT TO MAKE FRIENDS. I SHALL BE THE BESTEST OF FRIENDS! AND SANS, OF COURSE.”

“what was that about sans?” asks an all-too-familiar voice. At this point, you don’t even have to turn around to know it’s Sans standing behind you. He slides into the seat next to you, snickering. “what, did the nerds kick you out to be social for the night?” he asks you. You nod solemnly. He laughs. “might as well get a drink while you’re at it.” Then, before you can resist, he orders a waiter to get him a scotch and a water.

“Who’s the scotch for?” you ask.

He shoots you a mischievous look. “you. the water is for me. can’t handle heavy drinks- they go right through me.”

A small grin forms on your face. Maybe tonight won’t be half bad.

“Okay, okay!” Doggo shouts after the laughter recedes. The attention turns to him, and he downs his fourth beer. “When I met the human, I was out back getting high off dog treats! So when I saw something moving, I thought it was Undyne!” The dog monsters at the table made similar noises of sympathy.

“I think we all know how she was about doing anything other than our jobs,” Dogaressa comments. The dogs at the table all make muted sounds of agreement, but Dogamy looks pointedly at Sans.

“Well, all of us, especially Mr. Snowdin, here.”

Sans, who had been idly mixing ketchup into his glass of water beside you, looks up and grins lazily. “i have no idea what you’re talking about,” he says. “i would never slack off on the job.”

“Yeah,” Dogaressa snorts. “And I’m the Queen of the Underground.” Papyrus nods in agreement.

The dogs around the table let out barks of laughter as you giggle. You haven’t said much, and apparently, your peers have noticed.

“Say, you haven’t talked much, have you, Y/n?” Doggo asks, winking at you. “Why don’t we play a game, to get to know each other?”

“Never have I ever!” Dogaressa cries. “I love that game!”

“THEN, LET’S PLAY!” Papyrus says, barely keeping his containment at the thought of a game contained.

And so the game begins.

“Never have I ever…” Doggo begins, holding up five fries instead of fingers, because he has a paw. “Slept on the job.”

All the fries and fingers go down except for you and Papyrus.
Pappy scoffs. “Y/N AND I ARE THE ONLY COMPETENT WORKERS AROUND HERE.”

You smile sheepishly. “I don’t have a chance to sleep. Gerson has me working to restock at all hours.”

The Dogi look at you. “Your turn, Y/n,” Dogamy says.

You swallow. “Uh, never have I ever…” you look at Sans. “Never have I ever built a snowman.”

To your surprise, your finger is the only one that stays up.

“We all lived in Snowdin,” Dogamy explains. “It’s very, uh, snowy there.”

Oh.

“if i didn’t know better, i’d say y/n did that one on purpose,” Sans quips.

Papyrus gives you a hard eye. “AH, NO! I CANNOT BE BESTED BY AN INFERIOR HUMAN!” he yells. You don’t feel insulted. “NEVER HAVE I EVER HAD A DATE!” he says, looking smug. “THERE. YOU SHOULD LOWER A FINGER NOW.”

Again, you’re the only finger that remains up, other than Sans, which doesn’t surprise you.

You blanch at Papyrus. “You’ve had a date?!” you ask.

“I, THE GREAT PAPYRUS, HAVE HAD A DATE. FRISK WAS MY PARTNER!” he confirms.

“Frisk?” You’ll have to keep him away from Rei from now on.

“YES! UNFORTUNATELY, I COULD NOT RECIPROCATE THEIR INTENSE FEELINGS FOR ME, AND HAD TO TURN THEM DOWN. WAIT.” Papyrus looks at your hand, where five fingers still remain raised. “YOU’RE TELLING ME YOU’VE NEVER HAD A DATE?!”

You give him a sheepish grin.

“YOU’RE DATELESS, LIKE SANS! EXCEPT MUCH PRETTIER,” he adds.

You blush at the complement as the rest of the table guffaws. Sans lets out a chuckle himself, and then the turn is Sans’.

You can tell from the mischievous look in his eyes that his turn will be embarrassing. “never have i ever had a sibling,” Sans says.

You blink, and lower one finger. You’d honestly expected him to use his turn to say something embarrassing, but instead, he winks at you.

Papyrus lets out a wail of betrayal. “YOU TARGETED ONLY Y/N AND I ON THAT ONE, SANS!”

You notice Papyrus and Sans each only have two fingers left up, while each of the others have at least three. You have four fingers remaining.

Papyrus doesn’t take well to the fact that he seems to be losing, so he excuses himself to the bathroom.
It’s Dogaressa’s turn. The grin lighting her snout turns absolutely wicked. “Real questions, now. Never have I ever had ‘done it’.”

She, Dogamy, Doggo, and Sans all lose a finger. Your face turns a bright red as you don’t lower a finger.

Sans smirks your way. “not often you’ll see a person like you with their virginity still intact,” he says, a gleam in his eye, and you don’t know whether to take it as an insult or a compliment.

Dogaressa takes it as an insult for you. “Hey! Keep your mean comments to yourself, Sans. Asgore forbid she think all monsters are like you.”

Sans gives a noncommittal shrug as Papyrus finds his way back to the table. “WHAT DID I MISS?” he asks cheerily.

“Nothing,” you quickly say. The last thing you need is someone as innocent as Paps knowing you’re a virgin, too.

“never will i ever play that game again,” Sans mutters as you, him, and Papyrus walk out of Grillby’s. The rest of the night had gone off well, the table behaving themselves for the most part. Doggo had eventually gotten drunk, and left early. As he had left, you noticed a small white dog clinging onto the back of his shirt. Your brow had furrowed at the peculiar sight. Was that dog… was it there the whole time?

Dogamy and Dogaressa had left not too soon afterward, mentioning marital “duties” they had to attend to in the morning. That left you and the skelebros sitting at the table, talking and eating, until you had checked the time.

It was nearly 3 a.m.! You’d jumped out of the chair, hurriedly explaining that you had work the next day, but the brothers offered to walk you home, and you just couldn’t refuse.

“so, you’ve never built a snowman before, huh?” Sans asks.

You nod. “I guess I never really had the time. When I was younger, I lived in Texas, where it barely ever snowed enough to really get anything out of it. I suppose we all just liked to watch as it came down. Then, when we moved to the city, my sister and I were… left alone not shortly afterward. After that, I was spending too much time taking care of Rei to care about things like snow.”

You hear a loud sniff, and turn to see Papyrus wipe a tear from his eye. Wait, are his eyes actually doing that shaking thing that anime character eyes do when they cry?! “THAT IS A TRULY SAD TALE, HUMAN. I CAN’T IMAGINE WHAT IT’D BE LIKE TO HAVE NEVER BUILT A SNOWMAN. I PROMISE, THE NIGHT IT SNOWS, I WILL BUILD A SNOWMAN WITH YOU.”

You smile brightly at your tall friend. “I’d like that, Papyrus.” And you really mean it.

You stumble into the apartment as quietly as you can. Snores resonate from The Scalesx2’s room, and you check Rei’s room to verify that she’s sleeping. You softly close the door to her citrus-room. Your bed has never felt so soft.
Despite Everything...

Chapter Summary

Everything is going right...
Except for Rei.

Chapter Notes

THE COOKIE LIVES ON!!
Honestly though, I'm SO sorry that I haven't updated in so long, and I feel terrible about it! I've gotten such nice comments and so many kudos I want to cry, but my motivation has come back!
Part of the loss of momentum was because my laptop broke, but I promise I'll get one soon so I can update more often. For now, I'll do my late night writing on my phone!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You wake up to movement in the kitchen, the clanging of pots and pans and talking as the scales x2 make breakfast. You groan, hungover and deprived of sleep, as you drag yourself out of bed. Slowly pulling on a comfortable set of clothes and stumbling down the hall to the bathroom, you blink blearily at the blue hoodie slung over the knob of the door into the bathroom. Huh. You don’t take Al or Undyne to be the hoodie type, and you’ve certainly never bought a blue hoodie.

You try to open the door, but it’s stuck. Perhaps it’s jammed. Jiggling the handle, you push and throw your hip into the wood, but it doesn’t budge. Just as you prepare for another assault on the bathroom door, it opens.

Turns out, when a door doesn’t budge when you try opening it, it usually means it’s locked. And that someone is in the bathroom.

You blink at the monster standing in front of you, a towel wrapped around his waist.

“Who are you?” asks the monster. He looks a bit like a horse, except with a mop of hair on his head and a douchey smile on his face.

“I’m-uh-wait, who’re you? What are you doing in my apartment?” You volley back. You have no idea why a random monster would be using your shower, but it probably has something to do with Undyne and Al.

“I’m Aaron. A friend of Alphys and Undyne,” Aaron says as he grabs the blue hoodie and slings it over his shoulder. “My shower broke, so they said I could use theirs. They didn’t tell me there was a hot human girl that lived with them ;)” Just then, his towel slips from his waist, and you shriek and cover your eyes. When he makes no move to pick it up, you peek between your fingers. From the waist down, Aaron has a scaly tail, much like a mermaid. So then-

“Oh, god. You’re a seahorse!” You practically shout. Aaron is a walking, talking pun.
His chuckle is his only response as he glides over the floor and into the main area of the apartment. You follow behind him wearily.

Undyne, who is leaning against the fridge and drinking coffee, smiles at Aaron as he glides into the kitchen.

“Aaron! You punk! You’re the one who stole his hoodie!” Undyne laughs. She holds out her hand and Aaron unabashedly drops the blue coat into her waiting hand. Then he turns and grabs one of Undyne’s protein drinks out of the fridge.

So, he’s a gym friend of Undyne’s, probably. Although you could have guessed by the set of abs the seahorse has. Hmm.

Aaron leaves after a while of making bad fitness-related jokes and wrestling Undyne. Al eventually stumbles down the hallway and grabs herself a mug for some coffee a few minutes after Aaron leaves.

Rei is the last of the residents to walk into the kitchen, eyes bright and alert. It’s a Wednesday, so she has school and you have work, so you prop open the door after she eats breakfast.

“And off we go, monkey,” you say with a small smile. Rei hops out the door as you shrug on a jacket. The air has started to get chillier outside, the small bite of winter promising the cold season to come.

“Hey, Y/n?” Rei asks after you’re walking down the sidewalk.

“Yeah?” You reply.

“How much money do you make a week?”

You hesitate. Why does Rei want to know that? As far as you know, you’re in better shape financially than you’ve been for the past two years. You have a home and friends, and a job.

“Around 5g an hour, Rei. It’s a different currency here,” you say after a while. Rei puts on a thoughtful face, nods, then turns toward the school.

“Bye, Y/n.” She doesn’t even give you a farewell hug as she runs toward two familiar waiting figures in the schoolyard.

You look after her, then turn toward the path to your work.

Once you get home, you find Alphys and Rei watching a TV show in the main room. Undyne, as Al tells you, is out at the gym. You make an early dinner in the kitchen, keeping a wary eye on Rei.

It’s not hard to tell when something is different with Rei. She seems a bit… subdued.

The next few weeks move on without a hitch. Gerson takes pleasure in terrifying you each morning by making various murder scenes. Al and Undyne continue with their daily lives, and you feel like it’s all covered.

Except Rei is not acting right. You can tell she’s off. Instead of being happy like she always is, she's more irritable now. Tired, grumpy… quiet. She reminds you of you when you were younger, after
you were stuck with a young Rei between a rock and a hard place.

Yesterday, she said she wanted to stop being seen walking with you around the school grounds.

Honestly, the behavior worries you, but it's not behavior you don't recognize. You were once in her shoes too. She's acting like an animal that's been backed into a corner. By what, you ask? It isn't hard to see. Rei is being bullied at school.

Your face pulls down into a frown. You know just who can help.

The next morning, you walk a quiet Rei to school. The night before, you'd asked Gerson for a day off, and he'd let you have the vacation day, so you walk her to school with forceful purpose.

Just before you turn the corner to see the brick building, Rei starts to shrug you off.

“Y/n, I don't think you should follow me this way… your work is in the opposite direction,” Rei says timidly.

“Sorry, monkey,” you respond. “I'm going to school today, too.”

And that is how you walked straight into the midst of a battlefield.

If you think the school was what was being referred to as a battleground, you are deadly wrong. It isn't the school. It's the entrance gateway.

You see it coming the moment before it hits- giving you just enough time to pull Rei behind your back as a huge balloon hits you in the gut.

Paint explodes everywhere. It's covering your shirt, your face, and everything attached.

Wiping gooey paint from your eyes, you see small monsters swarming out from behind the gates, looks of pleasure and delight on their faces.

Looks that dropped upon seeing your tall form and very, very angry scowl.

“Art class happens inside the school, not at the front gate, ya little buggers,” you say. No one moves. You take a menacing step forward.

Kids scatter. They turn tail and flee into the school, childish screams of fear filling the air.

Hm. So maybe you're a little scary.

But what is more scary is the number of kids that were waiting at the gate. It looked like the entire school was waiting for that paint balloon to hit.

And you're pretty darn sure you know just who that paint balloon was meant for.

Two gasps of horror from behind you pull you out of your sad thoughts, and you turn to see Frisk and their friend, Monster Kid. They're both staring at you.

“Yo, did the other kids do that to you, big human? 'Cus that just ain't right,” MK says.
"It’s okay," you say, even though it certainly isn't. "Can you two walk with Rei two class? I want to talk to Toriel," you say sweetly.

Frisk nods and grabs a quiet Rei’s arm. Monster Kid gives you one past worried look before scurrying after the other two kids.

After a moment of hesitance, you follow the three kids into the school.

The interior is just as you remember- luxurious. You follow the path to the office, where you meet the secretary. She nods you toward Toriel’s office.

The door into the principal's office is covered in papers that hold scribbles and notes written in crayons. Timidly opening the door, you find Toriel reading a book.

“Uh, hi," you say hesitantly. Toriel looks up and smiles warmly at you.

“Y/n! What a pleasant surprise to see you!” She exclaims brightly.

“Yes, well, unfortunately the news I have to share with you is not so pleasant,” you say grimly.

You explain your thoughts to an increasingly worried Toriel.

“Oh dear,” she finally says. “Well, I do have an idea… it might not be terribly effective, but it’s a good start.”

You walk out of Toriel’s room an hour later, as an announcement chimes down the halls of the school. You follow her directions to the auditorium, and begin to set up.

The first students begin to arrive just as you finish setting up.

Hiding behind the heavy red curtains, you watch the students file in.

Toriel had given you a new set of clothes, so now you’re in a small purple dress with something called the “Delta Rune” on it, which Toriel says is the sign of the monsters. But, she’s said, it had lost significance a long time ago.

The dress is a tad bit tight fitting, but you don’t mind.

Finally, everyone is ready and in their seats. Hushed murmurs bounce off the walls of the room, but once you step out from behind the curtains, all noise disappears. Toriel hurries out from behind the children and up onto the stage.

“Hello children,” she says hastily. “You all did well coming here, despite how sudden this school assembly is. And now, I would like to introduce you to the speaker of today’s assembly, Ms. L/n.”

There’s no applause from the audience. Just blank stares. It seems they don’t recognize you without paint all over your face. “She’ll be your new art teacher,” Toriel says.

All of a sudden, realization hits the students in a wave. Horrified students look up at you and Toriel in a stricken manner, until Toriel bursts out laughing.

“Oh my…” she gasps. “You… should have seen your faces!” She wipes a tear from her eyes as a collective groan rises from the children.

Still wheezing, Toriel hands you the microphone.
“I'm not here to talk about art,” you begin. Relief spreads through the crowd. “I’m here to talk about a much more serious topic.”

Kids start to look bored, you're sure some of them have already guessed what you're going to talk about.

“You've probably realized that out of the entirety of your school, there are two students among you who are different. These students are different because they're human. One of them you might all know- Frisk.” You gesture at the child in the front row. They wave and monsters wave and smile warmly back at them. “And, there is Rei.” Rei did not get much positive feedback. Kids ignored her, and someone behind her gave her shoulder a little push. “Now, Frisk you all know and care about, because they have befriended you and did something great for you by freeing you.” Nods. “Rei… you don't know Rei.”

And then you begin the real speech.

“You might not know Rei, but I do. You see, Rei is a loving, caring, and sweet person. She has a soul of perseverance and a heart of gold. How do I know this? Because Rei is not your average human. Just shy of two months ago, Rei was pushing through with cancer- lymphoma, to be exact.” You know she didn't have cancer, but she doesn't know that, and it gets the point across. Kids are already starting to look awed at the mention of cancer. “Now, if you don’t know what lymphoma is, it's a really fatal cancer. Hardly anyone survives it, but Rei did. And guess what? She smiled all the way through. That was back when we lived with humans. When we came here, everything was awesome. Rei could finally go to school again, and for the first time in a year, we had an actual place to live! But it still didn't change the fact that Rei has been through many hardships, including the loss of her parents in a car accident.” Kids gasped. You guess they didn't know she didn't have parents. “Yeah, me and Rei, we've been in a car accident, and we lost our parents, too. Yet, despite everything, Rei is still Rei. She is a happy, beautiful person. But the past few weeks, Rei has been sad, and it wasn't hard to figure out why.” You take a deep breath.

“If you don't know someone, get to know them, if you don't trust them, get to know them. Bullying someone just because they're different is never the answer.” You give the kids a stern look. “Rei wants to be friends, not a target. Imagine if your best friend was being bullied. Having paint balloons thrown at them, being tripped in the hallways… you wouldn't want that to happen to them, right? You'd stand up for them. Do the same for Rei. You might not think what you're doing is harmful- in fact, no bully has ever looked at their actions and known they were a bully. But, making fun of someone, doing things to hurt them, that is all bullying.” Kids start fidgeting, and you gesture at Rei to join you on the stage. She timidly hops out of her seat and climbs up the steps onto the platform. “So, let's start over. Everyone, this is Rei. Rei is a human, and from now on, she'll be going to your school. I'm trusting you to treat her well when I can't be there, okay? Be a friend to my little sister for me.”

And having dropped bombs with your speech, you walk backstage, Rei at you side. The moment you assume you're out of eyesight, you drop to your knees and turn to hug Rei tightly.

“Hey, if anyone's ever bullying you, tell me, alright?” You say.

You feel Rei nod, and then her shoulders jump in that tiny little way that you know she's crying. Her hands fist in the back of your shirt as she just lets out all of the sorrow from the past few weeks out.

Now in a solemn mood, the kids file out of their seats and return to classes. You'll never know that you hadn't been out of their eyesight yet when you broke your stern act and comforted your sister, but that just might have been what drove home the nail.
After a while, you feel a big, furry paw land on your shoulder, and you look up to see a tearstained Toriel.

“That was a very heartfelt speech, Y/n,” Toriel sniffles. “You're free to excuse Rei from classes today, if you like.”

You give her a grateful nod as you take Rei by the hand and lead her toward the exit.

As you walk out into the bright sunlight after the darkness of the auditorium, you only have two things on your mind- Rei and a ride downtown. You glare enviously at a blue and chrome model motorcycle that leans against the wall of the school. If only you could have a beauty like that.

Chapter End Notes

Motorcycle??
Oh heck yea. You guys know what's happening next, amirite?
Sorry about the short chapter, the next one will be longer, I promise.

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