Summary

Just a series of snippets/drabbles of Cross trying to dad and Allen trying to live like a normal little kid. Anything triggering I try to make it known through titles but if it is super triggery I will let you guys know in the beginning notes so you can skip over those drabbles. Feel free to send suggestions!

Notes

(Modern AU. Just small snippets of Cross trying to be a dad and little Allen trying to be a normal kid and the antics they get into together. Allen is age 8 in this. Also Timcanpy is in this as a golem :D. I have never went through a car wash that was automatic as far as I could remember but I was struck by a random thought of how Allen would react to going through one his first time.)
Allen’s First Time Through A Car Wash

“Where are we going?” Allen asked, swinging his legs in the back seat of Cross’s beat up 1957 chevelle.

“The car wash. What got a hot date with Dora the Explorer on T.V. or something?” Cross shot back.

“Uhhh no what am I like three?” Allen shot back with a glare.

“With how tiny you are honestly I don’t know anymore.”

“I am not tiny I am vertically challenged! Besides I haven’t hit puberty yet!”

“You are the smallest kid in your grade. You looked like a fucking toddler during your Christmas program.”

“Says the guy who only went to hit on my teacher!”

“Can you blame me!? Damn you’re lucky you have a teacher that fine, all the teachers I had were old and cranky.”

“Can you at least wait until I pass this grade before you decide to make your move on her.”

“Fair enough,” Cross agreed.

“Why did you even have to take me with you to the car wash? This piece of junk is always falling apart why do we gotta even wash it?” Allen whined.

“Why do you think I take you everywhere I go?” Cross fired back.

“Cuz you’re secretly lonely and I am the only person that talks to you that isn’t a female with huge boobs or a coworker.”

“Nice guess but no. It’s because you are the unluckiest kid I have ever met and if I leave you anywhere unattended, I know somehow you’ll almost get yourself killed.”

“What can I say, I make your life interesting,” Allen agreed.

“I can’t believe I left only to get the mail out of the mailbox and you almost drowned yourself in the bath tub,” Cross sighed.

“It’s not my fault the bottom of the tub was slippery and I smacked my head really hard on the side of the tub! Your house isn’t child proofed, it’s barely adult proof!” Allen whined, crossing his arms.

“How did you survive all those years alone as a fucking toddler!?"

“Cuz the fates enjoy my suffering too much to let my life end so early.”

“That’s pretty dark kid.”
“So is every time you close your eyes.”

“It is way too early for me to deal with your fucking sarcasm.”

“It’s always too early for me to deal with yours.” Allen sassed right back.

“I wish this car had an eject child button somewhere.”

“I’m surprised it doesn’t. It already tried to kill me once already!”

“You didn’t shut the car door all the way and I apologized what more do you want kid!”

“To know we’re not driving in a death trap!” said Allen

“I like to live dangerously! One day you will appreciate the survival skills I teach you just by being in my mere presence!” Cross responded.

Allen rolled his eyes and blew a small piece of hair out of his face.

“Don’t you fucking roll your eyes at me I am the king of sass and I am not willing to give you that title yet,” Cross complained.

“I’m sorry but did you mean sass or king of asses?” Allen fired back.

“You’re lucky we’re in the middle of traffic or I would turn this car around.”

“I don’t even think this hunk of metal can barely turn at a stop light anymore let alone make a full U turn.”

“…Dammit I think you’re right.”

Allen smirked in victory to which Cross frowned in annoyance as he pulled into the car wash. Allen blinked, looking around in curiosity. Mana never took him to a car wash before, usually they washed the car themselves and it was very seldom. Mana liked to see the dirt caked on the car because he said it made it look like a traveler’s car, which they were. They were traveling performers. In fact, Mana’s car was older than Cross’s car and didn’t have any seat belts, but Allen didn’t mind. As far as he was concerned it got them to where they were going, but as he thought back to the night of the car accident, it probably would’ve helped to coax Mana into getting the car checked out. Maybe he’d still be alive. Of course, that was a story for another day.

Cross turned off the car momentarily to walk up to a machine to pay and pick what option he wanted before he returned to the car and brought it up to the entrance.

“W-Wait so you’re not going to get out and like wash it by hand?” Allen said, his eyes wide.

“Pfft no, what do I look like to you a peasant?” Cross responded before looking over at Allen, “I know Mana never seemed to wash his car before, but you’ve never been through one of these before?”

“No. Are you sure the car won’t fall apart in here?” Allen asked.

“As long as you keep the windows rolled up then it should,” Cross responded as he drove up to the track would automatically take the car through the wash, “I mean it, keep the windows rolled up or I will tan your hide, got it?”

“Yeah,” Allen said distractedly, gasping when the car jolted and began to move on the track.
“Don’t piss yourself kid,” Cross laughed, stealthily pulling out his phone so he could record Allen’s reaction.

“I’m not scared!” Allen retorted, although his eyes flitted around nervously when the car began to shake, and water began to splash against the car. The part that entertained Cross the most was when the big brushes came out, “What the bloody hell are those things!?”

Cross resisted the urge to cackle at Allen’s accent slipping through in his surprise, deciding to just quietly sit and watch his reactions which were a mix of awe and fear. He wasn’t a fan of the huge brushes which quickly became clear as he moved as far away from them as he could and stared at them distrustfully. Timcanpy even popped out to move towards the window, attempting to bite at them through the glass, an attempt to protect his little companion.

“Ah it seems Tim doesn’t like them either,” Cross chuckled, watching Allen’s huge eyes blink owlishly as the soap slowly oozed down over the windows. He was grateful the kid hadn’t noticed he was video taping because he was so enamored with what was going on around him. Once Allen figured out that the brushes would be able to hurt him from within the car, he seemed to relax a little bit but still stared suspiciously at them and scooted away from them. Of course, that didn’t stop Tim from growling at them and flying around aggressively to try to scare them off. Once Tim was sure the brushes would not be returning, he flew back to perch on Allen’s head, seeming to be quite satisfied with itself. Of course, the fun wasn’t over as more water washed over the car and the air blowers started. And began to rock the car even more.

Cross continued to laugh as Allen instinctively scooted closer to Cross’s seat, staring at the air blowers warily. It reminded him of thunderstorms and he didn’t like how loud they were. He wasn’t traumatized by the experience though and Cross thought that was a win, even though his reactions were absolutely priceless. Timcanpy was simply an added bonus as he began to growl at the blowers and swish his tail around like a pissed off cat.

Cross quickly pocketed his phone before Allen could finally take notice, smirking cockily at how close Allen was pressed up against his seat and staring back at the exit in a mixture of awe and concern, “Not scared huh?”

“Shut it I wasn’t scared! I didn’t know what to expect! Tim was the one who was scared,” Allen yelped, glaring and pushing himself away from Cross’s seat in favor of kicking it once in defiance.

“Are you kidding me? Tim was at least trying to fight those things you just cowered away in your seat.”

“I’m too tiny to fight them!”

“So is Tim, that doesn’t stop him.”

“He has pointy teeth and can fly!”

“You do to and if it’s flying you’re concerned about I could just send you flying.”

Allen puffed out his cheeks in irritation before sulking in his seat, “I aint scared of some stupid car wash. I was scared of the car coming apart halfway through it.”

“Whatever ya gotta tell yourself kid.” Cross said, rolling his eyes with a shit eating grin, “I can’t believe I actually got that shit on tape.”

“YOU DID WHAT!?”
(The End~)
Comforting Allen During A Thunderstorm

Chapter Summary

In which Cross deals with the routine of comforting Allen during the thunderstorm. He is also age 8 in this one. Modern AU!

Cross was reading a book by lamplight when he heard the first rumblings of thunder in the distance. He had the T.V. volume on low which created a pleasant buzz of noise throughout the living room without being too loud to wake up the brat sleeping in the room over. It’s been two weeks since he had finally returned home from Mother’s place and though he learned quite a bit on how to take care of a child during their stay, he still found himself wishing desperately the old woman was around. He was thankful that the brat was walking around, feeding himself, toileting himself, and starting to do what a normal kid would do, especially now that it was just the two of them. The kid liked playing with Timcanpy but seemed confused when Cross introduced him to some kid toys that he got from Tiedoll. Cross thought that a bunch of legos and cars would keep the kid entertained, after all there were things that surely an eight-year-old would still play with right? He was disappointed when the child instead looked up at him asking, ‘What am I supposed to do with this?’.

Throughout the two weeks, Cross was still filled with unease. He was sure he must’ve called Mother almost once a day so far over trivial things; like what to do when the kid started to stare off into space, if it was okay for the brat to watch Sex in the City, how he could try to decrease the number of bed wetting episodes the kid kept having because of nightmares. He had many other questions, like what he could do to teach the kid how to read and write, how he could get him to stop being so shy out in public. He figured enrolling him in school right now would just stress him out too much, so the next best thing would be just to teach him himself. When it came to being in the public eye, as much as he hated almost tripping over the tiny brat clinging to his leg for dear life, he’d rather know exactly where he was than have him wander off somewhere and get himself hurt. He just managed to get the kid to start functioning again on his own, the last thing he needed was the brat to have another mental breakdown and go back to square one because he pushed him too hard.

Cross instinctively turned his head towards the window when he saw a couple flashes of lightning out of the window followed by the distant rumble of thunder that was beginning to grow louder. Shit. He was in for a long night. He wondered if maybe praying to whatever god was out there would help the kid sleep through the thunderstorm. Fat chance. The kid was a light sleeper from his days of being out on the streets. Cross sighed and put his book on the table next to him before standing up to stretch, preparing himself for the brat’s inevitable awakening.

Sure, he supposed all kids were afraid of thunderstorms at some point in their lives, but in Allen’s case he’d even start to cry at the sight of rain depending on the day. Cross couldn’t say he blamed the kid though, he lost his first father figure in a car accident during a bad thunderstorm. It took a few days for Cross to even get the kid to sit in his car long enough for him to drive back his house when it was time to leave Mother’s.

Cross made his way to the window, moving the curtain away to glance outside at nature’s lightshow. He could see the branches of the trees outside start to shiver violently like a child’s
shoulders when they lost their parents in a store. The red-head moved away from the window in favor of going to the kitchen where he got out a jug of milk and a pot. He flipped the switch to turn on the burner on the stove before setting the pan down on the circle that began to glow a fiery red. He personally didn’t like warm milk, he thought it was disgusting, but over the couple months he had gotten to know Allen he found warm milk was a good aid in calming the child. Sometimes it would even lull him to sleep and if there was anything Cross knew about Allen, it was that the kid could use more sleep.

Just as he was pouring the milk into the pot the thunder rolled through again, louder this time and close enough that he could feel the vibrations under his feet. He capped the jug of milk, leaving the milk in the pot to warm by itself as he walked back over to the window to watch the storm move in. The branches were waving wildly, and rain began to patter fiercely against the windowpane. Cross flinched instinctively as he watched electricity bounce across the clouds, leaving loud thunder in their wake.

He wondered why he was even doing this. Why the hell should he care whether the kid sleeps or not? Why should he care if the kid watches something on T.V. that he shouldn’t, or gets lost in the supermarket? Why didn’t he just leave Allen in the wreckage of the car accident a couple months ago? He could’ve left him to Tiedoll. Honestly, he didn’t have an exact answer. All he knew was that when he arrived at the scene and looked through the hole where the passenger side window should’ve been and saw a pair of frightened, defeated baby blues look back up at him, he felt his chest hurt and a surge of protectiveness take over him. Even in such a devastating situation, he had to admit the kid was kind of cute. Of course, he would never admit that shit to anyone, not even the kid.

Cross jumped a little when a loud thunder boom shook through the entire house, pulling him from his thoughts as a piercing wail broke through the silence that fell soon after, summoning him to the room Allen slept in. The red-head sighed and walked towards the room where more wailing came from, he sped up when he heard another thunder boom shake the house. When he opened the door he was met with the familiar sight of Allen sitting up in bed, his white hair sticking up all over the place, screaming his head off.

“All right, alright kid we’re gonna get through this,” the man sighed as he walked closer to the child, recoiling a little bit when he smelled urine, “Dammit I really gotta get you something for that.”

“All right, let’s get you cleaned up,” Cross muttered to himself as he went through Allen’s drawers to find him a clean pair of pajamas. Cross flinched when Allen’s voice reached an octave higher as the next thunder boom shook through the house, “Enough kid, you’re going to bust your damn voice box again. God’s just having a rock concert up there, nothing to be scared of. Alright?”

Cross shifted his clean pair of pajamas so that they were draped over his shoulder before he lifted up the crying child and awkwardly carried him under the shoulders to the bathroom. He set the child down on the bathroom floor, sighing before he knelt down and began to unbutton his pajama shirt. Allen continued to scream as the wind picked up speed, the tree branches hitting up against the bathroom window. It seemed like the storm was at war with Allen to see who could be the loudest which was not doing Cross’s head any favors.

“Come on kid work with me here. Arms up. There we go,” Cross muttered to himself as he continued changing the child’s outfit. Once he saw to it that he was in clean, dry clothes he picked up the child once again and walked to the kitchen.

“Come on kid, it’s just a little thunderstorm. With me around it wouldn’t even think of hurting you,” the man said, grabbing a small blanket on the way to the kitchen and draping it over the child, “It’s just a little water, sound and lights. Want some warm milk?”
The response Cross got was more screaming. Great. He resisted the urge to shiver in disgust when he felt the kid nuzzle his wet face against his neck. Gross. Instead he walked over to a counter near the stove and sat the child down on it as he grabbed a couple of mugs. He ignored the way Allen reached out for him when he pulled away in favor of preparing the warm beverage for the child.

“Here, hold on to this and take a sip. You’ll feel better,” Cross said, setting one of the mugs into the child’s grabby hands to keep him distracted as he tried to find something to wipe his face off with. He managed to find a clean rag from one of the kitchen drawers and walked back over to the child, plucking the mug out from his hands after he took a sip to move it aside so he could wash his face.

“Ughhh disgusting, you better feel better after this. Hold still dammit! Don’t rub your eye like that you’re going to make it hurt and then I’ll have to hear you complain about it all day,” Cross said as he moved Allen’s hand away from his scarred eye so he could wipe at it gently with the cloth.

“I-I-I’m so-sorry,” Allen whined out.

“For what?”

“I-I-I” Allen continued to blubber.

“Enough kid, you can barely speak. Finish crying and then talk,” Cross said, leaning over to glance out the window at the storm just in time to see another flash at lightning, followed by a large thunder boom that also made Cross jump a little bit. Allen shrieked, slamming his hands over his ears as he began to wail once more. Cross sighed in frustration, hoping the storm would end soon so this little brat could sleep and stop screaming. The man tried to distract the child by getting him to sip some more at the warm milk, but Allen wasn’t having it.

Shit. He didn’t know what he could do to comfort the kid. What would comfort him? Booze. Having a nice big bottle of booze would help him, but he doubted it would be a good idea to try out on the kid. What if he didn’t need to hear the thunder?

“Okay kid. I got an idea but you gotta sit here and wait for me. Can you do that for me?” Cross asked, but the way Allen was clinging to him told him that there was no chance of that happening, “Alright then, fine. Come with me.”

With that the man lifted the child up again who clung against his neck, sobbing and rewetting his neck with his body fluids. Again gross, “I can’t believe you still have tears to cry, you’re going to dehydrate yourself at this rate.”

Cross made his way back over to the chair he was sitting in before the storm hit and sat down with the child in his lap. He grabbed his cell phone and headphones on the little table near his sitting place before he put them over Allen’s ears. Allen looked up at him with watery, confused eyes and watched him fiddle around on his cellphone for a few moments before he heard soft music pulse through the headphones.

“There we go. It’s no children’s lullaby, but at least it’s not someone screaming in your ears,” Cross muttered as he moved Allen so he was laying down in his arms. Allen continued to sob, although Cross was happy to hear that it had dimmed some since he gave him music to listen to. Cross kept watch on the storm that continued to rage on outside and switched the T.V. channel to the news to see when it might leave. The man sighed when he found it wouldn’t be leaving anytime soon. He was thankful that his phone still had enough juice in it to last for another hour or two. He went back to messing with his phone to create a tiny playlist for Allen to listen to for the rest of the storm. He looked over at Allen who was sniffling and was blinking up at him tiredly.
“What are you looking at?” Cross asked as he leaned over to grab some tissues to clean up the child’s face once again. Allen whined in annoyance and threatened to start crying again.

“Oh my god come on. I’m letting you use my phone for crying out loud. I swear if you start throwing a fit I’m going to set you on that couch over there and let you cry yourself to sleep,” Cross threatened, only half meaning it as he finished cleaning Allen’s face.

Allen stopped his whining, resorting to pouting up at Cross.

“Well I’m sorry kid but when you cry your nose runs like a river. It’s disgusting.” The man responded as he pet back his hair, blinking in surprise at the content little sigh that left

Allen’s lips. Okay, that was kind of cute, not to mention his hair was soft. Cross smirked at this new discovery, deciding he would use it to his advantage.

“What, you like how that feels brat?” Cross smirked, doing it again. Allen closed his eyes and leaned against his touch, the music and warmth seeping into his tiny body beginning to lull him back to sleep.

You are so lucky you are cute brat, Cross thought to himself as he continued, though if anyone asked it was to get him to fall asleep sooner. It totally wasn’t because he found Allen’s reactions to be cute or the fact that he felt strangely whole to have the small body next to his. He looked back up to look outside, seeing the storm rage on. As he watched Allen drift off to sleep, he made himself comfortable, his own fatigue washing over him. Maybe it wouldn’t be such a bad thing to sit here for a bit longer…
I Don't Have A Title For This

Chapter Summary

Basically the two of them go to a morale boosting gathering with Cross's coworkers with their snot nosed brats as well. Tiedoll questions Cross's parenting and Cross gets a lil bitchy.

“Oi brat, you got your shoes on yet? Tiedoll is gonna rip me a new one if we’re late again,” a man with long, red hair said as he finished tying his hair into a ponytail. Usually when it was undone it was wild, sort of like flames, or at least that’s what the little seven year old, whitette thought as he looked up from the cartoon he was watching, waiting for the older to finish getting ready.

“Mr. T wouldn’t do that, he’s too nice,” the child said, his legs out in front of him, tapping his feet together to make his shoes light up that Cross thought was a total waste of money but the little ankle biter threatened to throw a fit if he didn’t buy them. Well, throwing a fit was an overstatement. Allen wasn’t like most kids his age by the obvious deformed left arm and weird scar on his face, but personality wise, there were times Cross thought he was stuck raising a miniature adult instead of a snot nosed brat. That wasn’t to say Allen was the most behaved child on the entire planet. Like all kids he had his moments, but most of his fits dealt with being hungry or having a nightmare. At least he took care of those damn shoes he bought…most kids wouldn’t.

“Yeah, to little ankle biters, not so much with adults,” Cross sighed, walking over to grab the remote and turn off the T.V., “Where’s Timcanpy?”

Allen squealed when said golden golem popped out of the collar of his shirt, grinning wildly.

“Make sure you keep him hidden until we get there okay? I don’t feel like chasing after another damn juvenile delinquent or a fucking cat,” the man responded as he bent down to tie Allen’s hair up since it had gotten long and it felt like Satan himself was trying to burn everyone on earth alive today.

“We’re gonna have to cut your hair again, dammit,” the red-head muttered crossly (ba-dum tshh)

“I don’t wanna cut it,” the child whined, probably just for the sake of whining about something was Cross’s guess.

“It makes you look like a girl.”

“Am I a pretty girl?”

“I’m not answering that. Get up,” the man responded, giving the smaller a tiny shove towards the entrance way as he grabbed his keys.

The child chased the golem to the front door, jumping up to catch him in his hands, and holding him close as the pair made their way to Cross’s car, a red, beat up, 1967 chevelle. Cross made sure Allen hopped in the car and closed the door before getting in himself out of habit. There was a time where the brat didn’t close the door all the way and it slammed open while they were on the highway. Cross had his quick reflexes to thank that day otherwise his brat would’ve gotten a bad
case of road burn. He really needed to invest in a new car.

“I thought you didn’t like being around the Black Order,” Allen said, his words a little garbled because Timcanpy was pressing himself against the younger’s cheek.

“I don’t.”

“Then why are we going to the gathering?”

“Tiedoll says it’s to boost morale or some shit, and I don’t need the higher ups chewing my ass for not being a team player,” Cross sighed. He’d rather stay home, crack open a cold one and watch T.V., but he’d been avoiding talking to his co-workers for a long time and he knew he was pressing his luck. The Black Order was essentially a special group of police force spread out all over the world. They undertook the trickier, more gruesome cases that the smaller police forces didn’t want to deal with.

“How come you’re bringing me along?”

“Cuz I don’t trust you at home alone and Bookman’s little twerp will be there along with everyone else’s snot nosed brats. If I have to be social, then you have to be social to,” the man muttered while the younger swung his feet, happy his friend would be there. Lavi was his first friend since he came into Cross’s care and the eye patch wearing ten year old managed to bring Allen out of his shell much to Cross’s relief. It took a lot of shoving and encouragement to even get the kid to go a few feet away from the man in public alone at that time. The kid stuck like glue to him with wide, fearful, sad eyes when his adoptive father Mana died unexpectedly, which was another story for another day.

After a few moments of driving, Cross heard the dreaded words that any parent driving never wanted to hear.

“I need to pee.”

The red head thunked his head against the steering wheel in frustration, “I told you to go before we left!”

“I didn’t need to go then!”

“Well there’s no gas station anywhere right now. You need to hold it.” The man sighed.

“We just passed one!”

“I am not turning around, we’ll stop at the next one.”

“I don’t know if I can hold it til then.”

“You can and will unless you want your ass beat to kingdom come.”

The child sighed, crossing his legs and staying silent for the next few minutes before he began to squirm around in discomfort.

“Are we there yet?” the child whined, tears gathering in the corner of his eyes, “My bladder is gonna explode.”

“You’re gonna make my head explode in a minute,” Cross growled, feeling fear rising up within him over his car seat being ruined. With a sigh he veered over to a gravel road and
pulled in far enough where there was a great coverage of trees.

“Alright kid, choose a tree,” the man instructed.

The child stared at him in shock, like the man just instructed him to kill a puppy, or the more likely situation, sitting a plate of food in front of him and telling him not to eat it.

“What’s the problem? Animals do it all the time and honestly kid the trees probably need a little watering,” the man said, taking out a cigarette and lighting it.

“Those things will kill you.”

“Nah kid, I’m sure taking care of you will give me a heart attack way before these cigarettes kill me.”

“What if someone sees?”

“No one will see or care if you hurry enough, now go before I boot you out of this car.”

“Fine but if I get in trouble I’m gonna tell them you force me to watch Jersey Shore and beat me every night to the sound of Rick Roll by Rick Astley playing in the background,” the child mumbled as he got out of the car.

“What kind of fucked up world do you live in?” Cross spluttered.

“The same one you live in,” Allen called back before running over to the trees.

“Oi watch that mouth or I’ll leave you here for dead!”

~

“Lavi!!” Allen shrieked and in a flash of white and yellow, the kid had gone off to try and tackle the redhead to the ground. Luckily the eye patch wearing, twiddle dee, was prepared and caught the younger as he launched himself into the other’s waiting arms. Cross sighed, thankful that they made it in a decent enough time, but definitely not looking forward to being forced to be social.

“God Moyashi, do you really have to scream like that, you scared off all the birds,” another irritated ten year old, this time dark-haired and ponytail, growled.

Allen scowled in the other’s direction, “It’s Allen and I thought the birds were scared because of your attitude. I’m sure you’d look better smiling Bakanda.”

“Watch it Moyashi or I’ll cut you in half,” the kid growled.

“Wow you guys are such great friends, it almost makes me jealous,” Lavi crooned, rubbing his dirt streaked cheek affectionately against Allen’s.

“Shut it Lavi,” the two growled, the whitette squirming in the red head’s grasp in slight disgust.

“Ewww Lavi you’re sweaty,” Allen whined.

“It’s not my fault, it’s sooo hot out. I think I’m gonna melt,” the red head complained, letting Allen loose to fan at his face, “Allen if I die you can have my eyepatches and my inflatable hammer. Kanda can have my copy of The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy.”

“Hey what about me?” a girly voice called out, revealing a dark-haired girl in pig tails.
“It’s mostly dude stuff Lenalee, you wouldn’t be interested…I guess you could have my jackets, that way you can always stay warm in the winter,” the red head offered.

“Just because I’m a girl Lavi, doesn’t mean I can’t enjoy dude stuff,” the girl pouted, before extending her hand towards Allen, “But I accept your offer. Anyways Allen, are you hungry? Jerry made a bunch of food for the occasion!”

“Lena, it’s Allen we’re talking about, he’s a bottomless pit. Of course he’s hungry,” Lavi laughed as the younger took her hand eagerly and went skipping off with her to the table of food.

“Shit, my kid found the food already and it’s only been five minutes,” Cross cursed as he watched the little one go off skipping with Komui’s sister. Komui was trying hard not to have an aneurysm, or at least that’s what Cross thought.

“Why are you complaining Cross, that just means you won’t need to feed him when you go home,” Tiedoll questioned.

“That’s wishful thinking. The kid’s a bottomless pit. He could clear half of that table, still have room for dessert, and be starving to death by the time we get back to my place,” the man complained.

“Well he’s a growing boy…” Tiedoll chuckled.

“Ya a growing shit machine, and a growing hole in my wallet,” Cross grumbled under his breath watching the kid go to town on a huge plate of food that was almost as big as him. Just watching him gave him a stomach ache but at least he was happy and the food was free.

“So when are you going to enroll him in school?” Tiedoll asked, always making sure Cross was following at least the basics of parental standards.

Cross nearly choked on his soda at the question. Shit, that’s right. School was a thing.

“Uhhh…good question,” the man said hesitantly as he looked over at Allen who was halfway done with his plate already. If he wasn’t stuffing himself, he would’ve shoved him back in his car and they would’ve blown this popsicle stand.

“You haven’t thought of it have you,” came the disappointed tone.

“Alright alright, no I haven’t! The kid can barely read, besides I don’t think a school setting is right for him,” Cross sighed, betraying his nervousness of throwing Allen to the wolves so soon after Mana’s death. He doubted he’d even be in his grade level and while he knew he was a fighter, he knew kids had trickier ways of being assholes to each other. Not to mention how expensive it would be to make sure he had all he needed for school…

“Cross a child’s education is very-“

“Important. Yeah yeah I know, but you haven’t seen the shit I’ve seen him go through. I’ll enroll him when I feel he’s ready,” the man grumbled, starting to get irritated at the older’s persistence on telling him what was best for Allen. It wasn’t like he was the world’s best dad in the world, but he made sure Allen had what he needed and then some. He was learning in his own chaotic way on how to be a parent and Allen was learning what it was like to be an actual child growing up in society, rather than a street performer.

“The longer you wait, the harder it’ll be for him to catch up,” Tiedoll sighed.
“Since when were you an expert at parenting? Actually, no, don’t answer that. If I wanted my parenting skills questioned I would’ve gone to that old hag in Liverpool. Just because I’m not doing it the way you would do it, doesn’t mean it’s not effective. I know how Allen is and how he thinks, it’s his path and his choice. I’m not shoving him into something he may not want,” the redhead argued. He was sick of seeing the kid walk in Mana’s shoes. He wanted the kid to take an interest in going to school instead of having someone tell him he had to, or to present him the idea and have him think “what would Mana want?” Cross and Tiedoll’s attention was drawn away when they heard one of the kids start yelling.

“Oi Moyashi look at where you’re going, you got cake in my hair,” Kanda yelled, grabbing at his ponytail in disgust.

“Well maybe if you cut your hair every once in awhile it wouldn’t have landed in my cake. What a shame, it looked really good,” the child muttered pitifully.

“Why you little-“ Kanda growled, reeling a fist back to punch Allen square in the face. Allen blinked at him, unamused, and smashed the rest of his cake into Kanda’s face. It was already ruined anyways.

As the plate slowly fell from Kanda’s face and landed on the ground, revealing his cake covered face, Allen had a hard time trying not to laugh. Lavi also had his hand over his mouth, both in surprise, fear for his friend, and humor.

“Now Kanda, think rationally here,” Lenalee said, trying to step in to save Allen from becoming beaten to a pulp.

“Run,” Kanda growled.

“Or else what? You don’t scare me, ponytail,” Allen responded, puffing out his little chest as he met Kanda’s glare head on with his own. This was the Allen Cross loved to see. Timcanpy, sensing the incoming fight, flew away from Allen and sped over to Cross to watch the action.

“You’re fucking dead Moyashi!” Kanda screamed, grabbing the other’s collar angrily. Allen spat in Kanda’s face while the other tackled him to the ground, shoving his face in the dirt.

“Kanda! That’s enough! It was an accident,” Tiedoll scolded, acting quickly to grab the ten year old by the back of his shirt to pull him away from Allen. Cross rolled his eyes, sad to see the fun end so soon, but the last thing he needed was Tiedoll complaining his dear charge was injured because his kid lost his temper.

“Brat that’s enough! Break it up or I’m forcing you to go to bed without dinner,” the redhead said, striding over to grab his own ankle biter who managed to kick Kanda in the stomach before he was pulled away from the whittete. Cross restrained the now dirty, and struggling Allen, not at all concerned at the injuries he sustained. Must’ve not been that bad if he was still kicking and struggling, he swore to god if he sent one of them at his crotch, this kid would have his fury to face and it won’t be child’s play. Tiedoll meanwhile was trying to make Kanda stop his onslaught of insults so he could check over his own injuries.

“Alright, I’d say that’s enough fun in the sun for now. We’re leaving,” Cross announced, heaving his charge over his shoulder who was still yelling at Kanda at the top of his lungs,” Jeez kid, will you calm down, you’re giving me a headache with your squeaking.”

The man dropped the pouting child unceremoniously into the passenger side of his car and slammed the door shut before walking around to the driver’s side and getting in. Cross gave Allen
a napkin to wipe at his face, “Clean your face, you look disgusting.”

“S’not my fault, it’s Kanda’s fault for being such a jerk.”

“Stop your complaining. Cut your losses. You managed to get a good kick in and all he got on you was a little dirt,” Cross said, lighting another cigarette.

“He ruined my cake though…” Allen said with a pathetic little sniffle.

“Get over it. It’s over rated. Besides we’re stopping for ice cream.”

“Really!?” Allen exclaimed, his eyes brightening with hope and joy.

“Yeah, I got something I need to talk to you about,” the man responded, rubbing the top of the other’s head as he started up the car.
Chapter Summary

(Basically, small snippets of Cross slowly building up somewhat of a relationship with Allen after the accident and learning the early stages of what it was like to be a dad. Modern verse AU. Timcanpy is still a golem in this. Mana died by a suspicious car accident and for some reason Cross decided to take Allen in. Allen’s past still somewhat follows canon minus becoming exorcists and innocence. He is still born with a messed-up arm but after some brain damage the car accident causes, he slowly learns how to move his arm. May be a little OOC, I know Cross is a lot less of a jerk then in the manga, but this is how I think he’d act like towards Allen without the whole Neah thing and emotionally distancing himself. Cross is a law enforcement officer in this.)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“You have to admit he’s quite a cute little thing,” Mother comments after Cross placed the injured, sleeping child on the spare guest bed they had, “I still think you should’ve taken him to the hospital Cross. What if he has damage inside of him that we can’t see?”

“What the fuck can a hospital do that we can’t do?” Cross snapped, but quickly added as an afterthought, “On second thought, don’t answer that. Look, the whole entire thing was suspicious. The car accident wasn’t caused by a freak thunderstorm. Mana was being chased. It doesn’t help his piece of shit car had shit tires which only made it that much easier to stage it as an accident.”

“Okay, but why did you decide to take the kid? I swear to god Cross if you push him onto me you have another thing coming-I am way too old to be raising a child!” Mother nagged, “Who knows, he probably won’t even survive!”

“He’s a kid! Look I know I can be heartless but not heartless enough to let some brat die out there. Besides the last thing the Noah need is another member to add to their forces,” Cross retorted.

“The hospital could’ve taken care of him and he could’ve gone into an orphanage. A family could adopt-“

“The kid may be cute, but nobody is going to want to adopt a kid with a fucked-up arm and an eye on top of it.”

“Don’t tell me you actually took the kid with you because you actually felt bad for him,” Mother chortled in amusement, “You’re losing your touch Cross. I didn’t know you had a soft spot for kids.”

“I don’t!” Cross snapped, “I have such a desire to kick Tiedoll’s little ankle biter across the room and Bookman’s kid is so squeaky and annoying that it takes every ounce of self-control I have not to strangle the kid’s neck!”

“So why him?”
“What the fuck is this twenty questions!? I didn’t take him in because I felt sorry for the brat!” Cross growled, walking out in a huff.

“Careful if you keep yelling like that, you’re going to wake him up”

“Nonsense, the brat is knocked the fuck out, he won’t be waking up in a long while.” Cross called back.

Mother looked back at the child, a perplexed look on her face, “Well I don’t know why he decided on you, but you must be something special to thaw even a little of that man’s heart.”

~

“Why are you just standing there like that? I know you think you are a very scary man but glowering at him won’t get him to snap out of it any faster,” Mother said as she walked over to the doorway to stand behind Cross, her cane tapping quietly against the wooden floor. She blinked, noting the wet stain underneath the child’s butt and looked up to see Cross visibly twitching in disgust.

“Well, it looks like you got some work to do. You better hurry up. Sitting in soiled clothing will cause skin breakdown,” Mother laughed as she tapped away.

“What!? You don’t honestly expect me to clean the kid up do you!?”

“Well who else is gonna do it? Barba? He’s too busy outside!” Mother called back, her voice laced in amusement, “You decided to take the child in and when you have a child, you’re going to find that you’re going to learn a whole lot about bodily fluids, including body functions.”

“He’s past the age where he should be toilet trained!”

“That may be so, but you didn’t take into the account the trauma the kid may be in. Now get to work!”

Cross’s eye twitched in annoyance as he watched Mother’s retreating form and he slowly turned to look back at the brat who stared unblinking at the wall. Dammit. Why did he had to go and get a heart? He didn’t sign up for this shit.

~

Cross jolted awake into instant alertness and stood up, knocking over the chair that crashed loudly to the floor at the sound of the first blood curdling cry of the night. It was many of the sounds that became his alarm clock over the past three days of taking over Mana’s brat named Allen. Cross was amazed how in just the span of a few days he had become so in tuned to the brat. He could identify which whimpers meant he was hungry or in pain. He was beginning to figure out his bathroom schedule which saved many bed sheets and meant a lot less work for Cross. Sure, the brat wouldn’t stop staring off into the void but at least he needs could be communicated.

Cross found his body automatically moving quickly to the bedroom and walking through the door, understanding full well what awaited him inside. The first time Allen had his fit, he had to admit that the amount of blood and screaming freaked him out a little bit, but now he barely batted an eyelash as he strode over to rip the child’s hand away from his eye before he could claw off the bandage on his eye. All Cross could do was loom over the child and pin his wrists to the bed as scream after scream tore itself out from his tiny lungs until he passed out from exhaustion. Cross would usually be annoyed about getting a headache from the continuous screaming, he’s seen too much shit with his job that it took a lot to disturb him. Looking at those wide, bloodshot, glazed
over eyes and the unholy sounds ripping out from deep inside this tiny body, however, gave the man nightmares. These nightmares would only add to the ones he already had he would later soon realize.

Why should he feel anything for a snot-nosed brat? Why did he decide to walk over and pick up this small, glass covered body thrown from the passenger side of some piece of shit car? No one else saw the kid, nobody else cared. So why did he? Was it the star carved into his forehead? One of the marks of the Noah family? Was it the way his tiny hand curled tightly around his finger or the look in the child’s eyes before he passed out. As the child continued to scream, Cross could only pray that the child fell asleep quickly this time.

~

Cross sighed letting the strands of white hair that used to be a reddish-brown fall from his hand, “It’s completely white now. Not even a single red strand in sight.”

The man gently laid Allen back on the freshly clean sheets and tucked the blankets around his form, “Alright kid let’s try to keep these clean for at least a few hours this time. Yeah?”

The man placed his hand on Allen’s head, ruffling a few of the soft strands that were freshly washed after his most recent accident. He seemed to be quite relaxed and sleeping peacefully after his bath and Cross hoped that that would last for quite a while. Sure, the kid was beginning to sleep more thoroughly during the night and his eye seemed to be healing up fine but those were the only improvements. The brat still refused to move, refused to eat by himself, to basically function and Cross didn’t know how to kickstart the brat back up again.

“You must’ve really loved that nutcase of a clown huh?” Cross muttered to himself as he moved the strands of hair out of the younger one’s face before standing up and exiting the room.

~

It’s been nearly a month now with about zero improvement with Allen and Cross’s patience was running out. Well that was an understatement. Cross was sure his patience was long gone by now and it surprised him how long he actually put up with this shit, metaphorically and literally. It surprised him how desensitized he became to changing the brat, feeding him, dealing with his screaming fits, doing laundry and cooking. Still, the brat couldn’t keep going on like this. It didn’t matter what Cross did. If the kid lost his will to thrive, he was going to die sooner or later and Cross was just delaying the inevitable.

The man looked over to Allen who sat curled up, staring at the wall with blood shot eyes. The same position he has been in for nearly a month unless Cross moved him into a different one.

“So, you loved Mana that much huh…” Cross said, breaking the pregnant silence within this room, “C’mon Allen…Do you remember what he always used to say…? Never stand still, always keep walking.”

Don’t stop now kid. Sometimes it can be hard to live and continue to walk through this life but there is a reason why you are put here and you’re not the type of kid to go down because of something like this, Cross thought to himself before he left the room, noting that the younger had tears in his eyes. He only hoped this was what the kid needed to hear to break through the darkness that had surrounded his mind.

~
Two little gray eyes peeked over the corner of the wall timidly at the man who sat before him on a couch in the living room. The man was ignoring him and smoking a cigarette which made the little boy wrinkle his nose up at the acrid smell. He held Timcanpy, who he had warmed up to and sought comfort from, tightly in his skinny little arms as he peered at Cross. He had no idea what to make of this man. Sure, he nursed him back to health, but he sure seemed a bit rough around the edges. Allen wondered if he should run away and try to live on his own or trust the man before him.

“Oi, what the hell do you want kid? Do you honestly think I wouldn’t notice you standing there when you have Tim with you? I’m surprised you actually made it this far though,” Cross responded, not glancing up once from the T.V. that quietly hummed in the boring tones of a news station. Cross was referring to Allen’s legs that had grown weak during his bed rest which made it hard for him to walk long distances or stand for long periods of time.

Allen shied away a little at being caught and at the man’s voice, but after a moments hesitation he began to slowly walk towards Cross, his head lowered. After noting that the man didn’t seem to mind his presence in the room, he grew more confident to walk a bit closer until he was a few feet away from the man. Cross found himself unnerved by how shy Allen was being, after all the shit he’s done for him he still acted like he was going to strike out at him at any moment. Guess he couldn’t blame the kid though. After looking at the faded scars littered around his tiny body, he knew his past wasn’t exactly the kindest to him.

Cross’s eyes flitted over to the younger who jolted back and looked down at the ground like he was wishing he could become one with it. He noticed how badly the boy’s legs were shaking, whether it was out of fear or fatigue, the man didn’t know but it caused his chest to hurt. Fucking heartburn, Cross thought to himself.

“Well don’t just stand there. You can sit down you know. You’re not like some fucking dog or something,” the man responded, causing the younger to jolt again, his eyes flitted over to the other side of the couch. Hesitating the child walked over and set Timcanpy down on the couch before he climbed up beside the golem who smiled encouragingly at Allen. Once seated Allen stared at the T.V. talking about some news story that he couldn’t wrap his mind around with little words scrolling across the bottom of the screen that he couldn’t read.

“You know I’m not going to hurt you right? Not unless you do something stupid or piss me off,” Cross responded, breaking the awkward silence. Allen was sure he meant to be comforting, but those words did little to ease his nervousness around this man he barely knew. He didn’t know what pissed him off or what he considered to be stupid.

“Oi, calm the fuck down already. I can feel how tense you are from over here and it is unnerving so knock it off,” Cross continued to complain, watching Allen flinch and press his body against the side of the couch as he raised his hand. Instead of hitting him like Allen initially thought he was aiming to do, he was surprised when he felt a warm hand set itself on top of his head.

“Calm down or I will give you something to be nervous about,” Cross threatened as he slowly began to pet Allen’s hair. Gray eyes slowly opened again, confused at this strange, gentle gesture coming from a hand that seemed more like Cosimo’s or the Ring Leader’s hands. The younger’s eyes flitted over warily, wondering what he planned on doing. Was he trying to build up his trust only to break it back down? Maybe he planned on using his deformity to make money? That wouldn’t be a first, but if that was true then why was he staring at him like that? His eyes reminded him of the way Mana looked at him the first time they met at Allen the dog’s grave. Sure, his eyes were harder than Mana’s and didn’t hold the same joyful light that he had, but they softened a little bit as he looked down at the petrified Allen. Allen didn’t like that look. He didn’t like people
feeling pity for him. Cross couldn’t help it though; the kid did a whole 180. When he imagined the brat finally snapping out of it, he didn’t expect the child to act like Mana. Where was the vile mouth hurling insults? Where was the rebellion, the swearing, the fight? The child laying before him was a quivering, timid, polite mess that was afraid of his own shadow and Cross didn’t know how to deal with it. Literally, the kid was afraid of everything. He refused to eat anything unless he saw Cross make it for him and he watched him like a hawk. When he saw Barba walk into the room the kid hid in fear (granted Barba was a big man and sometimes didn’t know his own strength. It seemed natural for a child as small as he was to cower in fear). He wondered if he preferred catatonic Allen over this one…

Then the boiler decided to turn on and the child yelped and dove over to hid, his face into Cross’s side. Well damn, that went 0 to 10 really quick, Cross thought to himself, feeling his body freeze at this unexpected interaction. Shit, what was he supposed to do? “Calm your shit kid it’s just the boiler. I’m gonna be pissed off if you give yourself a heart attack,” Cross said patting the child’s back.

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“Come on kid, get in the car already. I’ll buy you candy,” Cross said leaning against the passenger side door as he watched Allen look from Cross and back to the car warily. They’ve been at this for five minutes.

“Cross with a car like that I’m not surprised the child is scared to go in,” came Mother’s voice from the porch.

“Shut it ya ol’ hag!” Cross shouted back before he returned to his attention to Allen who was slowly backing away from the car, attempting to run off. Oh hell no. This brat needed clothes and something to keep his ass entertained and out of Cross’s hair. Cross also needed to assess what grade level this brat was.

“Don’t you think about it kid. I may be old, but I have run after little brats like you before,” Cross responded, blinking when he realized how wrong that sounded, “Actually disregard what I said, but I’m serious you’re not running from this. You’re going to have to ride in the car sometime. How else are we gonna get back to my house?”

Allen whimpered and continued to back away. Shit this kid is actually gonna try running, Cross thought to himself. Just as Cross took a step forward, Allen dropped Timcanpy and took off sprinting towards the back of the house.

“Son of a bitch! Allen get back here right now!” Cross said, running after the child. Mother tsked sadly from the porch and continued to rock in her rocking chair as the two chased after each other.

“Barba grab him,” Cross yelled out as Allen sprinted through the garden, trying to make his escape by cutting through the garden to get his ass lost in the forest. Uh uh, no fucking way that Cross was going to let that happen.

“Huh? Father Cross?” Barba responded, wiping his brow in confusion before he saw the child running towards the garden, “Ah! Allen Walker! Why are you running? Cross did you scare him again?”

“Enough chit chat just grab him!” Cross panted, whipping his head around when he caught something yellow zoom right past him. Allen darted away from Barba before the man could grab him and instead made a beeline for the shed. Just as Allen thought he got away from the two men,
Timcanpy flew straight in his path and roared, forcing the child to reel back and fall on his butt in surprise.

“Way to go Tim,” Cross said, catching up and picking up the child who immediately began to throw a fit, attempting to elbow and kick at Cross to no avail, “Sorry brat it’s for your own good- Don’t you bite me or I will knock your teeth out!”

“Father Cross I don’t think that’s going to help,” Barba advised.

“It may not but not facing your fears isn’t going to help things either,” Cross responded as he walked back to his car with the screaming Allen who began to cry.

“Cross don’t you traumatize him again,” Mother called out.

“I’m not gonna fucking traumatize him. I’m a perfectly fine driver, I’m not even fucking drunk! Stop your fucking squirming kid, we’re just going to sit in the car for a bit!”

Timcanpy flew in the car first before Cross followed and sat in the passenger seat with the child on his lap, keeping him restrained so he couldn’t escape again, “Alright alright enough! You’re going to give me a headache with your squeaking and whining. We’re just gonna sit here for a bit. You and me. I won’t start the car, we’re just gonna sit here alright?”

Cross sat there, deadpan for a few minutes, waiting for Allen to calm down and when the child did, he moved onto phase two. Even though Cross wanted to scream at the kid to get the fuck over it, the man took a few deep breaths and gently set Allen on the passenger seat by himself before he scooted over to the driver’s side. He locked both doors and they simply sat like that for another moment or two before Cross started up the car.

Allen jolted and began to whimper, staring out at the window with wide, desperate eyes. Timcanpy made some sort of whining sound before pressing himself against Allen’s wet cheek as an act of comfort. Cross watched him carefully, ignoring the itch in his fingers to just put the gear in drive and get going down the road. Once he made sure Allen calmed back down, he slowly shifted the gear and slowly backed up the car. Allen tightened his grip on Timcanpy, his eyes flashing fearfully and flitting distrustfully. Cross was certain if the kid kept this up he’d end up making himself pass out.

“Relax. I’m going to go slow, alright? Don’t piss yourself and get your seat belt on,” Cross said, resisting the urge to roll his eyes as he grabbed Allen’s seat belt and got it on for him, his eyes not once leaving the road, “Ya got Tim with you there and he’s gonna make sure you’re safe to.”

So, they drove at a snail’s pace all the way to the grocery store which would’ve been fine had it not been for the assholes behind them honking their fucking horns and freaking the kid out even more. Or the fact that every time a car passed them the kid looked like his heart was going to stop right then and there.

“Fucking jack ass! Move around if you’re in a fucking hurry!” Cross cursed loudly at one of the drivers who honked his horn and stuck his middle finger out the window. Allen immediately started his waterworks again, his fingernails digging into Timcanpy. By the time they made it to the grocery store, Allen seemed to have run out of tears and as Cross parked into the parking lot and turned to look over at Allen, the child was staring out the window with a mixture of tired wariness.

Cross sighed and placed his hand on Allen’s head before ruffling his hair up, “Alright, so that happened. Let’s get your face cleaned up, it’s disgusting. The sooner we get done here the sooner we can get home and sleep before I can beat the shit out of these fucking drivers. Yeah?”
Allen nodded weakly in agreement.

Chapter End Notes

(Ahhhh I just wanted to say thank you all for the kind comments! Ya’ll made me cry and I am so happy that you guys love my Cross! I’m thinking of making a part two with this drabble! Please send me any suggestions you’d like to see written. Until next time!)
Cross Trying to Dad Pt. 2

Chapter Summary

Continuation of fourth chapter. Small mention of sexual abuse. You have been warned.

Cross Trying To Dad Pt. 2

“Alright brat, stay close,” Cross said exiting the bathroom after cleaning Allen’s face. Timcanpy had shrunk in size and currently had his tail wrapped around Allen’s wrist like a child’s leash and was following behind Cross who was walking towards the clothing aisle. Allen allowed himself to be pulled along, his eyes flickering around at all the people surrounding him and looking at him. He could feel their stares, their mumbling of how unnatural his hair was, the scar on his eye. He was thankful his left arm was hidden behind his long-sleeved shirt and the glove he insisted on wearing everywhere he went.

Cross could hear the whispers to and it pissed him off. There were mothers shocked that he would let his son dye his hair white and wondering where he got his scar from. They were nothing but people that had nothing better to do with their lives other than talk about other people. Nothing more, nothing less. Cross stopped in the kid aisle so abruptly that Allen nearly ran into the back of his legs.

“Alright kid go pick out some shirts or something and hurry up. I hate being surrounded by disgusting people,” Cross complained. When he saw the child not moving, he looked down and was met with gray pools that looked confused and overwhelmed. Oh my god seriously!? Do I have to do everything for this kid, Cross thought to himself.

Cross blinked, staring at Allen for a while before he groaned, “Don’t tell me you’ve never went shopping with Mana before kid.”

“I-I have b-but it wasn’t shops like this,” the child responded in a quiet voice that cracked easy from disuse.

“Do you know what size you wear?” Cross deadpanned, rolling his eyes when Allen shook his head no, “Alright well I have an idea, follow me.”

With that the red-haired man walked around the area before coming upon some shirts that seemed would be Allen’s size. Cross perused some of the selections before he grabbed a green shirt with a rocket ship on it before holding it out towards Allen who immediately scrunched his nose in distaste.

“What? You don’t like it? I thought all little boys like rocket ships and racecars and shit,” Cross responded before he looked at the shirt himself, “Well, on second thought, green isn’t a very creative color is it?”

“Little boys like that stuff?” Allen asked in confusion and self-consciousness. This is what boys his age liked? He knew he wasn’t like other boys in his age group, but he didn’t realize just how different he truly was.
Allen stared at the shirts, trying to wrap his head around why people would want to wear shirts like these? What was the purpose? Clothes were supposed to function to protect and cover the body so why did there have to be so many choices?

“Well…I guess the better question would be what do you like kid?” Cross said, getting down on his level.


Cross sighed in annoyance, “You already have a big appetite I am not buying you clothes with food on them to make it even bigger.”

“T-They have those?”

“Yes, they do.”

“Why?”

“Good question. I don’t know. Anything else that doesn’t involve basic survival. Favorite color?”

“I don’t know…dark colors. Gray? Black? Dark blue?” Allen said as a question like he was searching for Cross’s approval.

“Okay, that I can work with,” Cross nodded as he got up and began to pick out some dark colored shirts which was fine for Allen because he had no idea what he was doing. As

Allen let Cross pick out clothes for him, he looked around at all the selections, wondering if kids really wore these and why. Some of these options he didn’t even understand. Why were there humanoid turtles (Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles), block lego people (Minecraft), or weird yellow humanoid thingies that looked like pills with goggles on them (Minions)? His eyes widened when he saw shirts of wolves and even one that looked like Mana’s dog. Okay, now those were pretty neat.

Cross meanwhile was busy picking out some dress shirts for Allen and was surprised to feel a tug on his pants. Cross looked down, words of annoyance threatening to bubble their way of his throat, but they were quickly squished when he realized it was just his brat who held up a shirt of a dog with a determined look. Oh of course! Dogs! The brat would like dogs because of Mana! Sadly, the shirt was way too big for the kid and Cross was about to open his mouth to say that, but quickly closed it again. First of all, the kid was choosing a shirt which was a positive thing and Cross didn’t want to suppress Allen attempting to individualize himself. Second of all, the brat had such a determined look in his eyes that he was certain if he said no that he’d have to deal with him throwing a temper tantrum in the store (which he wasn’t ready to handle quite yet).

“You really want this shirt?” Cross asked, getting a quick nod from Allen in response, “Alright then, put it in the cart.”

Allen blinked in surprise. He said yes? He expected him to say no or say that his taste in shirts was bad or something.

“Well come on, let’s go. We still have to get you some pants, some underwear, socks, and pajamas,” the man responded, resisting the urge to smirk at the happy glow that lit up Allen’s eyes.
So, the pair made their way through the clothes relatively quickly, Cross choosing most of the things while Allen looked at all the things that boys his age apparently liked, burning it in his memory for future reference. He found most of these things to be boring and hard to wrap his mind around, but he supposed it would come in handy one day when trying to interact with his own age group. Should that ever happen. Cross decided to buy some very soft pajamas as an afterthought because while the brat had begun to function by himself, he still slept fitfully during the night and woke up several times with wet bed sheets. He figured soft pajamas would be therapeutic in trying to get the kid to relax at night.

Since Cross had that on his mind, he grabbed some bed wetting ‘underwear’ for the brat. He ignored how red Allen’s face turned and the way he looked down at the ground in shame. Sorry kid, but I’m tired of washing bed sheets every day, Cross thought to himself as they moved on to the educational stuff.

“Alright brat, time to figure out what you know, other than knowing how to survive. Can you read any of this stuff?” Cross asked, watching patiently as Allen slowly scanned the items on the shelves. His brain could register the symbols as letters, but he couldn’t put them together to form anything he knew.

Allen shook his head no.

“Do you know the alphabet?”

“A little bit. Mana tried to teach me some symbols before, but they weren’t like the alphabet,” Allen said, his voice cracking even more from how much he’s been using it.

“How about numbers? How high can you count?”

“I think to one hundred at least.”

“So, you’re better with numbers I see.” Cross murmured to himself as he began pulling work books from the shelves, “Sorry kid but you’re going to have to learn some basic stuff kids your age should know otherwise Tiedoll is going to be pissed at me.”

“Who is he?”

“A friend of mine. You know how to count money?”

“Yeah…for the most part.”

“Works for me. Damn why the hell do they make all this shit so expensive? I thought the government took the education of our next generation seriously. What the fuck is this?” Cross muttered to himself as he grabbed a few more books he deemed decent enough at teaching Allen what he needs to know, some flashcards and easy beginner story books for the brat.

This guy must be quite scary when he’s angry if he’s going this far to make sure I learn stuff, Allen thought to himself. He wondered why he thought it was so important whether or not he learned how to read, I mean he’s lasted this long without it. He had no interest in going to school either since most of the kids will think he’s a freak. It was so much easier to just forget about it.

“Alright kid, now we gotta go searching for shit that you can entertain yourself with.”

“Why can’t I just go get a job?” Allen croaked out.
“Child labor is illegal you know, that right? The fact that you worked at a circus was illegal kid. Looks like your voice box is telling you to shut up for a little while.”

Allen pouted at the statement in response. Illegal or not, nobody cared anyways so why would they now?

“All right kid. Go nuts, this is like a kid’s dream…or so I’ve been told,” Cross responded when they reached the toy aisle. Allen took one look at the toy aisle and looked up at Cross with a look that seemed to say, ‘why did you bring me here and why do kids play with useless things like this?’

“Seriously kid?” Cross responded in awe. This kid literally had a deadpan reaction to the toy aisle!? There is no way this kid had no experience with children’s toys before, right? Granted Mana had rubber balls, balloons and other clown trinkets but those were for performances, they weren’t meant as toys.

Timcanpy meanwhile flew forward to the huge pile of rubber balls and began to growl at them, threatening to fight them. Allen looked from Tim to Cross and said, “Tim doesn’t like this idea.”

“I can’t believe I’m gonna say this but…we’re not fucking leaving this aisle until you at least pick out three toys,” Cross said sternly, catching the flicker of…holy shit was that annoyance that crossed Allen’s face (no pun intended)? Hell, the man couldn’t even believe he’d encounter a situation where a kid literally did not want any toys.

“Why three?”

“Three is a perfectly good number!”

“Why can’t it be one?”

“It can’t be one because what if you get bored with it!?"”

“There’s Timcanpy.”

“Timcanpy isn’t a toy!”

“Then what is he?”

“Something that isn’t a toy! I don’t know! I can’t believe you’re arguing with me right now! I would be proud of you if I wasn’t sick and tired of being here!” Cross responded, crossing his arms in annoyance.

Allen pouted and walked off down the aisle, feeling confused and overwhelmed. He just wanted to go home but then he’d have to deal with riding in the car home and he didn’t want to go through that again. Not only that but he was exhausted, hungry, and he really needed to use the toilet. He hated feeling hungry. Loathed it. He could feel frustrated tears begin to fill his eyes at the overstimulation.

Cross sighed, watching the kid wander off and poke random toys unenthusiastically. Timcanpy on the other hand seemed to be having the time of his life interacting with the other guys, especially growling at toy monsters and army men. The little golem fluttered back and forth between toys but seemed very fixated on a remote-control car and a nerf gun and kept trying to get Allen’s attention. Cross meanwhile stood around staring at women absentmindedly and wondering if Mother would allow him to drink into unconsciousness. There was no way he was going to help the brat on this one. He already got him clothes and educational bull shit that seemed a little condescending for someone like Allen with how cutesy the fucking covers looked. Whatever, if it got the job done.
Cross didn’t give a damn.

Allen decided he’d take Timcanpy’s suggestions, the little gears already turning in his head on what he could use these ‘toys’ for. The gun with foam darts could prove to be useful in the future and he thought Timcanpy would have a lot of fun riding in the remote-controlled car, so Allen grabbed both things and put them in the car.

“I said three kid.”

Allen resisted the urge to roll his eyes and simply grabbed the box full of blocks at his side with a deadpanned look and tossed it in, blinking up at Cross.

“Well okay then. I don’t know why a kid would want a gun with foam bullets but what the fuck would I know. I mean back in my day we shot each other with BB guns.”

“Is that how your eye got messed up?” Allen asked, beginning to walk a little funny.

“No. Why the fuck are you walking like that?”

“I need the loo,” the child whined pitifully.

“Why didn’t you go when we were in there during your emotional breakdown?”

“Why didn’t you go?” Allen fired back, snippy for once which Cross was a little put off by and intrigued.

“I didn’t have to go,” Cross smart assed.

The child stared at him with a look that said ‘well there is your freaking answer.’ Okay, well the kid got him there, plus they’ve been there for at least an hour or so. So Cross begrudgingly led the tyke to the bathroom but was confused when the kid refused to make a move to go in it.

“I thought you had to go to the bathroom!” Cross responded, feeling his irritation rise.

“I do!”

“Well then go!”

Allen looked up at him like he grew three heads, “W-Well I can’t go in there by myself!”

“Why the bloody hell not!? You’re at the age where you can go by yourself! It’s not like I’m gonna ditch you here!”

“W-Well cuz I don’t want some old wanker tryna’ have his way with me,” Allen mumbled down to the floor, fidgeting with his shirt. His accent slipped through without him knowing.

Cross’s eyes widened at this new piece of information. Did the kid mean what he thought he meant by that? He opened his mouth, intending to have the kid explain himself, but he snapped it closed again. They were in public. He’d talk about it with him later, but least to say he was not happy about this arrangement.

“Fine. I’ll walk in there with you and I will stay in there until you’re done,” Cross growled grumpily, “Happy?”

Allen nodded his head, his eyes not leaving the ground as the two went inside.
“Y-You promise you won’t leave?” Allen asked, eyeing Cross warily.

“Yeah, yeah I promise, now hurry up kid,” Cross sighed in annoyance from outside the stall. He wondered what other shit this kid was hiding from him. Granted it was his fault for not researching into him further, but he wondered what other shit would pop up later that he would have to deal with.

~

“Get in the car. We are not going to go through this again,” Cross growled, feeling annoyed that the brat was just standing there. They were repeating the same damn thing back at Mother’s house except there were cars all around them, moving cars, and asshole people. The man’s eyes narrowed threateningly when he saw Allen take a step back, preparing to run, “I swear to god kid if you even think of running you better hope to god that one of these cars flatten you into a pancake before I get my hands on you.”

A mother turned and stared at Cross in disgusted awe at his threat, hugging her infant closer to her chest. Cross ignored her.

“Come on kid, you want food, don’t you? The sooner you get in the car and get it over with the sooner I can make you food,” the man bribed, watching Allen’s eyes look around, trying to look for an escape route.

Cross sighed before walking around the car to kneel in front of Allen who took a few steps back so abruptly that he fell to the ground. The kid sniffled, threatening to start crying.

“Allen, enough. You can’t keep hiding from this forever,” the man responded sternly but in a softer voice, “I am not going to get us killed in this car. Alright? I know I may not look it, but I am an experienced driver. I know I have road rage and I drink but I am not about to put us in a dangerous situation where we might get into a car accident. I haven’t given you a single reason for you not to trust me when it comes to keeping you alive. Have I?”

Allen looked away from Cross, unconvinced and anxietal. Cross made a mental note to look up things to set a child’s anxieties at ease. He felt this was only the tip of the iceberg when it came to the trauma this kid had.

Cross resisted the urge to just pick the kid up and throw him in the car. He didn’t want to deal with the kid screaming and crying his head off the whole ride home and it wouldn’t do shit in trying to get the kid to trust him. Instead he slowly reached up and patted Allen’s hair before slowly reaching down to grab his chin and tilt his head back up, so he was looking directly at Cross. For a moment, Cross could see a flicker of a scared shitless, confused little boy staring back at him before his eyes automatically darted down in submission.

“Allen. Look at me,” Cross said sternly. No response. So, he tried again, his voice dropping down to a tone he never knew he was capable of, a tone he only saved for his lovers in bed, “Look at me.”

Slowly Allen’s eyes shifted over to look directly into hard to read, blood red pools. He felt quite awkward, staring into someone’s eyes. It was something he never did because the people he usually interacted with never had good intentions in the first place. He even had a hard time looking Mana in the eyes, those kind eyes that only held warmth and deep sadness. The red eyes that stared back at him were usually piercing, calculating, smoldering with something deep and painful that could never be fully brought to the surface. What stared at him now felt like a piece of that wall, hiding the deep and painful, was chipped away and it made Allen feel relieved and
scared at the same time. Those eyes could see what he’s hiding. There was no bull shitting. The stress of hiding was eliminated. Those eyes reflected some of Mana, but it also held something different that Allen couldn’t quite put his finger on back then.

“I am going to do whatever I possibly can to keep you alive and safe. I can’t promise I will be anything like Mana. I can’t ever live up to that damn clown but if I think or I know that you can’t handle something I will be there. If I am not, then Tim will be there until I can get there. I am not the most trustworthy guy out there and I am no fucking saint, but I can promise you that. I can promise you that I am going to try my damn hardest. Alright? Are you going to trust me?” Cross asked, not breaking eye contact.

Allen squinted, and Cross could see that little boy come crawling back, but it had the hardened edge of an adult that has seen some shit to know that this world absolutely could not be trusted. Instead of being put off by it Cross seemed to welcome it, allowing the child to stare hard at him, attempting to extract any lie he held in his face. While it hurt to see such a young face look in such a way towards him, he knew it was instinctual. It felt like he was staring into the eyes of an adult rather than a small child.

It felt like several minutes had gone by before Allen’s eyes finally softened and his body relaxed. He nodded quietly. Cross resisted the urge to smile in victory.

“Good. Now come on. It’s getting late and it’s not fun to sit in a parking lot at night.” Cross responded as he took Allen’s hand in his own and led him to the car. Allen obediently got in, letting Cross buckle him in and shut the door before the man returned to the driver’s side and got in.

“Alright. Here we go,” Cross said, starting up the car once again and driving back to Mother’s house. Allen jolted violently when the car started up but seemed to relax a lot quicker than last time. Even though Cross didn’t want to, he began by driving slowly like he did the last time, checking the kid’s reaction before he began to slowly increase his speed to get Allen used to it.

He still had a problem with cars passing them though and he nearly hyperventilated when a semi passed them. That pissed Cross off because he felt like all his hard work was going to waste because some jack ass was in a fucking hurry.

Cross moved his hand to rest on Allen’s head when his whimpering started, and he began to back away from his side of the car, his eyes widening warily as he watched the semi take its sweet ass time passing them. “Oi relax kid. He’s not that close to us. We’re okay. You’re okay alright? Trust me.”

Cross could already see that he would need to take the kid on a few more car rides in the future before he went home. It was a long drive back to his house and he might end up strangling the kid with the constant whimpers and near panic attacks this kid was having now. He could tell by the way Timcanpy was being squeezed that the golem would not appreciate having to sit through a long ass car ride with an anxietal child squeezing him into a pulp.

“See? Nothing to it.” Cross responded when the semi finally passed. He could feel the boy shiver underneath him and bury his face into Tim in exhaustion.

“Looks like someone could use a nap.”

He got a groan in response. Whether it was out of agreement or the threat of a tantrum, he didn’t know, nor did he care at the moment. All he knew was that he wanted to drown himself in a drunk stupor and pass the fuck out. This child care shit was definitely not the faint hearted.
Cross felt his eye twitch as he was hit in the eye with a foam bullet from a toy gun. The man slowly turned to glare at the small child who blinked in surprise at his shot, for he was aiming at Timcanpy who was happily trying to catch the bullets in his mouth. Allen moved the gun, so he was looking down into the barrel curiously before accidentally pulling the trigger and hitting himself in the face with the next bullet.

“I better not hear you bitch if you take out your other eye with that fucker,” Cross growled out, throwing the foam bullet back at the brat, “And if you aim that fucker at me again, I’ll shoot those fucking bullets up your ass. Got it?”

Allen simply pouted at the older man. Loaded up the nerf gun. Aimed. And fired straight at Cross again.

Thunk. This time it hit his ear. Cross slammed the book he was reading down and got up, “Alright kid you wanna throw down!? Let’s fucking brawl!”

Allen squeaked. Dropped the gun and took off sprinting. Cross grabbed the toy gun and went after him, shouting about how he’d shove it up his ass.

By the end of their brawl, Allen was on the floor, his hands and leg tied behind him and five nerf bullets stuck to his body. Cross was in the background sipping his wine and reading his book in victory. Least to say, Allen learned a very valuable lesson that day and that was to not mess with Cross when it came to guns. Toy guns especially.
Cross was simply sitting there, watching T.V. with a glass of wine in his hand when he felt tiny eyes and a golem’s metaphorical eyes on him. Ah. So, the kid finally woke up again for the second time this night…well technically morning now. The kid had a hard time falling asleep for more than three hours at a given time. Either he wakes up from night terrors to which Cross has to calm him down, or he simply wakes up and refuses to go back to bed. The kid’s sleep schedule was absolutely fucked and so was Cross’s. Whatever, he was more of a night person anyways. It still pissed him off because now he didn’t have Mother or Barba there shooting him suggestions on how to take care of the brat. Nope. They were back at his house. Just the two of them, three counting Timcanpy.

The man slowly turned his head towards the corner of the room, catching the blur of white when the kid darted back behind the wall again.

“I smell a little brat and an annoying golem that should both be in bed and fast asleep,” Cross called out, setting his glass of wine aside and staring at the wall expectantly. In a few moments time a pair of gray eyes poked over the corner of the wall followed by a little golem sitting on white, slightly messy hair.

Cross raised an eyebrow, “Well no use in hiding behind the wall. You might as well come out now.”

That was the spell that broke the kid’s stand still and the child quietly walked up to Cross’s side.

“So, boredom by politicians talking shit on the news wasn’t enough to keep you down and out either,” Cross muttered, more to himself. He wondered if he could bore the kid back to sleep with a documentary on oil drilling or perhaps business economics. He could try and force him to read the dictionary, but the kid couldn’t read anyway. He wondered if he sat him in a room with his boss if he would be bored into a deep slumber…I mean his boss already almost puts his own ass to sleep with his drivel nonsense.

“What are we going to do? You got bags under your eyes kid and I don’t feel like putting up with you when you start getting crabby,” Cross yawned.

Allen gave Cross a deadpan look that basically told him ‘I’m not going to go back to bed and you’re not going to make me’. As much as Cross would’ve loved to tell the kid to go ‘knock himself out’ and fall asleep, he quickly found that this little runt attracts bad luck to him everywhere he goes. He could never take his eyes off this kid for more than a minute without the
kid landing himself in some sort of trouble. Just the other day the kid nearly got his ass stung by a
horde of bees because he wanted to steal their honey. Now mind you, if it wasn’t for the fact that
Cross didn’t know if Allen was allergic to bee stings or not, he would’ve let the kid get stung a
couple of times. It would’ve served him right.

“You better wipe that look off your face or I’ll wipe it off for you and not in the way that you’d
like,” Cross threatened. Allen glared in response. Great. The kid was in a bad mood already. This
was going to be fun.

“We can do this the easy way or the hard way. The easy way involves you following me to bed and
laying your ass down willingly. No running away. I’ll even lay with you until you fall back to
sleep. The hard way involves me tackling your ass to the ground and restraining you to your bed
until it’s at decent hour for brats like you to be up and about,” Cross explained carefully, not
breaking eye contact with the kid. Allen was still glaring at him stubbornly. This kid absolutely
refused to go back to the bed.

Okay fine then, I’ll just have to use my secret weapon, Cross thought to himself.

“I’ll make pancakes when I wake up if you be good and do what I say,” the man said
challengingly.

The kid considered it, his eyes hard as steel, “Blueberry?”

“Yeah. With whipped cream, the whole works.”

“You promise?” Allen asked, staring at the older distrustfully.

“Yeah, I promise kid,” Cross rolled his eyes.

“No ya gotta pinky promise, like Mana did! That way you can’t go back on it or ya gotta stick a
needle in your eye and stuff and you only have one eye left, so you can’t afford to go back on your
promise. Just in case though ya gotta do the pinky promise okay?” Allen responded in
determination, holding up his pinky.

Cross heaved a huge sigh but wrapped his pinky around the younger’s, after all the kid’s logic was
right. He only had one eye left and he couldn’t afford to lose it, “Alright, alright I pinky promise
you little rugrat. Are you happy now?”

Allen grinned in response. A gesture that Cross noticed was becoming more common over the
months, mostly because of Tim but the kid would sometimes smile around him to.

Alright. I feel like I just sold my soul to Satan, but this is the perfect time of day to make bad
decisions, yes?” Cross said as he got up from where he was sitting and ushered the kid back to his
room. Once there he picked up the younger and threw him unceremoniously onto the bed. At first
Allen didn’t like being thrown onto furniture but after awhile he just figured that this was just how
Cross worked so he obediently laid down. The man collapsed on the somewhat small bed next to
the child, settling down for the long wait of the kid actually falling back to sleep. If he actually did.

So, the two laid there together, Allen staring up at Cross with curious, gray eyes and Cross staring
back with bored, red eyes.

“You know when I said sleep, I meant closing your eyes and sleeping,” Cross frowned in
annoyance. It didn’t help his own eyes were getting heavy, but he told the brat he was going to wait
Allen whined in frustration and shoved his face into the pillow, “Not tired.”

“That’s a lie and we both know it,” Cross yawned again, setting his hand on top of Allen’s head, “If you want pancakes you need to sleep. Besides we’re going to someone’s house later today.”

Allen popped his head back out of the pillow and glared at the older man. How dare he make him go out and be social! He was perfectly happy staying here and being with Timcanpy!

“That’s a fucking mood right there,” Cross said, unaffected by Allen’s glare, “Look kid I don’t like being social either, but you need friends that are not golems.”

Allen responded by sticking his head into the pillow and made crying sounds. Cross rolled his eyes so fucking hard in response that he was sure he might’ve fucked up his vision doing so. He had to give the kid credit though. Those crying sounds sounded quite realistic and that brat actually got him a couple times in the beginning but unfortunately for Allen Cross was a quick learner. He knew he when he was fake crying versus actually crying.

Cross squeezed Allen’s head with the hand on top of his head in warning, “Stop it right now or I will give you something to cry about.”

With a little squeak the crying sounds stopped, only to be replaced by real crying. Fuck. Way to go Cross. Now you can hear him crying himself to sleep, he thought to himself.

“Okay you’re not tired. You are fucking exhausted. Lay your ass down and stop trying to suffocate yourself in the pillow. You’ll have plenty of time to do that when you’re older and people disappoint you over and over,” the man growled out shifting Allen forcefully until his head was out of the pillow and he was laying on his side.

“I don’t wanna have friends,” Allen sobbed.

“Trust me kid you want friends because you clearly can’t go anywhere without something bad happening to your ass so you’re going to need those friends to bail your ass out,” Cross responded in annoyance, “Besides this brat is as socially inept as you are. He may not be your friend, but you’ll probably be clinging to him for the rest of your god forsaken life so you’re going to be nice and be social with him.”

“He sounds like a serial killer,” Allen continued to cry.

“Boy I have seen little kids grow up and become serial killers and trust me you two don’t match the definition. So, stop your bawling and sleep. I can’t believe you are crying over the fact I am trying to make you not become an unsociable hermit. I mean, I feel you but sometimes we just got to do what we got to do.”

Allen continued to cry but slowly grew quieter when he realized Cross wasn’t going to budge from his decision. Cross pet the kid’s hair back in boredom, hoping this action would get him to fall asleep faster. Allen blinked at Cross tiredly, his eyes beginning to grow heavy, but he was determined to keep his eyes open and pout at Cross to let him know how pissed off he was. Cross was past the point of caring though. The brat was quiet, and he was getting sleepy, that’s all he cared about. The man sighed, feeling his own eyes start to close against his will.

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Allen was the first to wake up. Again. He was surprised to find Cross passed out beside him, snoring lightly, with a hand on his head. Allen blinked at him curiously, studying his face which
was smoothed over and more peaceful looking than how he was when he was awake. The child slowly removed the man’s hand from on top of his head and studied his hand. Usually Cross never slept around Allen, so he decided he’d used this opportunity to observe him without him knowing that he was being observed. His hand was rough and calloused with long thin fingers. If he stared close enough though he could make out tiny, faded scars on his skin from past wounds. The child spread out his own small, normal human hand and compared it to Cross’s. Cross’s hand could easily swallow his hand without even trying. Allen wondered if he was going to be as tall as Cross when he grew up. It always unnerved him to be so tiny and weak. After he bored himself with that, he crept closer to stare at the man’s face and was surprised to find Cross has a very light swath of freckles adorning his cheeks. He was also surprised that the man didn’t seem to have any wrinkles on his face considering he sure frowns a lot. As Allen continued to study Cross, he found that the shade of red in his hair was not just one color, some strands were lighter or darker than others and he even found a strand of hair that was almost black. He wondered if his hair was like that to, or if every strand was permanently white.

Next, he went back to look at the blue veins that pressed against the skin on the back of Cross’s hand and beneath his wrist. Allen used to study Mana’s features a lot to, although he felt more confident to play with his adoptive father’s hands when he was awake. With Cross, however, he felt safer studying from a distance, this is the first time he got to really look at him so closely. Maybe it was a little creepy, but Allen thought it was because he usually didn’t have such intimacy with other people before so other people enamored him. Without really thinking about it, Allen traced the blue lines ever so lightly with his finger tip. Little did he know Cross was awake and was watching the brat in curiosity. He found it a little creepy that the kid was tracing his veins and wondered if he was planning something sinister. Since he wondered what the kid would do next, the man decided to pretend he was still sleeping for a few more moments.

Allen’s fingers paused on Cross’s wrist, the child mesmerized by Cross’s pulse beneath his fingers. The child kept looking up to see if Cross was waking up, but if he knew Cross was awake, he gave no indication of it. So, Allen decided he’d get a little braver and scooted closer to the man, looking up every so often to make sure he was still asleep before he finally got close enough to press the side of his face to Cross’s chest. He smelled like a mixture of smoke and a little like something spicy that Allen couldn’t put his finger on. So different from Mana, yet somehow a little familiar. He could feel his heart ache in his chest for his dead adoptive father. Cross opened his eye in surprise and looked down at the child who was listening to his heart and his breathing. It was… well it was very strange for Cross to say the least. He was used to his lovers laying their heads on his chest but having a small child do it was strange for him. He felt a surge of something. Was it parental love? Protectiveness? Endearment. He didn’t quite know but he decided he’d indulge the child a little bit and gently pressed his hand against the younger’s back, rubbing it slowly when he felt the child jolt underneath him at being caught.

He caught the sigh that left the younger as he fully relaxed his body against him once he found he wasn’t going to be shoved harshly away. It’s been quite awhile since Allen was this close to anyone other than Mana, and even then, he was so touch starved that he took any opportunity he had with Mana to be always touching him. Once Mana broke down his walls Allen became quite the cuddle bug. Cross stiffened a little bit when he heard sniffing coming from the kid and instinctively pulled him closer. Shit this kid was going to turn him into Tiedoll, god fucking damn it. His man card was going to be revoked.

Soft sobs came from the younger body, but they sounded strangled, like he was trying not to cry. If he cried too hard, he wouldn’t be able to listen, and he didn’t want to lose that rhythmic beat just quite yet, even though Cross’s heart beat so strongly that Allen could easily feel it again his cheek. Cross didn’t know how long they stayed like that, but it was long after the sobbing and sniffing subsided and he almost thought the kid fell back to sleep but he was quickly proven wrong when
Allen slowly looked up. His gray eyes peered up nervously, like what he did was a shameful thing to do but Cross didn’t seem bothered by it at all. Sure. It was strange in a way and he sure as hell didn’t like the wet spot on his shirt, but it’s not like Cross had deep connections with many of his lovers. They were beautiful women, good women, but most came and went. This was a different connection. A weird, but deeper connection that Cross never felt before. It definitely wasn’t the connectedness he felt towards his own parents, or the women he slept with. But it was something.

“Do you want pancakes now?” Cross asked, his voice still hoarse from sleep.

Cross’s heart ached a little bit seeing the look of pure relief flash through the kid’s eyes that he didn’t get scolded before the child nodded his head in affirmation.

“Cool. Wash your face, you got snot running down your nose and it’s disgusting.”

Chapter End Notes

(I was originally gonna introduce Allen meeting Lavi for the first time in this chapter, but this chapter is already hella long, sooooo I’d rather dedicate a whole chapter to Lavi! We’ll start with him next!)
Allen Meets Lavi!

Chapter Summary

So Allen is forced to be social and he meets Lavi!

Chapter Notes

Expect more chapters with Lavi in the future and please include cute suggestions of things the two kids might do! I really enjoyed writing Lavi's character!

Allen Meets Lavi!

Lavi is 10 in this

Cross peered down at the tiny ankle biter at his feet who clutched at Cross’s pant leg and was staring distrustfully at the other, more older ankle biter grinning at him.

“Alright. Allen, this is Lavi. Lavi, this is Allen. Say hello,” Cross said pointedly down at Allen.

Meanwhile the brat with the messy red hair, black eye patch, and dark green eyes had no problem speaking, “Hiya Allen! It’s nice to meet you! Don’t worry, I don’t bite! At least not anymore!”

Allen shied away immediately from the more hyperactive kid and continued to stare at him distrustfully. Lavi didn’t seem fazed by it though. He was determined to win this new friend over. Bookman already told him ahead of time that the kid was going to be very gun shy at first but seemed to love food so Lavi already had a secret weapon up his sleeve.

“I’m only joking. Biting people is a health hazard because of the number of germs the human mouth carries. If I bit you, you’d probably get an infection or die which wouldn’t be very fun,” Lavi explained.

Allen looked back up at Cross with a look that practically screamed ‘take me home, now!’ . Cross gave the child a deadpan look and gently shoved him forward, or at least attempted to. The kid was stuck to him like glue.

“Speaking of biting and human mouths,” Lavi said, deciding to pull out his secret weapon. A bag of candy, “Ya want some candy? It’s the good stuff not the stupid cheap stuff you buy at sketchy gas stations.”

Allen immediately recoiled further in distrust. He never ever took food from strangers. Ever. For all he knew the candy could be poisoned. It happened before so many times and it sure as hell can happen again. Lavi blinked in confusion but was also very patient. Cross meanwhile was getting tired of Allen’s nonsense and bent down to grab a couple pieces of candy from the bag and unwrapped one before putting it in his mouth.

“Enough brat. I know this kid and he’s not going to poison your ass,” Cross said, chewing on the
piece of candy before unwrapping the second and holding it out to Allen, “Here try it. It tastes just fine.”

Allen stared at the tempting piece of candy in Cross’s hand, feeling more at ease now that Cross taste tested the candy for him. He slowly took the candy and put it in his mouth, relaxing more when he found for himself that it was a normal piece of candy.

Cross nodded approvingly before he placed his hand at the back of Allen’s shoulder and shoved him toward Lavi. He felt Allen resist, but he was determined to make this kid talk to someone his own age. Lavi no longer had confusion in his eyes, but intrigue lit up his green eye. This new friend was even a lot more interesting than Gigi made him sound!

“So, you’ve been poisoned before? What was that like? Did you get them back? I would’ve gotten them back,” Lavi continued, not at all minding that he was the one doing most of the talking.

Allen looked back at Cross warily.

“Enough with that look. If you need anything I’m going to be right here with this guy,” Cross said, jabbing a thumb at Bookman who has been watching the interactions with interest.

“That’s my grandpa. His name is Bookman!” Lavi piped in, offering his hand out to Allen, “Come on, I’ll show ya around!”

Allen warily took Lavi’s hand, allowing himself to be pulled along by the energetic red head.

“So, this house is pretty small, but I like it. It’s nice and cozy and it feels small because there are tons of books and papers all around. Bookman wouldn’t be a Bookman without his books. My name was originally Bookman Junior, but I like to be called Lavi. Sometimes people call me Junior though. Do you have a nickname? Maybe a last name?” Lavi blabbered as he led Allen around the cramped house that was filled with stacks of books and papers. Literally. Books were everywhere. They lined the walls in huge stacks, they filled shelves upon shelves. The smell of old books was so strong, it was almost dizzying to Allen. It was a comforting smell as well though.


“Walker? That sounds super cool! Like a cowboy name! Or that DJ guys name! Anyways, the door on the right is Bookman’s room. The door up there on the left is the bathroom. We also have an attic that has a bunch of relics and more books. Did you know the Mr. Potato Head toy was the first ever advertised on T.V.?” Lavi continued.

“No, I didn’t,” Allen responded softly, finding it hard to keep track of Lavi’s thought processes.

“Yes, I was tested for this thing called ADHD because I jump around a lot, sentence wise. Turns out my mind just runs too fast. I can sit still and pay attention after all. I’m just always thinking of something, Gigi thinks it is mostly stupid things, but I think they’re cool things. Cool ideas. Like how to make humans have laser beams shooting out of their eyes, or how to make a hammer that can become really big or small or extend without changing its weight. I want to travel around when I grow up, see the world. What do you want to do when you grow up?” Lavi asks, patiently waiting for Allen’s answer.

“I don’t know…” Allen admitted sheepishly.

“That’s okay. You’re still very young. At least you don’t want to be a donut when you grow up. One of my classmates said that. He’s stupid. I would’ve chosen something a lot more effective like being a tree is more helpful than being an artery clogging donut,” Lavi continues, leading Allen to
his room before throwing the door open revealing the most somewhat messiest and organized room Allen has ever seen. There were books and papers literally everywhere. There were tons on his bed, on his desk, on his floor. While there was so many books and papers, they were stacked, other than the ones on his bed and one near his pillow. There was an inflatable hammer leaning against his bed to.

“This is my room. There are probably not many like it, but this one is mine,” Lavi said with a grin before he spun around and grabbed the book near his pillow, “This is my favorite book. One of my most prized possessions. The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy! Do you read?”

“No. I don’t know how to.” Allen said timidly, looking around the room with wide, curious eyes.

“You don’t!? Dude you’ve been missing out! Reading is so much fun! You get to learn about all sorts of things, like history, like Greek mythology, like how to build a rocket ship or make a pipe bomb! Did you know you can easily make those things!? Isn’t that neat? Also scary because anyone can make bombs and hurt people if they really wanted to! Even if you don’t want to learn anything you can read fictional stories for fun or the lives of other people like Freddie Mercury!” Lavi responded excitedly, “Hey you don’t have to stand around like that! Sit down! Here I’ll make room for you! Sorry am I overwhelming you? A lot of people don’t seem to like me because I’m kind of…well excitable when it comes to books and stuff. I mean I have friends it’s just that one of them has a crazy big brother and the other is…well we don’t really share interests but we’re still somewhat friends. He’s rough around the edges.”

Lavi continued to talk, all the while clearing off a spot on his bed for Allen who gingerly sat down.

“I-I….y-yeah it is but…” Allen responded.

Lavi blinked, waiting for Allen to finish his answer politely.

“It’s overwhelming but…the smell of books is comforting. I can’t really talk because…well my hair and my eye and…”

 “…Your arm. Sorry Gigi told me about it. Don’t worry about it though your secret is safe with me,” Lavi cut in once Allen trailed off.

Allen gave a small nod, grabbing his left arm self-consciously.

“It’s nothing to be ashamed about. I think your eye looks cool and your hair makes you look exotic and interesting. I wish I had a pentacle eye scar, it would look way more cooler than a scar from when I shot my eye out when I was younger, “ Lavi said, nodding in approval.

“Thanks…but not a lot of people think it looks cool. They think I’m a demon child,” Allen sighed, continuing to rub his left arm self-consciously.

“Well I mean I get that with the pentacle on your forehead, but it doesn’t have to mean satanism. I mean first of all, it’s not a pentagram, but if it was it could be a Wiccan symbol in which each of the points represent the forces they work with, fire, water, earth, air and spirit. For the Tao it’s used to represent fire, air, wood, earth and metal,” Lavi explained, “I think I like looking at it that way because it makes it look even cooler. Did it hurt when you got it?”

“Yeah…I mean I don’t remember. I think so yeah.”

“I can’t remember when I shot out my eye either! I’m thinking it would be very painful. Gigi said your arm was paralyzed before, but you can move it now?”
“Yeah…it’s been that way since I could remember. I don’t know why I am able to move it now,” Allen responded, surprised that he was being so open towards Lavi. Usually he didn’t speak of his deformities to anyone. He did feel a certain connectedness towards the other kid though, I mean, the kid wore an eyepatch all the time. A lot of people would find that strange.

“Well that’s good. I don’t know what I’d do if I couldn’t move one of my arms,” Lavi blabbered before turning around and noticing his inflatable hammer next to him. He grabbed it next and showed it to Allen, “Oh yeah this is my hammer. I call it Big Hammer Little Hammer. It doesn’t actually grow or anything yet, but I’m gonna make a hammer that does and it’s going to be great! I’ll make it shoot out flames and summon lightning from the sky. Like Thor except it’s gonna be better than Thor because my hammer is going to control the elements of the Earth!”

“Wow…is it really possible to do that?”

“Sure, it is! If you work hard enough it’s totally possible, or at least that’s what I think. I already have several schematics sketched out about it. I tried to show my classmates a couple of times, but they laughed at me. Even the teacher thought I was nuts! I’m telling you that I’m going to make it possible though!” Lavi said excitedly. Allen found his excitement to be infectious, especially the way his green eyes lit up whenever he told a story or said a random fact.

“Then I look forward to seeing it! I think it would be very cool,” Allen said, smiling softly. Lavi in return impossibly grinned harder at Allen’s approval.

“Seriously!? That’s so cool, you’re the first person who actually took me seriously! We’re gonna be the best of friends!” Lavi yelped excitedly.

“I-I don’t know about that. I’m n-not…I never really had friends before. I’m not good at it…” Allen said nervously.

“Me neither! I mean…well I have Lenalee and Yuu, but Yuu isn’t very friendly and Lenalee’s brother Komui scares me. He doesn’t like any boys being around Lenalee. I guess they’re friends but we’re gonna be different! It’s okay if you don’t know what to do because we’ll find our own ways of doing things!”

“I think I’ll just be weird…”

“You’re not weird!”

“Are you sure?”

“Yeah I’m sure! Just cuz you’re different it doesn’t mean you’re weird! I’m good at reading people and you seem like you’re gonna be a very great friend. We’re gonna travel the world together one day. Have you ever seen the ocean before? I have! It’s amazing and it’s so huge! You can smell and taste the salt in the air!” Lavi said, scooting closer to Allen who blinked timidly and scooted away instinctively.

“I’ve never seen the ocean…”

“Have you ever seen the desert?”

“No”

“What about mountains?”

“I might’ve seen a few…I don’t think I would be a very good explorer. I’ll only slow you down…”
“Nonsense! I want to see your reactions to all the places we see to! We’ll travel to Asia and eat so much yakiniku! It’s so good you’ll love it! Mitarashi Dango! Soba! Sushi! We’ll go to France and try frog legs and snails and stuff!”

Okay now that got Allen excited, especially when mitarashi dango was mentioned. He only had it once when he was traveling with Mana and since that day, he loved it ever since. His gray eyes lit up excitedly as Lavi continued to describe the sights, smells, and food they would eat.

“That sounds like a lot of money…”

“That’s why I’m gonna invent stuff before so we’ll have plenty of money to go!”

“I’ll help out to! I can do street performances!” Allen grinned.

“Awesome! I’m so excited! I wish we were grown up enough now, so we can go!” Lavi said, feeling super pumped up at managing to get Allen excited and smiling.

~

So, the two of them continued like that. Lavi was doing most of the talking, but Allen was starting to break out of his shell a little bit more and responding to whatever Lavi was talking about which was a wide arrangement of things. At one point, Lavi dragged Allen out to watch T.V. with him which mostly involved watching the history channel, which would’ve been boring to Allen if Lavi wasn’t there to explain everything to him. Lavi was a great story teller and explained everything in a way that made it interesting and fun.

Periodically Allen would return to Cross’s side, mostly seeking reassurance that the man was still there and approval that he was doing a good job with being social. Cross would pat him on the head or rub his head before gently pushing him back to Lavi who waited patiently for his little friend to return to him. Bookman and Cross watched the boys interact from afar. Bookman seemed surprised that Lavi didn’t scare Allen off by now with his constant talking and mass amounts of information, and Cross had to admit, he was surprised to.

Cross’s main objective in coming here was to find out more information on how to deal with children and trauma. Bookman was one of the few intellectuals that he trusted to give him information that was trustworthy. That wasn’t to say that the other intellectuals he knew were not as smart as Bookman, it’s just that some of them were a bit crazy and may want to experiment on Allen. Of course, what they were doing now by putting their two kids in the same room together could be considered an experiment, but it wasn’t going to hurt the kid. Bookman was good at healing people so Cross trusted him to help him out. Mother was hours away and was more knowledgeable in child rearing, but Bookman was closer and though he didn’t know as much as Mother, he was still a valuable resource.

“Hey Allen, I’m so glad we’re not lobsters.” Lavi said.

“Why?”

“Cuz they have bladders on each side of their heads, they communicate with each other by peeing on each other.”

Allen blinked at Lavi, dumbfounded, “They what!? They don’t pee on each other you’re bluffing!”

“No, they do! I swear they do! You can look it up!” Lavi responded, raising his hands up in surrender.
Allen made some sort of choking noise in the back of his throat and began to shake violently as he imagines, two lobsters peeing on each other in order to talk.

"Allen are you okay? Please tell me you’re not have war flashbacks of something dealing with lobsters,” Lavi asked concerned, but that only caused Allen to shake harder and his face to turn red as he tried to hold in his laughter. But then the red head knew what was going on and he was determined to make Allen break down in laughter.

"Can you imagine an angry lobster peeing on your face because you planned on picking it up and eating it? I feel bad for chefs at fancy restaurants now-“

That finally broke Allen into peals of laughter that forced him to curl up on his side because he was laughing so hard. Lavi grinned victoriously, deciding he liked hearing the sound of Allen laughing. Cross meanwhile was cut off into what he was saying because he thought Allen was having a screaming fit when in actuality he was laughing. The kid was laughing. Not once did the kid laugh since coming under Cross’s care. Sure, he might’ve made soft huffing sounds at something funny Timcanpy did, but he never outright laughed like that before.

“H-Hey Allen did you know male ostriches can roar like lions,” Lavi chuckled, finding Allen’s laughter to be contagious.

“N-No way! Y-You lie!” Allen shrieked, near tears as he started to imagine an ostrich actually roaring.

“I aint lying dude! It’s true!”

That only made Allen laugh even harder and tears began to roll down his face.

“D-Dude breathe! Ah nuts I broke him!” Lavi choked out through his laughter, pretending to perform CPR on Allen which only the younger squeal more and begin to sob because he was laughing so hard. He didn’t know why that was even so funny to begin with, but he knew it was long while since he laughed as hard as this. The last time he did was when Mana was still alive. It was only a couple of hours before they got into that car wreck. Allen thought he’d never laugh properly ever again but here he was laughing with a kid he only knew for a couple of hours.

It took several moments for Allen to calm down, several because Lavi would start laughing and Allen would start up again because Lavi was laughing.

“Dude I didn’t think you’d laugh that hard over something like that. I’m sorry for making you cry,” Lavi said, concerned about his new friend’s feelings.

Allen shook his head, feeling light headed but his body buzzed happily, “It’s okay. I haven’t laughed like that in so very long.”

“Well then that just means we were totally meant to be friends!” Lavi grinned happily, “I’m glad I could be of service to you!”

“Those things you said…they’re true?” Allen said, just to make sure.

“Yep. Totally true!” Lavi affirmed.

“Nature is weird….”

~
By the fifth hour of the two boys being around each other the two of them were cuddling each other which wasn’t very surprising on Bookman’s end. He knew Lavi was a very touchy person and loved cuddling, especially when he was getting tired or preparing to sleep. Cross on the other hand was surprised that Allen would allow someone so new to touch him so freely. Usually Allen was gun shy when it came to be touched and would still sometimes flinch or jerk his head away when Cross tried to. Lavi found out how to handle Allen quite easily just by a few minutes of meeting him and from what Bookman told him. He knew to take things slow and that just because Allen was finally opening up to him now, it didn’t mean he was fully comfortable around the red head.

So Lavi started by scooting closer and closer to Allen before introducing a small bit of contact like touching the back of his hand or pressing his side against Allen’s side. He kept his hands where Allen could see them. Allen, running colder than most people and appreciating the body heat Lavi gave off soon pressed up against him as well. He had to admit, it felt kind of weird, but he really didn’t know how friends acted around one another and he did like having someone pressed against him. Plus, Lavi was warm and it made him sleepy. He felt like he could trust Lavi, mostly since Cross was around but he felt like if Cross wasn’t around, he could feel quite safe around him.

Lavi stayed where he was for the most part, allowing Allen to choose whether or not he wanted to be closer or not. Lavi did end up resting his chin on Allen’s shoulder though, starting to feel sleepy as his hyperactive energy from earlier began to leave him. That freaked Allen out a little bit because Lavi was close to his neck and he didn’t like things near his neck, so Allen moved so his head was tucked up Lavi’s chin. Lavi didn’t seem to mind this change of position because Allen’s head was a lot softer than his bony shoulder. Lavi sighed happily, nuzzling his face into Allen’s hair and Allen found himself nuzzling back against Lavi’s chest until Lavi was forced to put his arms around him, not that the red head minded.

Pretty soon the two kids were laying on the floor and Lavi was completely passed out while Allen’s eyes were slowly sliding shut by Lavi’s body heat and the sounds of him peacefully breathing beside him.

“I think the two of them together will be quite therapeutic. Honestly, I thought Lavi would’ve scared him away with how excitable he gets but I think he actually listened to what I told him upon meeting Allen,” Bookman observed, offering a cigarette to Cross who took his offering.

“Yeah, well it wasn’t exactly a picnic getting the kid over here. I went through Timcanpy’s recordings and the kid has never interacted with someone even near his age before. Even if he has, they were not necessarily good interactions,” Cross responded.

“Everything will come in time. I know the progress is slow, but from you said he’s improving quite well.”

“Yeah, he is now but who’s to say that down the road I won’t fuck up the kid even more.”

“I don’t think that is possible Cross, the boy has simply been through too much already. Have you thought about enrolling him in school or perhaps having him talk with a therapist?”

“No. Not yet. The kid can barely talk to me about anything that’s bothering him and he’s way to gun shy around people right now to even enroll him in school.”

“You know Tiedoll isn’t going to be very happy…”

“Tiedoll can settle his ass down. He has his way of doing things and I have mine. The fucking runt
got into my alcohol-filled chocolates just the other day…there is no absolutely fucking way he is anywhere remotely ready to be put into school. He can’t even take care of himself when I’m around at home! I don’t know how the fuck he’s even survived this long when he was out on the streets!”

“Cross you really shouldn’t have alcohol in the house with a child. Have you thought about quitting?”

“I don’t know! Well after that incident I have. It’s not the brat’s fault he thought it was fucking candy. Still though.”

“Well…it sounds like you have a lot of choices to make. I don’t know Allen as well as you do but I do hope you keep my recommendations in mind. Don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.”

“Yeah…whatever…thanks,” Cross responded bluntly, his eyes darkened by the newer thoughts that plagued him. Give up drinking? Shit, that would probably kill him, but the old geezer had a point he couldn’t just get himself wasted every night anymore. Not with a little ankle biter following him around. The red-headed man got up and walked over to retrieve Allen who was napping with Lavi. The kid was twitching in his sleep, a behavior Cross noticed since Allen had fallen into his care. The kid never could sleep fully at peace if he even managed to fall unconscious at all. As much as he hated to wake either of the two. It was getting dark outside and he had some calls to make, so he slowly unwound Lavi’s arms around Allen, surprised the kid continued to nap on like nothing happened.

Meanwhile as he lifted up Allen, the kid immediately began to whimper and throw a fit. Cross rolled his eyes, hushing the kid up and rocking him a little bit until he rested his head on his shoulder and continued to sleep. Damn this kid was such a fussy sleeper, it was a damn miracle Cross was even still functioning every day. Is this what women went through when they had kids? What the fuck?

~Just a random ass snippet because I like making Cross wonder why the fuck, he decided to be a parent and why he still deals with the shit he does.

Cross sat in the living room a little disturbed, a little bit annoyed, and a little bit concerned as his eyes shifted to the bathroom where loud moaning and whining sounded from. They had just returned from a restaurant (because Cross was too lazy to feed Allen’s enormous appetite himself) and of course the brat ate a shit ton and Cross told him to slow the fuck down because he thought his digestive tract wouldn’t appreciate it. Of course, what do you know. It didn’t. It also didn’t help the kid’s stomach couldn’t quite handle the food he gorged himself on yet, as it was a lot richer than what he had while working in the circus or living off of the streets.

“What are you tryna do have a baby in there!? I fucking told you to slow your ass down when you’re eating brat,” Cross called out, really not willing to deal with a sick kid since he could barely take care of his own ass when he was sick.

“That’s not funny!”

“It wasn’t meant to be! Is it really necessary to make those noises!?”

“I think I’m dying”

“I’ve already died inside, welcome to club kid! I swear to god if you clog up the toilet again, I will make you go outside!”
“That wasn’t my fault!”

“The fuck it wasn’t! I’m going to be so pissed if you are the reason why I need to get a new god damn toilet!” Cross yelled back, annoyed at the situation he was in. Kids were so fucking disgusting and fucking weird.

“Really? I think I’d be doing you a favor! It could be worse, I could be doing it in your boots!”

“You say that like you haven’t pissed in my boots before ya runt!”

“It’s your fault for being hung over and not feeding me!”

“So, you decided to piss in my boots!?"

“I was thinking of your hat!”

Cross growled out in annoyance, deciding that he wasn’t going to win this fight and instead buried his face in his hands. Fucking kids…
Allen Can Sing!? So Can Cross!?

Chapter Summary

In which Cross jams out on his guitar and Allen finds out he can sing. Cross also finds out Allen can sing to so they jam out together!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Allen Can Sing!? So Can Cross!?

(This has been a head canon that floated around in my head for a long while, so I hope you enjoy these two nerds.)

It was night and Cross was bored out of his freaking mind. Usually he’d be drunk out of his mind by now, but he decided to take Bookman’s advice to try to quit drinking. He was currently on day 5 without alcohol and it sucked major ass. Imagine going for almost a day without your favorite caffeinated beverage and finally taking that first sip. Imagine that calm and clarity that washes over you. That was, in a sense, the relief Cross was resisting against. Without his alcohol Cross felt like an anxietal mess of course he tried to hide that from the kid. His body felt tense and it was hard for him to sleep. His mind was racing, and he loathed the thought of being around people. He literally thought a piece of himself was dying when he collected all the bottles of booze he had and threw them out. He even snapped a few times…well okay more than a few times at the kid over practically nothing. Now that he thought about it, he even yelled at him for simply sitting on the floor minding his own fucking business and the kid staring up at him in utter confusion as Cross stormed away. Cross didn’t know what to do with this open time. He tried to interact with Allen, but the kid was fucking boring and quiet as a mouse most of the time. Not that he could blame the kid, he was still trying to figure out what to do with himself to.

Just earlier today Cross sat in front of the kid on the floor where the child looked up at him mostly confused and Cross responded by staring back at the kid in frustration and also confusion. It went sort of something like this:

“So…sitting on the floor doing nothing is what the cool kids are doin’ nowadays?” Cross growled out in frustration, finally breaking the awkward silence.

Allen shrugged, looking around the room, the awkwardness suffocating. The kid didn’t know why the man was taking a sudden interest in what he was doing but it was really weird. Was he supposed to be doing something interesting? Cross nodded looking around self-consciously. He didn’t know the first thing parents did with their kids. They mostly just went their separate ways unless it was time to eat or Allen needed something. Usually the kid wasn’t very needy. Well I mean he was, but that was mostly at night although the kid has been known to have some of his ‘fits’ during the daytime.

“God don’t you fucking do anything!? Scream! Throw a fit! Whine about wanting to go somewhere! Do something stupid and give me a reason to scold you!” Cross growled out in frustration, finally breaking the awkward silence.
Allen shrunk down considerably at the man’s anger and looked around in fearful confusion. That made Cross feel bad, he didn’t want the kid to be afraid of him, but at the same time he was so frustrated at trying to keep himself busy. He thought kids were supposed to keep a parent busy, but this fucking kid wasn’t doing jack shit.

“W-Well I don’t know where I want to go…Lavi is in school right now. I don’t like being yelled at either,” Allen stuttered. At least the kid was being honest. The child looked so helplessly confused that he almost looked like he was about to cry in frustration.

Cross decided this idea was a total bust and simply sighed in frustration, “Whatever. Carry on!”

With that the man left a very confused Allen behind that felt even more self-conscious of himself than before. So obviously Cross not only had to figure out ways to keep himself busy and off the alcohol, but also something for Allen to do as well. But he had literally no idea what kids did nowadays.

He was just about to just call it quits and call it a night when he was struck by an idea on how to cure his craving. It’s been awhile since he did this. A very long time, but at one point in time Cross was very good at it and almost joined a band when he was younger because of it. The man found himself slowly being led to his room, to his closet where he threw open the door coming face to face with a guitar case. He wondered if he’d accidentally wake the kid up if he started playing it, but he found out during a thunderstorm that the kid loved music. Maybe he wouldn’t mind…. plus, Cross’s fingers were itching to strum out a few cords. It wouldn’t hurt anything. He was sure of it.

So Cross grabbed the case, using his hand to wipe some of the dust off of the case that has collected over the years of disuse. With a soft click Cross opened the case and caressed the instrument lovingly before gently lifting it up and situating it in his arms. It didn’t seem like much, but it did calm the itch in his skull of wanting to down a bottle of wine, so it did what it needed to for Cross. He strummed out a few chords, patiently tuning up his guitar for a few minutes. Then he just went with whatever song was stuck in his head which happened to be one that he heard on the radio frequently enough where he felt he could play it without sheet music.

He could already tell his voice was a little too rough to actually sing a song like this, but it was the only song he knew that should be quiet and soothing enough that it wouldn’t wake up the boy in the other room.

“Once I was 7 years old, my mama told go make yourself some friends or you’ll be lonely. Once I was 7 years old. It was a big big world, but we thought we were bigger, pushing each other to the limits, we were learning quicker. By eleven smoking herb and drinking burning liquor, never rich so we were out to make that steady figure,” Cross began, his hands moving along the neck of the guitar and strumming as naturally as his chest expanding and deflating with every breath he took. It wasn’t a total cure all from his craving of alcohol, but it gave him something to do and he enjoyed it.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Cross, his little imp had crawled out of bed because he was having a craving for a midnight snack and he was scared to fall back to sleep because he didn’t want to see Mana’s face. Allen got curious when he heard a guitar being strummed and snuck over to Cross’s room and peeked his head around the corner of the door in curiosity. Timcanpy, catching a ride on his favorite little human’s head, grinned happily at Cross’s playing and singing. Allen listened to Cross quietly, except he was beginning to bounce around a little bit in happiness at the sound of music. He didn’t know that Cross had such a wonderful singing voice. He sure didn’t sound like he would and even though his voice was a little raspy, it sounded excellent, like what most girls would probably consider ‘sexy’.
Music. That was one thing that gave Allen comfort during his days of loneliness, cold, and hunger, before Mana came along and changed everything. Music was the one thing that made Allen happy and when he was sure the other performers were not looking, he would dance to the circus music that played. Sometimes they would play music that played on the radio and Allen would find himself dancing along or trying to sing along to it. Allen thought music died along with Mana after the car accident. Well okay, he knew that was sort of exaggerated, but he felt like he wouldn’t like music the same way ever again. Now here he was listening to someone he least expected to know how to sing or play guitar…well sing and play guitar! He didn’t know Cross had others, talents other than coming up with good death threats and drinking! Allen continued to bounce along to the music, listening to the chords and lyrics carefully so that maybe he could reproduce the same sounds later on when he was sure Cross wasn’t listening to him. Or anyone else. Apparently near the end of the song, Timcanpy got a little excited about hearing his master sing and play the guitar again after several years and shot up ahead towards the man. Allen tried to reach up and grab the golem’s tail, but Tim flew too high above Allen and instead the child stood there, his stomach sinking in disappointment. Once Cross knew Tim was up, he’d know Allen would also be up and quit making music.

When Cross was done with the song, he caught the glint of gold in the corner of his vision. Shit. They were up. The man removed his hands from his instrument, sticking out his index finger for Timcanpy to land on. His eyes shifted over to the corner of the room, but the brat already ducked his head behind the wall self-consciously. The man looked over at Tim who gave him a mischievous grin in response. Cross looked at the floor length mirror in the corner of his room that had a nice view of his doorway and the man smirked. He had an idea.

He pretended not to know Allen was up and decided to play another song to see how the brat would react.

“Do I look lonely? I see the shadows on my face. People have told me, I don't look the same. Maybe I lost weight. I'm playing hooky, With the best of the best, pull my heart out my chest, So that you can see it too” Cross began, his eyes flitting up every once in a while, waiting for those two little gray eyes to peer back around the corner. It took another verse to pull Allen back and Cross resisted the urge to smirk because the kid was involuntarily bouncing and swaying along to the song. It was fucking adorable. Not that Cross would say that. It was even cuter to watch the kid’s reaction when Cross hit the high notes because his eyes went wide, and he caught the way his eyes sparkled happily.

It’s been a long time since Cross ever sang for someone. Sure, he sang a little bit for his friends back in high school and they thought about creating a band. He performed once at the talent show his high school hosted every year, but some assholes decided to put a bucket of pig’s blood up on the rafters and splashed the mess on him during his performance. All he remembered was a crowd of people laughing at him and blacking out from anxiety. Of course, he didn’t let those fuckers get away with it. When he found out who was responsible, he made sure he got even with them. Let’s just say Cross earned himself a week’s suspension and some time in jail. Either way, he decided he’d stop singing for people and only sang when he was at home alone. He had to admit, it felt nice to sing and watch the little boy happily dance along to it. It was pretty rare for Allen’s eyes to ever light up like that.

Cross was struck with surprise however when he began to hear a voice join his voice during the second round of chorus. It was very quiet and if you were focused on Cross’s singing you wouldn’t hear it, but he could hear the child trying to sing along with him. The kid’s voice was as clear as a bell and he was sure if the kid sung louder, he would have such a beautiful voice. It definitely wasn’t pitchy and screechy like a lot of children’s voices were, especially at that age. Damn, did Mana teach him how to sing? Cross’s interest was piqued, and he decided he was going to try and
coax Allen’s voice out one way or another before this night was through. He just had to find the perfect song that’ll get the kid distracted enough to sing at his full potential.

Once he was finished with that song, he pretended to ignore Allen while trying to figure out which song he wanted to play next. Allen meanwhile continued to stand next to the door, hoping the man was going to play another song. He didn’t know that Cross knew he was awake and was messing with him.

Cross went onto the next song, eyeing the kid to see if maybe he knew this next song. He had to stop himself from smiling victoriously when the kid bounced on his feet and his eyes lit up in recognition and excitement.

“Happiness hit her, like a train on a track. Coming towards her. stuck still no turning back. She hid around corners and she hid under beds. She killed it with kisses and from it she fled. With every bubble she sank with a drink and washed it away down the kitchen sink.”

It didn’t take long until Cross heard Allen’s voice mingling with his once again and he smiled when he watched how excited Allen started to get with the song.

“The dog days are over. The dog days are done. The horses are coming so you better run. Run fast for your mother, run fast for your father, run for your children, for your sisters and brothers. Leave all your love and your longing behind. You can’t carry it with you if you want to survive. The dog days are over. The dog days are done. Can you hear the horses? ’Cause here they come. And I never wanted anything from you, except everything you had and what was left after that too, oh.”

By the time Cross hit verse two the kid was already belting it out, apparently getting himself lost into the music to forget that he was supposed to be asleep and not listening to Cross play music. Cross dropped out, instead listening to the kid belt out the lyrics with a voice that shouldn’t belong to a tiny body like that. The kid wasn’t only singing and keeping the pitch, the kid’s voice had a rich quality to it that you only found with professional singers. The kid’s accent filtered through as well and instead of it being annoying it made it voice sound more beautiful. Cross was completely awestruck. He knew the kid would have a beautiful voice, but he didn’t expect it to be this good. This kid had a fucking gift. Florence and The Machine was definitely not the type of band where their songs would be easy to sing to, the vocalist had quite a range on her to begin with, but this kid made it looks like child’s play.

After Cross finished the song, he turned around and looked directly at the kid who was still lost in his own head that it took him a few moments to come down from his high. When he did the boy blink and looked back at Cross who stared at him in amazement. Tim meanwhile was grinning ear to ear. For awhile they stood there and stared like that, Allen’s face progressively turning a darker shade of red when he realized he totally sang in front of Cross when he should’ve been asleep. This was bad. This was so so bad. His voice was terrible. He knew it. He was going to be laughed at. He could feel tears collect in the corners of his eyes in embarrassment.

“Holy shit kid I knew you had a good set of lungs on you but that was…holy shit! Who taught you to sing? Why the fuck are you crying? Don’t fucking cry that was excellent!” Cross blurted out, noticing the look of pure embarrassment and mortification on Allen’s face. That made his chest hurt because he knew what that mortification felt like.

Allen sniffled and rubbed at his eyes, which widened when he wasn’t met by laughter but… surprise and praise? He wasn’t used to that at all. He looked up at Cross shyly who was…smiling at him? Genuinely? Was he dreaming? Timcanpy dashed over to Allen’s side, pressing himself up against Allen’s cheek happily.
“God, I knew you were singing back there but I didn’t think you were that good until you finally belted it out. Damn you got quite the vocal range,” Cross responded excitedly, “You’ve been holding out on me.”

“I don’t like to sing in front of other people… I’m not that good-“

“Are you fucking kidding me!? I mean I get not singing in front of people but shit son you got a voice.”

“Y-You think so?”

“I fucking know so!”

“T-Thank you,” Allen stuttered, his face now aflame with flattery.

“Come here. What else can you sing?”

“I don’t really know,” Allen responded but he hesitantly walked up to Cross who picked him up and set him on the bed.

“Alright, well you ever heard of Adele?”

Allen looked around, thinking for a few minutes before recognition lit up his eyes and he nodded.

“Alright let’s try this one. I’ll sing it with you, we’ll see if you recognize it,” Cross responded, excited to see what this kid can do. Allen seemed a little overwhelmed but also a little excited that he wasn’t being shunned or called stupid.

“There’s a fire starting in my heart, reaching a fever pitch, and it’s bringing me out the dark. Finally, I can see you crystal clear. Go ahead and sell me out, and I’ll lay your ship [shit] bare. See how I’ll leave with every piece of you, don’t underestimate the things that I will do. There’s a fire starting in my heart, reaching a fever pitch, and it’s bringing me out the dark.”

It took a moment or two for Allen to recognize the song but before long he was singing with Cross once again. As they progressed through the chorus and on to the next verse the kid was moving his head to the beat and showing some attitude with the lyrics. That was fucking cute as hell and Cross had to resist the urge to chuckle out of endearment. Cross was sure his man card would be revoked for this, but at the moment he didn’t care. He found something he could do with the kid and Allen seemed to be enjoying himself as well. They kept going like that, singing song after song for a good hour or so before Cross remembered that it was very late at night and Allen should really be sleeping.

“Damn brat. You should really be in bed.”

Allen frowned, feeling his stomach sink in disappointment. He wanted the moment to last and he enjoyed being challenged with songs and learning new ones that he never heard of before. Besides, he really like how Cross looked in the moment. He wasn’t this scary, grouchy adult. In this moment his eyes sparkled with what Allen would later find out was pride. For once they found a great connection through music after several awkward interactions and some bickering. Allen was afraid of this side of Cross disappearing.

“Don’t look at me like that. You know it’s true,” Cross warned, his voice returning to that ‘no nonsense’ tone he had.

“I’m not tired.”
“We can do this more in the morning, but you really should get some sleep.”

“Can I sleep with you?” Allen blurted out, deciding to be brave for once and ask. Most of the times the two slept together through Cross falling asleep after comforting Allen after a nightmare. It was a bit awkward, especially the first couple of times it happened waking up next to each other, but Allen found he slept better knowing Cross was beside him. He knew he was being a baby. I mean he already had a bed wetting problem on top of everything which already made him feel like a total baby. Cross bit back the automatic response that threatened to bubble out of his mouth, looking at how Allen looked down at the bed in shame.

Cross felt like a total pansy admitting this, but he found that he slept better knowing Allen was beside him to. He knew he couldn’t give into the brat every night, after all there was going to come a time where the kid will have to sleep in his own bed, but right now he was a child. A child who trouble followed quite a bit, enough so that Cross found it hard to sleep in fear something would happen to Allen and he wouldn’t know about it.

“Sure. Why the hell not. Just don’t make it a habit,” Cross rolled his eyes, laying down and moving over for the kid. He pretended not to notice the relieved smile that came across the younger’s face as he gratefully laid down next to Cross, instantly curling into a little ball at Cross’s side. Cross rolled his eyes but placed a hand around Allen anyways, growling in irritation when Timcanpy decided he had to wiggle himself in between the two of them. Allen giggled and moved so Tim had room to fit and feed off of their body heat. Fucking greedy little golem.

Allen yawned and wrapped his arm around Tim before quickly falling asleep, Cross soon following him into a peaceful slumber.

Chapter End Notes

I also headcanon that Cross can sing screamo XD. The songs in order they appear are 7 years old by Lukas Graham, The Death of A Bachelor by Panic At The Disco, The Dog Days by Florence and The Machine, finally Rolling In the Deep by Adele.
Cross Takes Allen To the Doctor

Chapter Summary

Basically Cross takes Allen to the doctor because a healthy kid is a kid that doesn't whine so much lol. Of course Allen is not pleased whatsoever! Enjoy!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Cross Gets His Brat Vaccinated

Cross stared at his brat’s closed door to his room, feeling dread settle deep in his stomach. He knew he had to do this, no matter what, but he also knew Allen was not going to like this at all. It was for the good of society and he doubted Allen had never been to a doctor before. The kid needed a full physical done. Everything had to be checked out. He knew he should’ve done this when they were back at Mother’s, after all he could’ve used Barba’s help, but he didn’t want to fully traumatize the kid when he was already getting back up on his feet. It’s been a couple months now and Tiedoll has been pushing this since god knows how long so it was better they got it done and over with. Besides, if the kid started school, he’d have to get this done anyways. Cross just hoped he had enough patience to get through this without losing his temper.

With a deep breath, the man raised a fist up and knocked gently against the door, “Allen, get up. We gotta go somewhere, we leave in fifteen minutes!”

He heard tired grumbling from the other side but was happy to hear the sound of feet stumbling around on the floor a moment or two later as Allen dragged his tired body out of bed. Well, we’re off to a good start. The kid was obeying what he said. He knew that might change when Allen figured out where they were going.

In a few minutes the bleary-eyed Allen, dressed in a hoodie and sweatpants, made his way to the kitchen just as Cross finished making breakfast. The child bumped into him in greeting, wrapping his arms lazily around the older and Cross responded by thunking a plate of food on his head lightly and handing it to him. Allen mumbled something under his breath, taking the plate, his eyes still half closed as he sat at the table to eat breakfast. If Cross had to guess it was probably a thank you.

“You didn’t even brush your hair yet,” Cross complained walking off to grab a hair brush, ignoring Allen’s mumbles of protest as he returned to brush his hair.

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“Thank you, mom,” Allen eye rolled when he was done, finally waking up a little bit so Cross could understand what he was saying.

“If I was a mom my hairiness would be very shocking.”

“Yeah, you shed a lot to. You’re like Chewbacca.”

“At least when I shed it’s not as blatantly obvious as when you do,” Cross responded, kissing Allen’s head affectionately.
“Ughh gross. Are you high on something?” Allen groaned, a light blush covering his cheeks. He wondered why the man was being so overly affectionate? Granted they had a secret, unspoken pact between the both of them that any gesture of parent-child affection towards the other would be only something the two of them knew about and Anita. Still it made Allen suspicious.

“Where are we going today?” Allen asked, his eyes narrowing at Cross in suspicion.

“Well one of the places we are going to is the grocery store,” Cross mentioned, making a mental note to remember that. He had a feeling he would have to make all this up to the kid after all was said and done.

“Okay…so where else are we going?”

Cross then walked over to Allen, wrapping his arms around the child’s body although not for the purpose of being affectionate. Oh no. This was to restrain the kid so he didn’t run off, but he didn’t have to know that.

“You’re not going to like it,” Cross said, a fake smile plastered on his face.

“Are we going to hell?” Allen said, turning pale.

“Yea-Wait what!? No! I mean it could be considered hell-why the fuck would you think we’re going to hell!?”

“You seemed like you knew where hell would be located!”

“That still doesn’t explain why you you’d say hell! Even if I did know where it was located why the fuck would I take you there-!? You know what it doesn’t matter. We’re going to the doctor, alright!?! That’s where we are going!”

“Oh…” Allen said, relieved for moment that they weren’t going to hell but when he heard doctor’s office he immediately tensed, his eyes going wide, “WHAT!?”

“Don’t struggle Allen. I don’t like this idea either but Tiedoll keeps hounding my ass about it, besides you need to have a physical before we can get you in school. You said you wanted to go right?” Cross asked, still fake smiling even though his grip around Allen tightened when he began to try and run away.

“Tiedoll is a fucking sadist and I changed my mind I don’t want to go to school!” Allen screamed, his eyes wide with unadulterated fear.

“It’s too late to change your mind and I view Tiedoll as a masochist. I mean anyone who deals with that one brat with long hair and pointy teeth has to be a fucking masochist,” Cross said, no longer smiling as he picked up the kid and hefted him over his shoulder, “Time to go kid! We’re burning daylight!”

Cross walked out the door with the screaming and protesting Allen banging his fists on his shoulder. Looks like Red was going to make an appearance today if the lovely array of curse words that was currently flying out of Allen’s mouth was any indication.

Cross didn’t trust the kid to not bolt the moment he sat his ass in his car, so he placed Allen on his lap, even if it was totally not safe. He let the kid shriek his tiny head off, while he made the drive down to the clinic. He already took some pain killers ahead of time, knowing he was probably going to get a massive headache once this day was over.
“Let me out of here! I don’t wanna go! I’m going to die!” the child shrieked hysterically.

“You’re not going to die, stop being so over dramatic. You’ve never been to the doctor before and you were going have to one day anyways. What if one day you got really sick? What would you do then?”

“I would rather die!” Allen screamed, trying to open the passenger side door to no avail.

“Kid you are seriously doing yourself a disservice. If you fly out of this car, we will be going to the doctor anyways. Just suck it up.”

“I’ll hold my breath until I die! I’ll fucking do it!”

“Knock yourself out kid. You’re just going to pass out and you’ll breathe again,” Cross deadpanned before continuing, “Sorry bud. Though I am a little proud of you actually throwing a temper tantrum and acting like your age, I am afraid that kicking, screaming, and crying will not get you out of this one.”

“You suck! Take me home now!” Allen screamed.

“Insulting me won’t change anything either. Maybe if you keep doing it though I will pull you aside and spank your ass so bad you won’t sit for a fucking month. It’s seriously not that big of a deal. Settle down before you hurt yourself.”

Cross rolled his eyes when the kid curled up in a little ball, crying in defeat. At least he wasn’t trying to break out of the car. He could stand the kid crying for a little bit.

“Look, I’ll make sure they don’t try to poison you. I’ll be in there with you”

“So, you admit they poison people!” Allen sobbed.

“They don’t poison people, but you apparently think they do! You got five minutes to pull yourself together, that is if you want to. We’ll be there soon.”

“They do poison people! I’ve seen it! The circus doctor gave performers pills that made them act funny and shots that sometimes-killed people!”

“I’m pretty sure those weren’t doctors. Those were probably fucking drug dealers.”

“Same thing!”

“No, it’s not-Well actually that is kind of true-Ughhh look kid they are not going to fuck you up in there. Trust me! I haven’t given you one reason not to trust me yet have I? Look, all they are gonna do in there is just poke and prod at you. They’re just going to check you out to see if you have any problems. You might have to pee in a cup, take a few shots in the arm WHICH ARE NOT POISONOUS, and possibly get your blood drawn. It’s not my fault Mana didn’t decide to get you checked out and vaccinated. What if there is an imbalance I need to know about? That can explain why you’re always hungry.” Cross explained.

“They’re vampires to!? They’re going to give me shots! I don’t want to die!”

Cross resisted the urge to face palm.

“No. They collect a little bit of blood and test the hormones in your blood to make sure they are normal. They don’t drink it or anything, that’s fucking disgusting. Yes, they are going to give you
shots, but they are not poisonous it’s to protect your ass from diseases and everyone else around you from diseases,” Cross continued to explain in exasperation, sighing when Allen continued to cry.

“I don’t want them to look at me! I’m a freak! My arm is stupid!”

“You are not a freak! They are here to help you and make sure you are fucking healthy. They don’t care what your arm looks like—well I mean they do but trust me they’re not gonna be freaked out about it. They see worse shit in their jobs that your arm,” Cross scolded, “If they do, they’ll have me to answer to!”

Cross pulled into the parking lot and turned off the car, looking over at Allen who was still bawling his eyes out. The man sighed again, deciding that the kid wasn’t going to stop anytime soon so he picked up Allen and tugged his hoodie over his head, “You chose a good day to wear a hoodie kid.”

With that the man got out of the car, hoping that this would be over soon, but god only knows they were going to force them to sit there for an hour before the actual appointment. Cross quickly went inside, filling out the paperwork, letting Allen hide his face in his shoulder and cling to him like a koala bear (this kid was quite fucking strong, he found this out when the brat would actually take to climbing on him like a jungle gym a couple of times, although Cross didn’t mind…sometimes. The brat was light, and he found it useful to use the kid for weight lifting purposes.), before sitting down in the waiting room with his brat who stopped his crying in favor of sniffling.

Cross found some tissues nearby to wipe the kid’s face off, earning a yawn and a pout in response, “Damn kid you’re already tired? That’s a mood.”

Allen blinked at Cross, looking over at a little girl next to them a few feet away that pointed at his face, talking to her mother about the scar on his eye, especially the star part of his eye. The child grimaced and hid his head once again, while the mother glared at Cross, thinking he gave the kid a fucking tattoo on his face or something. Typical. Everyone just assumes shit without even hearing the whole story first.

Cross was thankful when twenty minutes later the receptionist called them back. He was getting sick of that lady staring at him like he was Satan himself. He resisted the urge to glare at her and simply offered her a tiny smile as he walked in the back with Allen in his arms. The receptionist led them into a tiny room and told them the nurse would be with them soon before leaving them alone in the room.

“It smells awful in here,” Allen murmured, looking around with wide suspicious eyes like he was afraid they were being watched or something.

“Yeah, but at least that receptionist looked mighty fine,” Cross smirked, frowning when he felt a tiny hand smack his shoulder lightly. He caught the tiniest of smiles though from the brat.

“Get your mind out of the gutter.”

“It wasn’t in the gutter! I was just saying she looked fine as hell!”

“You’re gross!” Allen complained.

“I happened to always love going to the clinic because the nurses and doctors were hot,” Cross chuckled.

“Gross! Stop being weird!” Allen giggled.
“Just be happy they don’t have to have someone stick their finger up your ass. That’s what you get to look forward to when you’re like forty.”

“No way! Gross! They do that!? Why!?!”

“I’ll tell you when you’re older.”

“You already said it you might as well explain it to me now!”

“I was trying to get a reaction out of you and it sure as hell worked.”

“You’re lying.”

“Me? A liar? If you don’t believe me just ask Bookman Junior.”

“I don’t want to be an adult.”

“Welcome to my life kid.”

Their conversation soon ended when the nurse entered the room and Allen immediately became silent and distrustful. Cross was also disappointed because it wasn’t a hot lady nurse. It was a guy nurse. Thankfully Allen didn’t have to interact too much with the nurse who was basically there just to get basic information over Allen, which Cross answered to the best of his ability.

“Does he have any allergies?”

“No? I mean I don’t think so? Not that I know of,” Cross answered. This felt like the billionth question the guy asked and he could tell the nurse was also getting frustrated at his lack of knowledge on the kid. Not like he could help it though. Mana didn’t leave any information on the kid behind. All Cross knew of the kid was what he experienced with the kid over the months. The kid had no medical record, but Cross was sure if he hunted around enough maybe he could find a birth record somewhere. Not that it would really work in this circumstance.

Cross felt better when the nurse finally left, mentioning that the doctor would be with them shortly. Cross felt irritated at the way he was looking at him like he was the most worthless father in the world. He knew wasn’t good at being a parent, but he was trying his fucking best.

“Alright. We should probably get your hoodie off-“

“I aint takin it off,” Allen pouted.

“It’ll make it easier for them to check you over and they’re probably going to ask you to take it off anyways,” Cross sighed, preparing himself for another fight.

“Why can’t they do it with my hoodie on?”

“It’s a lot of fabric and it makes it easier for them to feel your bones and shit. Seriously? Are we going to fight over this? The faster you cooperate the faster can get this over with.”

Allen pouted, glaring at Cross for a long time who stared back at Allen with the most uncaring, ‘I’m not putting up with this shit’ look one could muster. The child whined but knew he wasn’t going to win by Cross’s look and did as he was told.

“Thank you.”

“Whatever.”
“Damn someone is crabby,” Cross said, grabbing Allen and setting him on the paper covered bed.

“This is the worst bed in the universe.”

“It’s not supposed to be a comfortable bed.”

“I want to go home,” Allen whined, his bottom lip trembling. He didn’t want to sit up here all alone.

“That’s a mood,” Cross sighed, “You’re gonna be fine kid. I’ll make sure they don’t do something super weird in here with ya.”

“You’re gonna let them draw blood and make them make me pee in a cup and shoot me up with stuff. They are sick sick people,” Allen growled.

“Yeah and if they weren’t a medical professional I’d be seriously concerned. This is what they do with physicals- “Cross said, being cut off when the doctor entered the room and his brat immediately fell silent, glaring at the doctor that entered the room. Cross was once again disappointed that it wasn’t a hot female, but he supposed it would help him pay more attention to his brat in case he threw a massive fit.

“Hey there bud, how’s it goin’?” The doctor said, trying to be friendly, though the doctor noticeably froze in shock when he saw Allen’s left arm. Bad move. Allen responded by giving him a glare. The doctor blinked at the child’s cold response and Cross gestured for the doctor to step outside for a moment. The doctor looked from Allen, then back to Cross, before he stepped outside with Cross who sent a look to Allen that said, ‘if you don’t behave while I’m gone you are so fucking dead’. Allen responded by sticking his tongue out at him. Cross ignored him in favor of closing the door and looking at the doctor.

“So, guessing by the information my colleague gave me, this child has never been to the doctor before,” the doctor started the conversation.

“Yeah. I know. It’s not my doing. I took the kid under my care a few months ago,” Cross explained.

“Allright. So, what do I need to know?”

“The kid’s been through a lot of abuse. I don’t know the extent of it, but he hates being touched. If you gotta touch him don’t make any sudden movements. He has a deformity on his left arm, don’t stare at it. It used to be paralyzed but he can move it now. I have no idea why but don’t hesitate if you plan on touching it. He’s self-conscious about it. His hair has been white since he was in the car accident that killed his father before he came under his care. I don’t know why it’s white. It just is. His eye scar is from the accident and the star part of it is also from the accident. Don’t ask about it. I don’t know what his life was totally like in the past but he used to live on the streets and worked in a traveling circus. The kid is scared shitless and he thinks you’re basically going to poison him. Any questions?” Cross explained in the most basic way possible.

“So, what you’re telling me is that we might need back up?”

“I’m not telling you we might need. I’m saying we will need.”

“Allright. I’ll be back in a minute,” the doctor nodded in understanding while Cross went back in the room to receive the absolute scathing and betrayed look the brat could muster.

“You said he wouldn’t freak out about my arm.”
“Well, he didn’t technically freak out. I mean yeah, he froze but he probably thought you burned the fuck out of your arm or something. Give the man a break. It’s not like he reacted in disgust or something, he was just surprised. I explained it to him and he’s cool with it,” Cross explained, walking over and ruffling up Allen’s hair, before sitting beside him.

“He’s not cool with it. He thinks I’m a freak. I saw it in his eyes,” Allen muttered.

“For the love of-you are not a freak! If I hear you say that about yourself again, I’m gonna smack you upside the head. Understand?”

“That’s easy for you to say, you got a cool mask to cover up your eye! People think it’s mysterious and cool! Nothing about my arm is cool!” Allen yelled.

“So!? Look kid, you’re going to find people who accept you for who you are. Sure, maybe the whole world doesn’t accept you, but you don’t need the whole world to accept you. As long as you have people who love and care about you for who you are and accept the way you look, then isn’t that better than nothing? There are always going to be assholes who gawk at you, they’re just assholes that have their heads shoved up too far up their own asses to understand what it feels like to be stared at like you are a walking circus act. That’s something they have to live with. Not you. We’ll continue this conversation later. Alright? No more talk about how you are a freak. I will not stand for it.” Cross scolded, feeling irritated that every little thing was triggering this brat more and more. He didn’t expect this visit to be simple, but he also didn’t expect it to be this difficult.

Allen opened his mouth, about to protest before the door opened and the doctor walked back in. Allen snapped his mouth shut again and stared distrustfully at the doctor who simply smiled and continued on like the kid wasn’t trying to set him on fire with his mind alone.

“Alright bud. We’re going to try to make this as quick and pleasant as we possibly can. I understand you’ve never been to the doctor before, but there is absolutely nothing to be afraid of. We’ll go from the head down, sound okay?”

Allen continued to glare at the doctor, letting him know he was definitely not okay with this, but it wasn’t like he had a choice sense he had his demon guardian sitting behind him.

“Okay,” the doctor said deciding to continue. He walked through each process carefully, explaining everything that he was doing slowly and in simple terms, waiting for Allen to nod in understanding before actually doing the process. The child definitely didn’t like having lights flashing in his eyes or having the doctor look up his nose and ears, but he sat still through it. It didn’t matter that the doctor took time to explain everything he was doing because Allen still tensed at some parts. Cross thought the brat was going to try to break the doctor’s fingers when he gently pressed his fingers against his throat. If looks could kill that doctor would’ve been dead the moment, he had laid a finger on his neck. Next the doctor checked his lungs and his range of motion for his arms. Cross was pleased to see that the doctor didn’t even bat and eyelash when he checked Allen’s left arm. Allen couldn’t even sit still when the doctor began to press down on his abdomen, uncovering the faded scars that were scattered throughout his body, some big, some small. If the doctor seemed surprised or felt pity for Allen, he didn’t show it.

“I see you’ve experienced some broken ribs and fingers before,” the doctor said, pressing his fingers against Allen’s ribcage which made the kid jolt uncomfortably, “You’ve also experienced malnourishment it looks like. You said he was eight years old?”

“It’s an educated guess. We’re not totally sure. I’m not sure how he ate before, but he can eat for about five people alone and then some,” Cross butted in, he was keeping Allen calm by petting back his hair. Though he wasn’t sure how useful it was since the brat seemed to be thoroughly
ticked off at the entire universe.

“He’s not severely underweight but he’s on the cusp of it. He’s definitely quite small for his age as well. His lungs sound fine. Has he had digestive issues? Urinating blood, bloody stools, parasites?”

Cross shrugged, “Sometimes if he eats too much in one go. I noticed bleeding a couple of times but that was the first month he was under my care. I’m not aware of any parasites.”

Allen rolled his eyes at the doctor’s comments. He already knew most of the crap he was spouting out anyways. Well okay not everything, but he already knew he probably broke a couple of ribs in the past. He already knew he didn’t eat a decent amount when he was younger. There were several times he went without food because either the circus chef poisoned his food, or he ran his fucking mouth and the ring leader forbade him to eat. Sometimes they’d stick broken glass in his food. He was only allowed one meal a day and most of the time it was scraps. There were times he was so hungry he ate the poisoned food and accepted the consequences associated with it. Other times he’d try to steal food from circus audience members or eat food from dumpsters. Even after all of this, he still felt fine. Sure, there were times where there was blood where there shouldn’t be blood, but Allen was used to it, so he didn’t think much of it.

“Well, can you tell me what your diet was like before? Have you had any stomach pain since coming under his care? Does it hurt anywhere I touch?” The doctor asked, aiming his questions at Allen.

“If I say no will you stop touching me,” Allen said, losing his patience.

“Brat, just cooperate.”

Allen rolled his eyes in annoyance, “I don’t know I ate whatever they gave me and whatever Mana gave me. If they didn’t give me anything or they messed with it, I either didn’t eat or I dug through garbages or stole food. Are you happy now?”

“How did they mess with your food?”

“Why does it matter?”

“Trust me it matters.”

“I don’t know what they did they put some kinda poison in it. One time it was glass. It doesn’t matter though, it’s in the past.”

“Do you have stomach pain at times?”

“Yeah? It goes away though,” Allen huffed

“Does it hurt when I press down on your stomach anywhere? Your lower stomach?”

“A bit. Just stop touching me,” Allen said, finally breaking down and whining. He gave the doctor a suffering look.

“Alright, fair enough but it’s very important we get that checked out. We might need to run a stool sample test just to be sure- “the doctor said, but Allen tuned him out after that. He just wanted this to be over with. He was fine! Perfectly healthy! Sure, he didn’t have the best upbringing, but he was fine now! He also didn’t want this fucking stranger to know anything about his past, and he didn’t want to remember it! Allen looked up at Cross with the most dissatisfied, annoyed, exhausted look.
Cross ignored him in favor of listening to the doctor. Shit, he didn’t like the look of concern that came across Cross’s face, even if he was trying to hide most of it. What the doctor planned for him next had Allen gawking and looking at Cross with a look that said ‘you seriously do not expect me to do this. Do you?’

The doctor simply handed him a little cup and told him he had to pee in it. Sure, he was warned about this, but it didn’t make it any less weird and disgusting. Doctors were the most disturbing and creepiest individuals he had ever met in his life and he had met quite a bit!

“Don’t think you can just fill water in it either. They’ll figure it out,” Cross called out, smirking at Allen as he reluctantly shuffled behind the doctor who showed him to a tiny bathroom.

Cross waited patiently for his tiny, ‘fully done with this shit’ brat to return to the room.

“Good job. We’re almost ready to blow this popsicle stand.”

“This isn’t a popsicle stand, if it was, it’d be a terrible one,” Allen snapped crabbily.

“Calm your shit. If all goes according to plan, we don’t need to come back here for a while,” Cross said, wrapping his arms around Allen who pouted, crossed his arms and glared at the wall. He continued to glare when the doctor returned after handing the urinalysis to the lab. His eyes shifted warily when the doctor returned with a nurse.

“All right. We’re almost finished here. We just have to give you some inoculations. It seems we don’t have any records of you receiving vaccinations, but we’ll be giving you three in each arm. It should only hurt a little bit, like a pinch,” the doctor said, taking out six syringes with needles at the end of it. Allen’s eyes locked on to them. Those were huge fucking needles. Those were going in his fucking arm!? Oh, hell no!

Allen tried to jerk away but Cross was watching him carefully and his grip on him was tight and unrelenting. Allen tried kicking but Cross had his legs wrapped around his and it was near impossible.

“L-Let me go! Let me go now! They're going to poison me! They’re gonna kill me,” Allen shrieking his head off, he continued to struggle against Cross.

“We’ve been through this, they’re not going to poison you,” Cross yelled over Allen’s screaming. He was almost afraid he was going to go deaf with how loud Allen was being. The last time he saw Allen act this wild and out of control was back in Mother’s house where he was thrashing around on the bed in pain. He shot a look at the doctor and nurse,

“Can you hurry it up over there? I can feel my hearing permanently decline here and I really don’t feel like having the back of his head bash into my nose-Fuck kid calm your shit!”

“You’re a demon! You’re all demons!” Allen screamed and struggled with all his ability, but he was unable to struggle away from Cross who had him pinned against the bed, trying to keep him still as possible. Cross sort of wished he could see the look of fear cross along people’s faces in the waiting room as they wondered what kind of things they were doing back there. It would be better than watching the brat scream and cry until his face turned a dark red only to cough and gasp for air before doing it all over again. It made it worse when he began to scream Mana’s name at the top of his lungs.

Cross was only happy that the doctor and nurse didn’t waste any time finishing with the brat’s shots and deciding that while he was still pinned that they would try and draw some blood. Once
they were done poking at him and Cross made sure the two medical professionals exited the room; the man finally relinquished his hold on his still screaming and crying brat who shoved himself away from Cross. Allen curled up into a tiny, traumatized ball at the edge of the bed, his hands in his hair, his back towards Cross.

The man sighed, letting Allen continue to cry for a few minutes. Sure, he was acting a little melodramatic, but he figured a first trip at the doctor’s office would be quite traumatic, especially when you’re old enough to remember said experience.

“Are you done having your temper tantrum yet? You know pulling your hair like that is only going to give you a headache,” Cross said after a few minutes, leaning over rub the child’s hands that threatened to tear out every single strand it was attached to. He frowned at the way Allen jolted at being touched, “Settle down. I’m not going to hurt you. The worst is over now.”

It took a minute to get Allen to stop gripping at his hair, but when he did his hands were shaking violently. Cross rolled his eyes and sighed, “Come here ya little runt.”

The man grabbed the shaking, sobbing child and held him, rubbing his back and settling in to wait until Allen calmed himself.

“I’d hate to be the bearer of bad news but if they poisoned your ass, you’d already be dead by now,” the man smirked, breaking the several minute-long silence. Allen growled in annoyance, but it was cut off by a yawn.

“Wow, I’m so threatened,” Cross laughed, “Nothing says scary like a crabby little rugrat sucking on his thumb and yawning.”

Allen growled pushing Cross’s face away with a hand in irritation. Cross was just happy it wasn’t the hand with the thumb Allen was sucking on.

“All right, well, they said they could just call the house with the results. I think that’s enough fun for one day,” Cross said as he helped Allen get his hoodie back on (the brat was as useful as a sack of potatoes) and made his way back to the receptionist desk where he paid for the appointment. Once he was finished, he glared at all the horrified people staring at them before leaving the clinic.

“So, I suppose this means you don’t want any mitarashi dangos? What a shame, and here I thought I’d try my hand at making them for you,” the man sighed, faking disappointment. He smirked when Allen’s head popped up off his shoulder at the mere mention of his favorite food. Cross looked over at Allen expectantly, his eyebrow raised.

“Oh? Did you change your mind?” Cross asked, chuckling when Allen nodded his head excitedly. Cross knew he’d probably fail at making the sweet, skewered dumplings, but he figured he should give it a good old college try to make all this up to the brat.

~

Least to say, Cross had to hand it to himself. He managed to make the snack at least edible. When it came to cooking, Cross preferred to make something that didn’t involve a lot of work or was instant. Sadly, Mother threatened many times to hit Cross upside the head with her cane when he tried to take the easy route when it came to feeding the kid and nagged him about how ‘it wasn’t healthy for a growing boy’ and all that jazz. In the end, Cross learned how to make things edible, but he definitely wasn’t a five-star chef, he wasn’t even a fucking one-star chef. At least Allen looked happy either way with Cross’s efforts and that was enough for him.
“After your fits today, you better not have anymore for the rest of the week. Got it?”

Allen mumbled some sort of response around his dangos. Cross decided to think of his response as an affirmation to what he said, honestly, he was too tired to care. As long as the brat wasn’t traumatized about the day’s events, Cross considered the day to be a win. The red-head made his way over to the couch before collapsing upon it in exhaustion, in just a few minutes he was out, leaving the kid to his own devices.

Allen smirked mischievously. Sure, he was somewhat satisfied at Cross’s peace offering, even if it wasn’t the best mitarashi dango he ever had. However, he was still a little angry over the whole ordeal and decided he’d get a little revenge. So, with a little digging around, Allen found a marker and stealthily walked to the sleeping Cross. With an evil little smile, the little imp began to draw on the man’s face. Timcanpy flapped above the child and sweat dropped because Allen unknowingly picked up a permanent marker instead of a regular one.

~

A few hours later Cross woke up from his nap with no brat in sight. He didn’t think too much of it, that is, until he walked into the bathroom and looked at his face where a mustache was drawn, freckles, and the word ‘stoopid’. Cross tried to wash it off but found that no matter how hard he scrubbed his face, it only ceased to fade the marker a little on his skin. Permanent marker. That little fiend!

“ALLEN WALKER GET YOUR SCRAWNY ASS DOWN HERE, SO I CAN RIP YOU A NEW ONE!!” Cross yelled.

“It was Timcanpy!” came a squeak

“BULL SHIT! TIMCANPY CAN AT LEAST SPELL THE WORD STUPID! ACCEPT YOUR FATE LIKE A MAN!”

“But I’m a child!”

“WITH THAT APPETITE!? OH, FUCK NO!”

~

A few minutes later Allen could be found with a sore ass and a concerned Timcanpy flapping above him. Least to say, Allen didn’t learn his lesson, but he did learn a valuable lesson. That lesson was to always make sure what kind of marker you were using.

~ Random mini snippet!

One of the many things that Cross learned about Allen over the first few months of taking him under his care was that the kid could sleep practically anywhere and in any position. He knew there were kids who have slept in laundry baskets before or slept hanging off their beds and Allen has done that before, but the areas Allen chooses to sleep sometimes were…well not what he would consider ‘normal kid behavior’.

There was one time Cross was doing laundry and had he not caught the kid curled up in the dryer, he’d probably have killed the poor bastard. He figured the brat probably chose that as a sleeping spot because it was warm, but still, was it necessary? He almost gave the man a heart attack. If that wasn’t bad enough there was another time Cross caught him sleeping away on one of the blades of the ceiling fan. How the fuck did he get up there!? No seriously!? How!!
Cross found the kid sleeping in a tree, laying down with his legs behind his head, on top of the washer, the T.V., on the shelf of a bookshelf, and in the fucking refrigerator! One time he was curled up around the coffee pot, hanging off the top of the fridge, sleeping under the sink, hanging off the beam of the shower curtain, you name it Allen has probably somehow slept on it and made it seem like the most comfiest thing in the world. Cross knew he had taken in a circus kid, he expected the weird flexibility that kid had or the weird positions he’d sit in that would make Cross cringe. Especially if his bones popped in the process. He didn’t expect the brat to actually be comfy enough to sleep in those positions! He caught him bent backwards with his head between his legs and actually sleeping like that! Half of the time he thought the brat did this because it made Cross uncomfortable and he knew Cross wouldn’t tell him to stop because…well it was one of things he picked up from Mana. He figured being freakishly flexible may come in handy for him one day anyways.

While this was one of the many things that made Cross an anxietal parent (because what if Allen fell off one of his random sleeping spots and broke his neck or something!?), he had to admit sometimes it was oddly cute or hilarious to see which spot Allen would pick next. Out of all the sleeping spots though, Allen had two favorites. One was curled up in the middle of Cross’s bed. The other was wrapped in Cross’s coat in the closet.

Chapter End Notes

(Thanks for all the comments! I wanted to try my hand with something angstier. I’m no medical professional so I’m not quite sure what kind of medical problems a kid like Allen would have so I tried to mix some stuff that happened in canon [the light novels] and just went with it. Let’s be real, the kid was near starvation for the most part of his early life so obviously there would be some medical/developmental issues there. As for poison...I'm not sure what poison would do to the digestive system let alone the nervous system, especially if you don't know what kind of poison was used, but probably nothing good. Anyways. I hope you enjoy it.)
Cross Taking Care of Baby Allen

Chapter Summary

So this time Allen is a baby and here are a couple of snippets of Cross taking care of baby Allen! Enjoy!

Chapter Notes

(So, after headcanoning with some people I have decided to write a drabble in which Allen is a whole lot younger than he has been in my other drabbles. I thought it would be cute. I think for this particular snippet Allen will be around 6 months. In this particular drabble Cross is a stressed-out college student that happened to come across the abandoned Allen after walking back from one of his night classes in the winter. He originally was going to pass the kid off to someone else at the next chance he had, but Cross sadly got used to the brat. Plus, with how white his hair was and the weird birth mark on his eye and left arm, he doubted anyone would take him in, so he decided he’d raise Allen. Which was perhaps the best and the worst decision of his life.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Cross was sleeping soundly…well as soundly as a sleep deprived, overly stressed, college student could sleep. Yes, he was sleeping quite soundly, at least until Timcanpy flew over and bit his ear. Hard. Cross yelped, shooting up instantly and holding his ear in irritation.

“What the fuck!! Alright I’m up!” Cross growled, turning his head to look at the time 8 o’ clock in the morning. God fucking dammit. He hated waking up this early, especially when he didn’t go to bed until 4 o’ clock in the morning to finish an essay for one of his classes. He wouldn’t be getting up this early if he didn’t acquire a new resident in his apartment, nope. He would be sleeping until his 3pm class, probably even later if Timcanpy had not taken upon himself…or itself, to be Cross’s alarm clock. Cross had become quite dependent on Tim, especially with their new addition to their weird fucking family of one human and one golem. Timcanpy made sure to wake Cross whenever their little resident needed something or was awake. Based on the fact that no crying was heard within the apartment, he’d say his little free loader was awake. Cross groaned, rubbing at his eyes that had bags under them, and hell at this point his bags probably had bags under them. He couldn’t remember when he had a decent night’s sleep or even got the required amount for a man his age. With reluctance, Cross swung his legs over the edge of the bed and began to walk out of his bedroom to walk to another separate room that housed a little 6-month-old with a shock of white hair, a weird looking birthmark over his eye, and a red, scaly red arm, cooing away in a cardboard box that substituted a crib.

The 6-month-old thing was an estimation. Cross didn’t know how old the kid was or if he was developing normally or not. Cross didn’t know much when it came to babies and if it wasn’t for his constant texts to Anita or the other strippers, he had become acquainted with, the kid would
probably be dead by now. When Cross found him there was a note that said Allen Walker and that was it. Allen was wailing weakly and Cross could tell the kid had been left there for quite a while, even then, whoever had taken care of him before leaving him out for dead hadn’t done so properly. After doing some research, Cross found the child to be malnourished and a lot smaller than other babies his age.

“Good morning my second annoying alarm clock,” Cross greeted the child, smirking a little when the child greeted him with a smile and reached out towards him with his one working hand. One thing great about this kid was that usually he woke up all smiles and giggles. It was really cute, and it started Cross’s morning on a positive note.

“So, what kind of trouble are we going to get into today?” Cross asked as he picked up Allen, wracking his brain if there was anything, he could feed Allen on his meager college kid budget. Anita and the girls at the strip club were kind enough to give him some baby toys and other essentials that they thought Cross would need to take care of Allen. Just so long as he brought the kid to come see them, the girls were willing to help out however they could, but Cross felt a little bad for depending on them for everything. After all, those girls work hard for their money, he knew that for a fact. He tried to make ends meet when he could.

Cross walked out into the kitchen, ignoring the brat who was trying to grab Tim’s tail, in favor of preparing a bottle. While he waited for the bottle to heat up, the man went off in search of his own sustenance. He was disappointed to find how bare his fridge and cupboards were. He had a tin of raw oats, a box that contained three granola bars, a loaf of bread, one stick of butter, a box of yogurt (mostly for the kid, he was trying to get the kid to eat solid foods), a tin of formula, and a half pint of milk. Shit. He needed to go grocery shopping. And get a job. But it was already hard enough finding someone to take care of Allen, most times he just brought the kid to his classes. The professors liked him and so did the girls in his classes, just so long as he covered up his arm.

When Cross first found Allen, the game plan was to just keep him over night and then pass him off to an orphanage. As Cross thought about it though, he changed his mind. Sure, the brat was adorable. The only big thing that turned people off, excluding the girls at the stripper club, was his arm that he couldn’t even move. The white hair threw people off to. They figured his genes were probably screwed up because of inbreeding. Sure, people would play with him and coo at him, but Cross found out quickly that nobody wanted to actually take him.

Cross grabbed the bottle after it was finished warming up, gnawing on a granola bar as he did so. Allen was already eagerly reaching for the granola bar Cross was holding in his mouth but was quickly distracted when Cross shoved the bottle into his mouth unceremoniously. While Allen was preoccupied, Cross finished his granola bar and scrolled through his phone which was unsurprisingly empty of text messages and calls. Cross kept himself preoccupied by making a grocery list until a bottle was thrown at the side of his face, Allen’s way of saying that he was finished.

The man slowly turned to glare at the little troll in his arms who giggled in response.

“Well, do you really have to do that?” the man growled, shifting Allen in his arms so he could put a towel over his shoulder and pat his back lightly. The kid always downed those suckers quickly and ended up swallowing a bunch of air along with it, honestly the kid always acted like he was starving. It didn’t help the kid loved to spit up a lot too. It became somewhat of a game/test to Cross whenever he took Allen to the stripper club. Allen would laugh and giggle at the strippers he liked, but if he disliked them, he’d promptly spit up on them. It didn’t matter though, in the end, Cross was the one who dealt with being thrown up on, shit on, drooled on, and pissed on the most. Cross felt so honored….not!
Once the brat decided to burp, Cross moved the baby to crawl...well more like scoot around on the floor on his stomach. Timcanpy took over watching Allen for the time being, giving Cross time to finish his grocery list and attempt to study for an upcoming exam before his first class. Timcanpy’s version of playing with Allen was to trot away on the small stubs he had for feet and have Allen crawl after him. If Allen wasn’t interested, Timcanpy would wiggle his spiral tail to entice the brat. Once Allen caught him, Tim would stay there for a moment or two before trotting off again. He only wished Timcanpy was good at changing diapers.

~

After an hour of studying Cross was bored out of his skull and as he noticed a very tell-tale smell in the air that let him know Allen required a changing. Not necessarily the distraction he wanted to tear him away from studying, but it’ll do.

“Alright little trouble maker time to change your a-butt,” Cross said, trying to cut down on his swearing since a child was present. He personally didn’t give a fuck about swearing around the kid, but Anita threatened to ban his ass from the stripper club if he kept swearing around Allen. Damn, she might as well have designated herself as Allen’s mother at this point. Not that Cross minded. Anita was a fine woman...a very attractive woman *wink wonk*.

Cross reluctantly grabbed a diaper and some wipes from Allen’s room before walking back to the baby trying to push himself up to his knees. Allen squeaked out an indignant whine at having his efforts ruined when Cross grabbed him and flipped him over, so he could change his diaper.

“Ugh! Really!?! How can something so small and cute produce something so vile,” Cross gagged as the smell became a little overwhelming. He resisted the urge to glare at Allen who giggled at the funny face Cross was making. Cross cursed, trying to quickly clean the brat up as quick as possible so the vile smell would go away, but of course this was Cross and Cross never had the greatest luck with kids. Allen decided it would be a great idea to attempt to pee on Cross as he was changing his diaper. Timcanpy smirked, enjoying the man’s misfortune.

“Whoa whoa whoa!” Cross yelped, trying to cover the kid up before he could be urinated on, “Seriously!?! Is my face just really that ugly to you!? In this household we do not pee on other people!”

Cross swore to God an evil little cackle escaped from the kid’s throat. Tim growled in response to which Cross responded, “Tim that was one time and I was shit-faced- I mean drunk! Get over it! I apologized!”

Once Cross was sure that he wouldn’t get peed on, he quickly finished cleaning Allen up and sent the brat on his merry way after helping him to sit up. Once Cross disposed the dirty diaper he returned to see Timcanpy being shoved in the drooling child’s mouth, squirming unhappily. Cross cackled at Tim’s misfortune, “Serves you right you buggering golem!”

After a few moments of struggle, Timcanpy laid limp in Allen’s grasp, accepting his fate. Cross found this to be absolutely hilarious, that is until Allen spat up on Tim. Then Tim struggled harder, finally getting out of Allen’s grip in favor of darting around the room in disgust. Cross would’ve cackled at Tim’s reaction if it wasn’t for the squeaky whine that bubbled out of Allen’s throat that soon turned into a wail.

“Awhh come on pipsqueak don’t start the waterworks,” Cross sighed, slouching in defeat as he grabbed the towel he had on his shoulder from before and wiped up the kid’s mouth, “He’ll forgive you sooner or later.”
Allen continued to cry much to Cross’s displeasure, so the man picked him up, deciding perhaps a small nap was in order, “Tim you’re in charge of waking me up in time for my class. I’m gonna get this pipsqueak to take a nap!”

He heard some sort of weird growling noise in response from Timcanpy which Cross took as an agreement. He went to Allen’s bedroom to find his pacifier and blanket before walking over to his bedroom to lay the brat down while Timcanpy washed himself off. Cross shoved the pacifier in Allen’s mouth, surprised when the child immediately calmed himself now that he had something to replace Timcanpy.

“Wow. You’re quite easy to satisfy,” Cross commented gratefully as he laid down on his bed, letting the brat lay down on his chest. Allen hummed contently, stretching out his hand to mess around with Cross’s goatee.

“I swear to God you pull that and you’re going to be in big trouble kid- “Cross said, eye narrowing when the brat moved his hands to cover his lips as if telling him to shut up. This kid was going to be the most sassiest teenager when he grew older, he could feel it. As Allen tried to put his fingers in Cross mouth, Cross growled in warning, laughing when Allen jerked his hand away in surprise and blinked up at him owlishly. Cross watched Allen’s eyebrows furrow together in irritation at the man scaring him and he squeaked oh so threateningly up at Cross. Cross growled again, laughing at the unamused look being sent his way. His laughter was cut off when Allen let loose a loud screech in response. Okay.
Still not threatening, but it was amazing to hear a sound like that come from such tiny lungs.

“Ooo I know you did not just do that to me. Remember, I’m not making you pay rent,” Cross chuckled.

Allen made a soft growling noise in annoyance that sounded more like a whine. Cross rolled his eyes at his feeble attempt to scare him and stroked under his chin. In an instant Allen lit up in a happy smile, leaning his head against Cross. Hmmm cute.

Cross grabbed the baby’s blanket and threw it over his head, “Go to sleep. It’s night time.”

Another cool thing he realized about this kid was that he’d pass out if you simply threw a blanket over his head. It kind of made Cross feel powerful. So yeah, even though the kid was a shit machine and loved spitting up on everything, there were some cool perks to this kid as well. It took a couple minutes for the baby to fall asleep and once Cross was sure he was out he pulled the blanket down, so he wasn’t suffocating under the blanket. Cross smiled at the peaceful sleeping baby, happy that no one can see how stupidly soft and weird he was being to a baby.

~(Allen is about 11 months in this)

“Come on Allen, get the cookie,” Cross bribed to the baby sitting in front of him, currently putting his foot in his mouth. Cross has been trying for the past two months to get this kid to take his first steps. Hell, the kid didn’t even say his first actual word yet, it was just pure babbling. It kind of worried Cross because he wasn’t 100% sure what kids his age should be doing right now. It doesn’t help that he felt like his schooling and now part time job was getting in the way of trying to make sure Allen hit the milestones he was supposed to.

“Really kid? I betcha this cookie tastes a lot better than your foot! Tim, help me out here?” Cross pleaded. Timcanpy made a strange humming sound before deciding to take the scruff of Allen’s shirt in his mouth and lift him up until he was in a standing position. Once he was sure he had his balance, Tim let go.

Allen stood like that for a few moments much to Cross’s pleasure, “Awesome! Come on kid walk
over and get the cookie!”

Allen however, had other plans and plopped right back down on the floor, leaving Cross to sigh in defeat. They’ve been at this for a good hour now with no results. It’s been awhile since he’s seen Anita…maybe she’d have some ideas to get Allen to walk or talk? I’m sure she’d love to see the brat again.

“Allright. New game plan. You wanna see Anita again Allen?” Cross cooed, smirking when the brat looked up from gnawing on his foot once again and gave a huge, saliva covered grin. Gross. “You really need to stop sticking your foot in your mouth, that’s gross.”

So, after grabbing his diaper bag, checking and rechecking he had everything he needed in there and then some; Cross grabbed his kid, got him ready to go, and with Timcanpy in tow they were off to the stripper club where Anita worked at. Sadly, Cross had to walk in the snowy weather since he couldn’t afford a car just yet. Allen whined at the cold and Cross put the hood up on his coat before pressing him closer against him to keep him warm.

“I know. One of these days I’ll get a great job, a car and a new house and we won’t have to walk through this crap anymore,” Cross responded, trying to walk faster as he huddled his shoulders to protect Allen from the cold wind.

By the time Cross got to the stripper club he couldn’t feel his legs and he was sure he was shaking harder than Allen. He could hear upbeat music pumping through the air as one of the strippers did their performance. Cross hung off in the back, but it didn’t take long for the girl behind the bar to recognize the man and the little boy.

“Oh my gosh! It’s been too long Cross! Ooh Allen, look how big he’s getting! Poor thing is freezing, jeez Cross what are you doing to him!?” the girl greeted, holding out her hands to take the poor shivering Allen. Cross handed him over, shrugging in response, “Good evening Abby. It’s not my fault with all the bills, diapers, baby food, and formula there is simply not enough money for a simple car.”

Abby nodded sympathetically, bouncing Allen a little bit as the child got distracted by all the lights, he tried to reach out and grab at them, “Well at least you’re almost done, just a semester left right?”

“I thought so, but from the way it sounds I may have to go to graduate school to get a job that’s going to be decent enough to take care of both of us.”

“Ever thought of trying to be a stripper?”

“Yeah but I’m lucky enough if I can find someone to watch the kid with the part time job and classes I already have.”

Abby cooed at Allen who smiled up at her, preoccupying himself with her nametag, “I see. So, what brings the likes of you here Cross Marian?”

“I’m here to see Anita to see if she has any tips on getting this kid to walk or talk,” Cross said, cutting to the case. A few other strippers came around to coo at Allen, none of them Cross could recognize from the previous times he was here. Allen looked over at Cross, a little uncertain with all the attention he was getting from all these strangers. Abby set the baby on the table, helping him stand on top of the table top, but keeping ahold of his hands.

“I don’t think you need to worry about it too much Cross. Some babies are slow developers.
Besides, you’re not even sure what age he really is right? It looks like he’s developing fine to me, plus he didn’t spit up at me this time! That’s a plus!” Abby responded, letting Allen sit on the table when he began to whine, “Anyways, you’ll find Anita upstairs. She’s been missing you two terribly, especially her little boy.”

Abby cooed at the last part, making kissy faces at Allen who gave her a look that screamed, ‘what the fuck!?’. He wasn’t a fan of kissy faces. At all. He made sure to show that by putting his hand on her face and pushing it away with an annoyed squeak. This only amused the girls even more. Cross leaned over while the baby was distracted and kiss his cheek earning himself an annoyed squeak. Cross rolled his eyes at how dramatic he was being, letting the girls say their goodbyes before he picked him up and headed upstairs to Anita’s room.

The man knocked on the door with a couple knuckles, “Anitaaaa I have someone who wants to meet you!”

“Cross!” the woman’s voice called from the behind the door in recognition. Cross smirked and opened the door, revealing the most beautiful woman that he had ever laid eyes on, smiling so beautifully that Cross felt heat rise into his face just by looking at her. Damn.

“Mama! Mama mama!” Allen squealed happily, squirming in Cross’s arms as he reached towards the woman. Cross’s eyes widened in shock. Wait. What the fuck? Cross let the kid down so he could crawl towards Anita, but he was floored when the kid proceeded to actually take a few steps towards the woman before falling and crawling the rest of the way to her.

WHAT!? THAT WAS ALL HE HAD TO DO!?

“Allen!” Anita smiled, spreading her arms wide and picking up the baby when he came to her, “What’s with that look Cross?”

“That’s all I had to do…to get the kid to walk and talk!?” Cross exclaimed, falling to his knees dramatically.

“What do you mean-Oh! Oh wow!” Anita responded, at first confused, but then realization hit her like a truck. She smiled even bigger, “Well boy do I feel honored! This is quite a day for celebration!”

“The kid has been holding out on me this whole time!”

“Well you should’ve brought him here more often! He was probably missing me and getting back at you for getting in between our time together,” Anita responded before smiling softly at the man who began to splutter that he was busy with things and that he would’ve visited sooner.

“It’s fine Cross. I understand.” Anita chuckled before turning serious, “It has honestly been too long though Cross. You look horrendously tired. You’re not taking care of yourself.”

“I’m fine, it’ll be worth it in the end.” Cross sighed, getting up to sit beside the woman.

“Will it?” Anita questioned, reaching up to pull Cross closer, giving him a kiss. Allen cooed happily in Anita’s arms, watching the two interact with curious, owlish eyes.

“I sure hope so,” Cross sighed tiredly.

The two continued conversating, mostly talking about Allen’s antics, how classes and work were going, if Cross was taking care of himself, if he needed anything for Allen or himself. Anita talked about how work was going at the stripper club, how much she missed Allen, all the while cooing
at him and kissing him.

“God you sure do act like the kid’s mother,” Cross commented, his eyes soft. He enjoyed watching the brat and Anita interact, his two most favorite people in the world.

“I can’t help it. I can’t have kids of my own. I’m not fertile,” Anita sighed.

“You’re not?” Cross questioned, his eyes softening more in pity, especially how wistful Anita looked.

“Nope.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. I have Allen and I consider him to be my baby boy so I’m content. Now I just need a husband,” Anita said, looking pointedly at Cross who looked away, his face burning. He looked out towards the window, noticing in shock that it was now snowing really hard outside, “Dang it! I didn’t know it was supposed to snow tonight! Crap I can’t walk through this with Allen! The pipsqueak will get sick.”

“Then stay here,” Anita responded, “I don’t mind. Besides I missed my little boy and my love.”

“I don’t think I packed enough diapers or anything to stay the night,” Cross sighed.

“That’s okay, we’ll find a way. I’m sure one of the girls has a spare diaper somewhere, quite a few of them have children of their own.”

“I can’t possibly-“

“Cross. Stay,” Anita practically commanded and Cross sunk to his knees, powerless against her.

So, Cross stayed and together with Anita they tried to get Allen to babble a few more words and walk from one of them to the other. Cross smirked victoriously when Allen squealed and walked clumsily towards him squeaking out ‘Dada’. Shit that was so cute and Cross didn’t care if Anita saw his soft side either. She encouraged it actually. In a couple hours the tike was already tuckered out and nestled against Anita who rocked him with a soft smile on her face. Cross laid his head on her shoulder, his head leaning against hers as he looked down at the sleeping child in her arms. He felt so relaxed and at peace with everything.

“You should sleep Cross. I can take care of him tonight,” Anita smiled kissing the man’s temple and rubbing at the bags under his eyes in concern. Cross was too tired to throw a fit and gladly laid himself down on her bed where he passed out right when his head hit the pillow.

Chapter End Notes

(Hiya! I hoped you guys enjoyed this drabble! Should I make more!? Got any suggestions? Sorry if it seems a little inaccurate. I’m not an expert on babies!)
Cross Takes Allen to His First Day of School

Chapter Summary

Allen goes through his first day of school. Cross is totally not nervous. Nope. Not at all.

Chapter Notes

(I have been meaning to get this drabble…just other ideas sprang to mind and it got pushed on the back burner until a kind comment reminded me that ‘oh shit this drabble was supposed to happen’. So here it is. Allen is age 8 in this one. It was a hard decision to decide whether or not I wanted to have Miranda and Krory-kinds be adults or around Allen or Lavi’s ages in these drabbles [however I may make some stand alone drabbles where they are younger I dunno yet.] so I have decided that they will be teenagers. Let’s try around freshman high school level where things are still scary and awkward. As to how little Allen will be able to interact with Krory and Miranda, he does so because this is a combined school [I grew up in one preschool through senior year of high school, so that’s where the inspiration derives from]. Miranda and Krory participate in work studies which involve doing a job around the school to earn a class credit. Miranda works in the library while Krory works as a tutor to littler kids to teach them how to read and write. If you love Krory x Miranda, you will love this drabble! I hope you enjoy! I know Cross is probably a little OOC but this is how I think he would act without the whole crap happening in canon, where he could allow himself to be closer to Allen without worrying about getting hurt in the end.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Are you sure you want to do this?” Cross asked for what seemed like the billionth time, trying not to show just how worried he was over the kid interacting with people, alone, without Cross, for like the first time since falling under his care. The kid has gotten better at being around people, but he still got anxietal from time to time which made Cross worry, especially since Allen wouldn’t be allowed to use a cell phone to call him in case he started freaking out.

“Yeah! Lavi will be there and I’m sure even though he’s not in my class that we’ll be able to hang out. Besides Lenalee is there, and so is my other friends. Also, Bakanda,” Allen responded with a soft smile. He was excited, but also very nervous. Even though he was in the same class as Lenalee, Kanda, and Alma, that didn’t mean he would be with them all the time. Allen was a special case and would need to go in a separate classroom during certain parts of the day to have tutoring because he was not exactly at the same placement as other kids his age. In other words, Allen was forced to go into the classroom for stupid children, was the way he looked at it. Cross told him many times already that he wasn’t stupid, he knew plenty of things that children his age do not learn until they’re adults and sometimes never even learn. He simply needed more help because he had never gone to school before.

That was another thing that made Allen nervous. He’d never experienced this before. He’d never
been surrounded by a bunch of children before, he’s only ever seen them from behind a curtain in a sea of people when he was cleaning circus props or from alleyways in the street. He’d seen the childish innocence they held, their happy, curious faces, firing several questions to their parents a minute. He’s also seen how cruel they can be, mimicking their parents and mocking something ugly, deformed, different, something they didn’t understand. Like Allen. Would he fit in? Would he be able to speak of the same interests they had? He had white hair and a weird scar on his face. That already made him stand out. The gloves that he wore, hiding his left arm alongside a long-sleeved shirt only made him weirder. What if they asked about his real parents? What if they question him over why his hair wasn’t red like Cross, if they assumed Cross was his real dad? What if they question him what it was like to live with a ‘drunken bastard’ (which Cross was not anymore. Well I mean he was still rough around the edges at times, and he still smoked, but he managed to hold off on drinking for Allen’s sake)? He knew Cross didn’t have the best reputation around town.

Cross didn’t seem to be satisfied with Allen’s answer as he scrutinized the kid’s smile. That was Mana’s smile. The kid was just as nervous as Cross, and as much as Cross wanted to hide the kid away and try and teach him everything himself, he knew he couldn’t. Not when he was working a full-time job. He couldn’t just shove the kid back onto Tiedoll or Komui to watch either because they would insist that Allen had to get a proper education. Allen needed to learn how to interact with people his own age, to be in social situation without Cross. Cross was annoyed at his own nervousness. When the fuck did, he learn how to be a fucking parent? He couldn’t help it though, he saw himself through Allen and it brought back past memories of when he wished he could hide away from people. He didn’t want to go home because at home he had his asshole drunken father and his psychotic mother. He hated the mocking over his stupid mask that covered his own deformity. He got into so many fights when he was in school and when he wasn’t fighting off bullies he was in a corner, sleeping, ignoring everyone else around him unless a good woman approached him. He wanted to hide Allen from the kids who may mock him, embarrass him, and put him through hell. Sure, he had friends up there, but his friends were not always going to be right there beside him. He knew Allen had dealt with plenty of shit in the past and could probably handle a few arseholes…but with this Mana personality he always displayed around other people, even his own friends, Cross wasn’t sure.

“That may be so, but they won’t always be around for ya kid,” Cross mentioned.

“You act like you don’t trust me,” Allen sighed, stamping his foot in frustration.

“I do trust you! I just don’t trust other people’s shitty ass kids! If a kid throws a punch at you, fight back. I don’t give a shit what they tell you at school about telling an adult. That’s utter bull shit and the adults usually don’t do fucking shit anyway. You protect yourself. Shit I should’ve at least taught you some self-defense…remind me to teach you some when you get home,” Cross rambled, rubbing at his face as he mentally double-checked if Allen had everything.

“Mana said violence is wrong-“

“Self defense isn’t wrong. If somebody touches you, grabs you, tries to shove you in a locker or tries to land a punch on you, you fucking send their ass to the floor ya got me!?” Cross said sternly.

“But I’ll get in trouble-“

“Not if I have anything to say about it! Or Tim! You make sure you keep him either in your backpack or pocket. Don’t let anyone see him,” Cross ordered.

“…Okay,” Allen said, finally relenting as he shoved Timcanpy (who had shrunk and was peeking out of the backpack from the sound of his name) into his backpack once again. The way Cross was
acting was making him more nervous than before. Were kids going to hurt him at school?

“I’m not saying this to scare you, alright? I’m saying this for just in case. I doubt all the kids will be total assholes, but there is always one bad egg and the sooner you let that fucker know you are not going to lay down and take his shit the better it will be for you,” Cross advised as he bent down and refixed Allen’s hair with his hands. “With the teachers there, it should be a safe place, but you should always be aware of your surroundings. There is a lot more bullying prevention bull shit in schools now than there were back when I was in school, but in my opinion that just makes it, so kids have to be craftier in their methods.”

Had it been any other day or time Allen would try to bat Cross’s hands away from him in irritation, but then again it wasn’t every day that Cross would be so nervous about Allen’s appearance and asking him how he felt about everything. Of course, Allen was nervous, of course he was scared about what the other kids were going to think of him. Between the two of them researching into what kids his age were supposed to like, they managed to find school supplies reflecting those interests to help Allen fit in better. Allen felt like he had to do this though. He didn’t have much of a choice. He wasn’t living on the streets anymore, he wasn’t a traveling performer anymore. He had to be a part of society now and being a child in society meant going to school, interacting with people, learning how to read and write, to survive in society. So even though he was scared shitless, he accepted his fate and refused to let Cross have his way and hide him back home. Later on, it would be funny to recount how weird Cross was acting, but in the moment, Allen found himself feeling warm at Cross’s attentions.

The man looked over at the clock hanging in the kitchen. They would have to leave soon. Luckily for Allen Cross stopped messing with his hair, his clothes and especially his gloves. He wasn’t sure if it was because he deemed his appearance to be at his satisfaction or the time made him forced to be satisfied.

“Are you sure-“ Cross started again.

“Yes! God you make it sound like you’re the one going to school,” Allen said in exasperation.

“Well going to work is kind of like going to school except you’re not sitting there learning shit… you’re doing actual work and get paid for it,” Cross mentioned, “Whatever, let’s get going before I decide to shove you in the basement until I come back from work.”

“Okay mom,” Allen smirked before skipping in front of Cross to the car.

“Oi watch your mouth. Wait til you have kids ya little runt,” Cross growled as he reluctantly followed his kid out to his car. His backpack was covered in dogs which Allen insisted because he liked dogs, it looked huge on the kid’s scrawny little shoulders and bounced every time he took a step. Cross would’ve gotten a backpack that was smaller, but all the little back packs seemed way too childish for a kid his age, plus Allen threatened he’d throw a fit if he didn’t get it. Once he made sure his brat was safely in the car, he walked around to the driver’s side, got in, and started up the small drive to the school.

“Remember, you’re walking home with Lavi tonight and I’ll pick you up at his house. Don’t try and walk there by yourself because if you get your ass lost for the third time this week, I’m leaving your ass for dead,” Cross said, though his words held no promise behind his threat.

“The town isn’t that big.”

“It is when you’re like three foot five.”
“I’m not that tiny!”

“While the way you eat and the way you speak says otherwise, real measurements can’t lie. You are a fucking midget. I’m sure if you tried hard enough you could hide in your own backpack.”

“You know for someone who complains about the weird stuff I do, you should really stop giving me ideas to try.”

“Allen, I swear to god if you try to fit yourself into your backpack tonight and we have to run your ass to the ER or something I will smack you upside the head so fucking hard that you’d have thought you went to the moon and back. Do I make myself clear?”

“Would that be in the ER or outside of the ER because I think they could put you in jail for that as child abuse.”

“With the amount of heart attacks, I nearly had I’m pretty sure I could throw your ass in jail for elder abuse!”

“Oh, please you’re not that young! You probably rode a pterodactyl to school!”

“Maybe the school will teach you how not to run your fucking mouth.”

“You went there, and you obviously haven’t learned so I don’t think you should set your expectations that high,” Allen deadpanned.

“Fucking Christ kid,” Cross sighed in defeat.

“I learn it from the best.”

“Me?” Cross asked.

“From Satan himself.”

“So yeah. It’s me,” Cross responded.

As Cross began to approach the school and pull into the parking lot he noticed Allen had grown a lot quieter and he looked a bit paler as he looked up at the huge school. He was beginning to have doubts about wanting to go to school with Lenalee, Kanda, Alma and Lavi, even if he didn’t have much of a choice with Cross needing to work.

“You’re going to be fine. I’ll walk in there with you,” Cross responded, giving a sideways glance at Allen who began to pout.

“I’m not scared. It’s just a big building. I think I’m going to get lost,” Allen laughed, saying a half truth as he looked up at the building. The Black Order. A weird school name.

Apparently, it was a private Catholic school a long long time ago, but they decided to keep the name when it switched to being, a public school. The mascot wasn’t what Allen usually saw when it came to school mascots…apparently, they were the home of The Exorcists? Yeah. Totally not a product of some adults being lazy and not wanting to change the name or mascot.

“I think so to, but you have an excuse. You’re the new kid,” Cross reassured, “Let’s get going. You don’t want to be late on your very first day.”

Cross left the car first and walked around the passenger side to let Allen out who didn’t make a move until Cross grabbed his hand and helped him out of the car. Yep. He was scared. He can see
it in his little face and feel it in the way he clutched his hand. Cross led the way to the entrance of the school, squeezing the little hand that gripped his harder and harder the closer they walked up to the school.

“Okay Allen. Focus and try to remember where I am taking you. If the layout is anything like I remember, then I should be able to point you to the rooms you’ll be in the most before throwing you to the wolves. Everything else you just follow your class and don’t lose sight of them. We’re stopping at the principal’s office first. If you need absolutely anything, that place should be able to help you, whether if you get lost or you need to call me. Whatever,” Cross explained, watching Allen’s huge owlish eyes dart around the walls filled with lockers anxiously trying to remember where they were going.

“Well at least they kept the principal’s office where it was when I was a kid, a little way right in front of the entrance. That should be easy enough to remember for you,” Cross commented as he strolled into the office, coming face to face with the secretary.

“Well sir, can I help you?” the secretary, a woman who seemed to be in her 50’s, trailed off as she glanced up at the strange pair. A smile of recognition reached the woman’s eyes, “Oh. Hello Cross Marian. I never thought I’d see the day where you’d show your face back here.”

“Hello Martha. I didn’t think so either. I see you aged well.” Cross responded with a smirk. Based on Cross’s reaction to the woman, Allen deemed her to be trustworthy. Cross wasn’t fake smiling at the woman, in fact he seemed genuinely at ease in her company.

“I shall take that as a compliment,” the woman laughed as she glanced down at Allen, “So this is the child you have acquired? Wow, and here I thought you were lying.”

“Yes. This is my brat Allen Walker. Allen, this is Martha. If you need absolutely anything, talk to her. She’s a wonderful woman that isn’t afraid to open up a can of whoop ass when need be. She got me out of many tricky situations when I was in high school.”

“I just hope you’re nothing like him. I don’t think my heart can take anymore tricky situations,” Martha joked, walking around her desk and kneeling to meet Allen at eye level before extending her hand, “Nice to meet you Allen.”

“Hi,” Allen squeaked out, shaking her hand before going back to his position behind Cross’s legs and looking around at everything.

“Oh, now I know he’s nothing like you,” Martha commented.

“Oh, he has a sassy streak about him, just give it awhile. He’s just shy.”

“Either way, don’t hesitate to come talk to me sweetie, even if it’s just to talk.” Martha said with a smile before returning her attention to Cross, “Everything is located in the same areas they have been, the gym, cafeteria, and the stage have all been remodeled and of course the science room after nearly being burned down by an experiment that went awry a couple years ago.”

“I heard about that. God knows that science room needed that remodel since god knows when. It’s a miracle I didn’t start a fire back in chemistry,” Cross nodded, smirking at the memory.

“It’s a miracle you didn’t start anything on fire Marian,” Martha sighed, “Anyways, shoo! Be gone with you! I have work to do and you may have liked to show up late to class, but it doesn’t mean Allen would like to either! I’ll let the teacher know you’re coming!”

“Fine. I look forward to you giving my brat more black mail to hang above my head! We’ll see you
“Alright brat. So that’s the principal’s office. If I’m correct, then the cafeteria should be down the hallway on the right. It’s quite a long walk but if you remember that it is the hallway on the right when you hit the principal’s office, then you should be fine. It helps things are labeled. Just remember C-A-F-E. Since it’s about food, you should have no problem remembering where this is at. I know you’re used to eating as much as you like at home, but if you’re worrying about standing out, don’t do it here. Alright?” Cross explained before he returned near the principal’s office, deciding to use that one spot as a starting point for all the routes Cross was going to show him. That way if he got stuck all he had to do was find the office to figure out where to go. Next Cross walked him to the section that held all the elementary classes which was further down from the entrance. The cafeteria basically was the separating point basically between the elementary student section, from the middle school and high school section. It sounded like a clusterfuck and it sort of was still, but it was helpful that this was a smaller enough town where there wouldn’t be swarms upon swarms of students.

“Alright brat. Now to where you’ll be spending most of your time. It should be straight down from the entrance, just go through the double doors at the end of the hall. This section is where they shove all the elementary classrooms into one section. If it looks colorful and happy it’s the elementary section. If it’s dreary and colorless you hit the middle school and high school section, unless they remodeled it a bit to make it look cheerier,” Cross continued to explain as he led Allen to the double doors,” There are bathrooms right here near the double doors to so if you need a place to hide like the stereotypical dramatic white girl, there is that.”

Allen was not amused with his joke. In fact, he looked scared to death and he had a death grip on Cross’s hand. This kid looked to be on the verge of a panic attack. Maybe it was too soon to enroll him in school. Dammit he should’ve fought harder with Tiedoll on this! Cross looked around and the time on his phone. Shit they were going to late. Fuck it. This was more important right now. He was going to have a serious talk with Tiedoll when he dropped Allen off!

“Alright kid. You’re definitely not fooling me or anyone else,” Cross sighed before bending down to Allen’s level, “I know you are scared shitless and I am sure I’m not helping by running my mouth. Think about it though. Remember that day in the parking lot where I asked you to trust me and I told you I would make sure with all my power that I would keep you safe? Allen, I wouldn’t leave you here at all if I didn’t feel you wouldn’t be safe. Sure, I’m nervous, but apparently that’s pretty natural for parents to feel nervous about dropping their kids off at school for the first time. I know you’re going to be safe here. I know you are scared about those kids judging you and hurting you, you have every right to be. You have those bratty friends of yours though, Lenalee and Martha. If people are fucking with you, I know Komui’s little sister will drop kick their ass and Bookman’s brat and Tiedoll’s two brats will be there right alongside her. Yeah, even that extremely grouchy kid of Tiedoll’s. You two fight whenever you two look at each other, but I’m damn sure if push comes to shove that one is going to kick ass and take name when it comes to you. Friends stick together. If that doesn’t help you can always call me, alright? If anything is happening here, I want to know about it. Got it?”

Allen nodded, staring down at the floor. He didn’t say anything because he was afraid he was going to start crying or something. However, that wasn’t satisfying to Cross. He would be damned if these fucking shit stains put Allen through what he went through as a kid! If something happened here, he wanted to know about it, so he could stop it from happening. He made a promise to this kid to keep him safe and dammit he was going to do anything he could to keep this kid safe!

“Oi kid! Look at me,” Cross responded, narrowing his eyes as he grabbed Allen’s chin, forcing him to look at him, “If these shit stains are fucking with you, I better know about it. Got it? I told
you I was going to keep you safe, but you need to help me out here. I am not a mind reader.”

“Okay,” Allen softly responded after a few moments.

Okay,” Cross responded softly when Allen looked up and nodded. The man pulled Allen to him, embracing him, “You’re going to be fine. Stick with Lena and the rest of your bratty crew and you’ll be fine. You got people who care about you and like you for you. Some fuckers with their heads up their asses can’t change that and if they try to, they’ll have me to answer to. I don’t give a fuck if their parents get involved to.”

Alright. Let’s go,” Cross sighed as he got up again to lead Allen through the double doors. He felt a little better when he noticed the grip Allen had from before was still tight, but it wasn’t a life or death grip.

Okay kid. The room where you’ll be getting extra help is thankfully two doors down from your regular classroom, which is right here,” Cross explained as they walked through the double doors and down the hallway past four doors that were filled with kids sitting at desks. Some were writing away at their desks and Allen thought he saw Lavi in one of them, which made him feel happy and whisked away some of the nerves he was feeling. When they arrived at his classroom, he felt his stomach drop as he nervously searched the room for the back of Lenalee, Alma, or even Kanda’s head. He relaxed when he slowly managed to find all three in the room.

Alright kid. I’ll see you at Lavi’s. Wait for him to come find you to walk with you. Stick by your friends and try not to fight with Tiedoll’s kid,” Cross sighed, knocking on the door for Allen. As the pair waited for the teacher to open the door the two looked at each other and Cross raised an eyebrow.

Ah shit you don’t even have a good-looking teacher. Fuck,” Cross complained as a woman in her forties answered the door.

Allen made a noise in disgust, shrinking a little bit when the door opened, revealing the woman who looked like she was a nice woman but based on her appearance, she did look strict. Her face just had that shape to it that made Allen view her as the strict type. She looked from Cross to Allen, smiling softly at Allen.

Why hello there. You must be Allen Walker and this must your father,” she trailed off.

Cross Marian,” the man responded, placing a hand on Allen’s shoulder and squeezing it. He really hoped this teacher wouldn’t be a huge bitch.

Ah…well Cross, Allen is in good hands. The class is very excited to meet him,” the woman chirped. Yeah, okay lady, whatever you say, Cross thought to himself.

“Yeah well…call if you need anything. I’ll see you tonight bud. Behave,” Cross said awkwardly, giving Allen’s shoulder one final squeeze before stepping away and letting the teacher lead him into the room. Allen looked over at Cross and the man had to resist the urge to wince because the look Allen had on his face made Cross feel like he was sending him to the wolves. That hurt. Sure he knew a couple staff members here, but he technically was giving Allen to a bunch of strangers with other people’s kids. For the several months he had Allen under his care, he had always been under his watchful eye or the watchful eyes of people he trusted. This was the first time Allen was with a building where mostly everyone were strangers. This fucking sucked. He hoped he’d have a good day. Cross couldn’t forgive himself if he didn’t. Did all parents feel this way? Even though Cross knew he should really be getting to work, he hung back to watch Allen for a few moments as the teacher forced him to the front of the room to introduce himself. The kid
looked nervous as all hell, but Cross smirked when he saw Lenalee smiling serenely up at Allen from her seat, and that seemed to make it easier for him to introduce himself.

“Hello class. We have a new student joining us today. I expect you all to make him feel very welcomed,” the teacher announced as she led Allen to the front of the class. Allen felt his heart pounding in his ears and felt himself sweat when he heard people whispering immediately when he entered the room.

“Would you like to introduce yourself to the class? Your name, age, birthday, and something that you like to do,” the teacher said, although she phrased it as a question, Allen had the feeling she was commanding him to talk about himself.

“Uhhh…” Allen piped up, his eyes scanning the room fearfully before his eyes landed on Lenalee who smiled sweetly up at him, encouraging him and glaring at everyone who was whispering. He felt himself relax a little at that, “Uhhh my name is Allen Walker. I’m 8 years old and I was born on Christmas. I like to sing and play with my pet…dog Timcanpy.”

Allen knew he was basically lying to the whole entire class. First of all, he didn’t know he real age or his real birthday, and Timcanpy definitely was not a dog, but he knew if he told the truth then he would be looked at weirdly. He already knew some of the kids were staring at him and looking at him funny with his scar and hair. He touched his hair self-consciously.

“Wow. I guess that means you get twice the presents. Welcome to our class,” the teacher commented, trying to be encouraging. Yeah, okay lady, no. It didn’t mean he had twice the presents. In fact, with Mana’s budget Allen was fine with the fact Mana fed him and made sure he had a coat. He didn’t care about how many presents he got because as far as he was concerned, the fact he had a dad was more than enough for him. He wasn’t used to getting things, “Well Allen I think we’ll sit you in front of Lenalee there and we’ll continue with where we left off.”

Allen sighed. He was thankful that was over, and he was satisfied that he would near Lenalee. Thank god. Once Cross saw to it that Allen was sitting down, he made his leave. It wasn’t much, but it set some of his nerves at ease. He really fought to try and have this day off in case something happened, but he already pushed it when he took an entire month off to take care of Allen when he first came under his care.

The first part of the day went somewhat decent for Allen. He was still aware of the stares but was happy to find that the more the teacher kept talking, the less the stares have gotten. Allen listened intently and silently to the teacher, finding that looking around and staring at people was not very interesting. When he didn’t know what he was supposed to be doing, he copied what the other kids were doing. If they wrote something down. He wrote something down, although he wasn’t sure what he was supposed to be writing down so he mostly doodled to look like he was doing something. It was only until Lenalee helpfully whispered in his ear that he realized he was supposed to be writing down what the teacher was talking about.

For the most part it was pretty simple. Allen followed the class when the teacher led them to the bathrooms for a bathroom break, followed them when they had gym class, all that stuff. When it came to be recess however, Allen had a small predicament. There may have been teachers outside, but Allen quickly learned that they didn’t quite give much of a shit what the kids were doing just as long as they kept themselves out of trouble. So, in other words, as long as the kids did their things subtly then it was fair game.

“Come on Allen, let’s go swing on the swing set,” Lenalee chirped, she had her hand in his, “Lavi should be at the next recess and can hang out with us then! Since he’s in a couple grades ahead of us, he get’s less recesses than us!”
Kanda pouted, keeping by Alma’s side who happily skipped along with Lenalee and Allen, “Yeah Allen! We have a super-secret spot on the playground that we all hang out at in the afternoons! It sucks because after this year Lavi won’t be able to join us because he’ll be in middle school, we’ll just have to update him on our plans of world domination!”

“We’re not taking over the world Alma. We just hang out there because you idiots think it’s cool and I like it because it’s quiet and away from people,” Kanda growled out. Just like normal Kanda.

“Well of course it is. It wouldn’t be a great super-secret spot if we didn’t try and include your needs into it,” Alma smiled.

“People are being even more annoying than usual today. Their stupid whispering gave me a headache,” Kanda growled, referring to when Allen was first introduced. Speaking of whispering, Allen did notice the groups of kids whispering and pointing at him. Some of them were giggling.

“Don’t worry about it. They’ll be over it soon. They’re just curious. You don’t have to tell them anything that you don’t want to Allen. Just stay near us,” Lenalee advised, giving Allen’s hand a squeeze when she saw him looking around at everyone,” They wouldn’t think to even mess with you with us by your side.”

“I swear to God if one more person looks at us I am going to punch them straight in their fucking-“

“Kanda there’s already enough attention directed at us. Causing a scene will only make it worse,” Lenalee snapped, “Just be like the rest of us and swing out your frustration.”

“I am. I’m using my fists!”

“That’s not what I meant,” Lenalee said with an eyeroll as she sat on one of the swings and Allen took the one next to her. The four of them swung on the swing set for a little while before Kanda got annoyed with all the whispering and they went off in search of a place away from the groups. They managed to get away from most of the kids but of course some of the groups managed to follow them. Allen could pick up the words, the curious questions about the ‘weird ugly scar on his face’ or why his hair was white. He heard the snickering, the jeers about how they were a band of freaks.

“Will you guys just go away!?” Lenalee shouted, placing her hands on her hips, apparently fed up.

“Why? We just want to get to know the new kid,” a girl shot back, placing her own hands on her hips.

“Yeah Lenalee! We’re not doing anything wrong!” another piped up.

“Well maybe he doesn’t want to talk to you right now! He’s shy and you’re making us all nervous by following us around!” Lenalee explained.

“Well maybe if he didn’t look weird, we wouldn’t be following him!” a boy shouted. That particular boy was one Allen soon realized would be what Cross referred to as ‘the bad egg’. Or at least one of them.

“He’s not weird! Just because he looks different from you doesn’t make him weird!” Lenalee stepped up to Allen’s defense.

“Uh yeah Lenalee, it kind of does,” the boy responded with a shit eating grin.

“You better shut your trap before I really show you something weird to complain about,” Kanda
growled, stepping nearer to Allen, “How does seeing how far I can shove your head up your-“

“What Kanda means to say, is that you guys should get lost. Right now, Allen wants to be with his friends and you guys are sure not acting very friendly like talking and whispering behind his back,” Alma stepped in.

The boy, Allen later would recall him as being named Eric, opened his mouth to retort something at them, but the teachers yelled that it was time to return to classes. Eric closed his mouth, glaring heatedly at the four before he turned around and walked towards the building to line up with everyone else. The group slowly followed behind them, Kanda growling swear words under his breath.

“I-I’m sorry,” Allen stuttered. He didn’t quite know what he was apologizing for, he just felt like he needed to apologize.

“Don’t be. They’re just being jerks. You totally should not need to deal with that on your first day,” Lenalee said.

“That one in the red shirt. That’s Eric. Stay away from him. He’s an ass, and so is his brigade of bumbling idiots,” Kanda muttered, helpful for once.

“Yeah…I think I figured that out,” Allen sighed.

“Really? That’s surprising,” Kanda commented.

“Shut up Bakanda!”

“Make me Moyashi!”

“Stop it you two and get in line,” Lenalee sighed in exasperation, “Try and get along today.”

The boys obeyed Lenalee, because Lenalee was scary when she was angry and they didn’t want to attract the teacher’s attention. However, when they returned to their classroom, they quickly realized that they have. Apparently, Eric decided to be a little jerk and tell the teacher that Lenalee was being possessive over Allen at recess and wasn’t allowing other students to befriend him. What annoyed the group of four the most was that the brat even included fake crocodile tears.

“Now Lenalee I know you are close to Allen and are friends with him, but you have to learn to share him. He’s new and the other kids want to get to know him too,” the teacher responded sternly. Allen could see Lenalee had a retort at the tip of her tongue, but she swallowed it down, settling for an apology instead. Eric meanwhile sat in his seat grinning. Shit. This bad apple was my classmate. Allen thought to himself, anticipating that there may be some friction between him and Eric in the future. He wondered if he should take Cross’s advice to show this kid that he wasn’t going to put up with his nonsense. No. Not now. He didn’t want to get into a fight on his first day. Especially when he knew nothing about this kid!

As the day continued to progress, things seemed to be looking up, especially when lunch rolled around. It took a lot of self-control and looking around for Allen to eat…well ‘normally’. He was already drawing a lot of attention to himself as it was. He didn’t want people to make fun of him for how much he ate.

“Allen! What wrong? Usually you eat a lot more than that!” Lenalee responded in concern.

“Come on Lenalee! It’s obvious! We might be used to Moyashi’s appetite, but that doesn’t mean everyone else will be,” Kanda explained.
“Are you serious!? Starving yourself isn’t the answer!”

“He isn’t starving himself. He’s still eating,” Kanda sighed.

“Still!”

“Lenalee, relax. It’s fine. Besides, as much as I hate to admit it. Bakanda is right. It’s not going to hurt me to eat a little less at school,” Allen responded. He was thankful that Lenalee was so adamant on standing up for him and supporting him to just be himself, but he thought that he needed to take it slow. It was already shocking enough to see a kid with a huge scar on his face, not to mention the scar looked like a star on his forehead before coming down in a line down his eye. That was already weird enough. So was his white hair and the fact he wore gloves. Lenalee seemed like she wasn’t done trying to convince Allen to eat to his heart’s content, but she seemed to take the hint that Allen was just getting tired of being stared at and would like to stay as invisible as possible right now.

Lunch passed by just fine, even though Allen was still hungry at the end of it. He was beginning to tune out the stares, especially when their next recess rolled around, this time with Lavi being included.

“Allen! My best friend! You’re growing up so fast! Here you are in school! Gosh, I can’t believe I missed taking you to your first day of school! My heart is so broken,” Lavi cried out dramatically when the four of them met him in their secret spot, which was by a huge tree at the very end of the playground. The eye patch wearing red head immediately got up and ran to Allen when he saw them. He threw his arms around his little friend and swung him around in a circle.

“Ugh really usagi! Keep it down! We already attracted enough attention today, we don’t need anymore!”

“Oh yeah…sorry. I’ve seen. My whole class is talking about you to. It’ll pass though, I promise. How are you holding up Allen?”

“Fine. It’s nothing I’m not used to by now,” Allen said, shrugging it off, though it bothered him that the news of him was spreading so fast.

“Well, either way, if they think you’re weird, they’re not worth having around! We all get along well because we are all weird in our own little ways!” Lavi responded cheerfully.

“Don’t you bring me into your weird sappy mushy love fest baka usagi.”

“Kanda…even though you wound me so at times. I still love you.”

“I swear to God if you don’t shut up, I’m going to beat the shit out of you and make it look like a rabid dog did it!”

“Please do. I really don’t want to go back to class,” Lavi admitted.

Allen was thankful that this recess seemed to have ran smoother but was soon tense and nervous again when he realized he would be separated from his friends for most of the later part of the day to get extra tutoring.

“Don’t worry Al, I’ll walk you there, so you don’t have to be all alone. The guy who helps out there in the afternoon is named Alistair Krory. He’s a freshman and he’s really awesome! Just be warned, he has very sharp canines, he looks kind of like a vampire, but don’t worry he won’t bite you. Also, don’t mention anything about a girl named Eliade. She broke up with him and left him
for some thick-headed jock on the football team. He’s heartbroken about her, but rumor has it he
has a thing for Miranda Lotto. She works at the library, she’s super clumsy but she’s a very nice
person. She’s also a freshman and the two of them talk quite a bit but haven’t made any moves on
each other yet,” Lavi blabbered as he walked with Allen back to classroom. He waited outside of
the room for Allen to gather his things before walking with him to the classroom where he would
be tutored on reading and writing.

“Aww…I wish recess could’ve lasted longer. I don’t really talk to any of my classmates. You guys
are the only ones I really talk to. Anyways, have a great rest of your day. I’ll pick you up at your
classroom and we’ll walk to my house together! Alright? Don’t let the other kids mess with you,
they’re just curious and rude,” Lavi continued as he slung his arm around Allen, rubbing his
knuckles against the top of his head before releasing him so he could go to class.

“Alright…if you say so. See you soon,” Allen responded with a soft smile. He watched the red
head run off to his own classroom for a moment or two before he finally twisted the doorknob on
the classroom in front of him and let himself in. Allen felt nervousness settle into his gut, feeling
like he was in the wrong room or perhaps that he wasn’t supposed to be here. He jumped in
surprise when a young man with black hair popped up around the corner. He had a streak of white
in the middle of his hair and there were strands that curled up in front of his ear and up to his eye
on both sides. In other words…yes he did look like a vampire of some sort.

“Oh, my hello! I’m sorry that I have frightened you!” the man instantly apologized, a polite smile
lit up his features, “You wouldn’t happen to be Allen Walker would you?”

“U-Uhm…yeah I’m Allen.”

“Good! It’s nice to meet you! My name is Alistair Krory. I’ll be your tutor in the
afternoons,” the man introduced himself. Allen looked up at him owlishly. Wow. His teeth really
were pointy.

“My friend told me that you wouldn’t bite me,” Allen responded with a blink. He instantly flushed
in embarrassment, “I-I mean! I’m sorry! My friend is-well he doesn’t mean it he’s just weird and
he means well!”

“It’s quite alright. I get it a lot. It’s a birth defect,” Krory responded with a soft understanding smile
as he led Allen to a small table in the corner of the room.

“At least yours looks cool,” Allen sighed.

“Really? Nobody thought they looked cool before, usually they’d be afraid of me,” Krory said with
a blush, “Wait. You have one to? Oh, don’t mind me, you don’t have to show me I understand, but
you shouldn’t speak so badly about yourself. It’s what makes you special and, in my opinion,
maybe some people are jealous.”

“Yeah, maybe,” Allen responded, though he surely did not think the same. The sharp teeth he
could understand. That was cool. His arm? It was hideous, it was awful, and sometimes it was stiff
some days and hurt to move. It was nothing but a burden. Hell, he didn’t even know why he
brought it up with a total stranger like Krory. Maybe it was because he felt a strange connection to
him, plus he seemed really nice. He was the first total stranger here other than the secretary that
treated him like he wasn’t a freak. He talked to him like he was a normal person, which was a
breath of fresh air.

The pair sat together for about an hour or two with Krory going over simple words with Allen,
teaching them how to sound them out and how to write them out. Allen hated the way his voice
sounded tripping over every word. He was so slow, and it made him sound stupid! If Krory was impatient, he sure didn’t show it. In fact, he was rather patient, and Allen didn’t feel rushed at all. They were interrupted however when a woman with curly, long, brown hair entered the room with a stack of books in her hand. She also seemed to have bags under her eyes.

“Oh sorry. Did I catch you two at a bad time?” the woman asked with an embarrassed, but polite smile.

“Not at all Miranda!” Krory responded, his face lighting up in a totally different way that he only saw Cross look when he saw Anita,” Ah, Allen, this is my friend Miranda, she works at the library! Miranda this is Allen. He’s new here!”

“Oh, well it’s very nice to meet you Allen. It’s always rough being the new kid, I hope your class is treating you well. I got some books that I thought would work out well for beginning readers and I decided I’d bring them down since I had some extra time after I was finished with my work study duties,” Miranda explained as she walked over and set out the books one by one.

“Thanks Miranda! I always know I can count on you,” Krory chirped happily, reaching out to grab one of them and accidentally brushing his hand against Miranda’s. The two instantly retracted their hands, dropping the book, and turning bright red. Oh yeah, these two liked each other. A lot. Allen could see it, but he wouldn’t comment on it. It wasn’t his place after all. He simply picked up the book Krory dropped in his haste and pretended to look at it as he eavesdropped on the rest of their interaction.

“U-Uhm uhhh s-sorry about that!”

“It’s totally fine! It’s my fault!” Miranda squeaked, “Anyways I better go before my next class starts!”


“You to. Goodbye,” Miranda squeaked before rushing out the door.

Krory sighed when the door closed behind Miranda with a soft thud, “She’s such a nice girl. I can’t believe no one has asked her to the winter dance yet.”

“Why don’t you?” Allen asked, finally voicing his opinion.

“Me!? Th-That’s crazy she would never want to go with me! We’re just friends!”

“What do you mean? Friends can go with friends to a dance.”

“People will talk!”

“So? Why does that matter? It’s your business whether or not you two like each other like that or not. It isn’t their business. Besides, from the way it looks she might be thrilled being asked to a dance. She’s very pretty,” Allen responded.

“I don’t have the confidence to,” Krory sighed.

Allen rolled his eyes, “Oh my god it’s obvious she likes you, you know. She wouldn’t act like that if she didn’t.”

“How would you know!? She always acts like that! It’s her personality!”
“Well if that is so it fits well with yours. You’ll never know if you don’t give it a try. Just go as friends and if things happen, they happen. You seem like you two get along great, so I doubt she’ll say no,” Allen sighed in exasperation.

“You really think so?” Krory asked. Allen couldn’t believe he was taking advice from an eight-year-old so seriously.

“Yeah. It’s very obvious,” Allen stated, deadpanning.

“A-Alright…I’ll do it! N-No wait, I don’t know how to do it! I’m not good with romance!”

“She likes books, right? Take her out on a date to the bookstore and ask her there? I don’t know! I’m eight! Why are you asking advice from an eight-year-old?!?”

“You don’t think that would be too cheesy?”

“Well yeah. It kind of is, but I think she’ll like it.”

“Alright! I’ll do that,” Krory responded, his eyes sparkling with determination. Love was weird. Was it really that complicated? All anyone had to do for Allen was to give him food and he’d be hooked. It had to be good food though.

“Thank you so much Allen! I hope she says yes! She’s such a lovely creature, she makes my heart skip a beat! She’s all I ever think about,” Krory sighed, and Allen swore he could see his eyes turn into hearts.

“…Yeah…” Allen said, wrinkling his nose in confusion. Adults were weird, “Just remember to wear protection alright? I don’t know exactly what that means but my dad-I mean my guardian says it a lot. Uhm…not that I don’t enjoy talking to you…but can I leave now?”

“Hmm? Oh! Yes! It is time for you to return to your class! I’m sorry I totally wasted your time with my personal problems,” Krory apologized.

“Don’t be. I’m glad I could be helpful,” Allen shrugged, not really minding the distraction. Reading and writing were hard, and his head was beginning to swim anyways with how hyper focused he was staring at the letters. Sadly, this was not going to be the last time he would be staring at letters today because Krory decided to assign Allen to try and read one of the books Miranda had brought up with her today. It was kind of hard to be interested in a book that looked completely babyish. He already felt like a total idiot and now he had a stupid baby book to make him look even more stupid.

The last part of the day passed by somewhat smoothly, or so Allen thought. That quickly changed when the rest of his class were beginning to pack up their things to go home. Lenalee had to run off to basketball practice, while Alma and Kanda left to go to judo, that left Allen all alone to wait for Lavi. The teacher had exited the room momentarily for reasons Allen was not exactly sure of. Apparently, some of the boys in his class noticed that he was carrying the babyish looking book upon his return to class and decided to approach him about it.

“Hey, what’s up with the baby book? Are you stupid or something?” one the boys asked him.

“No. If I was stupid, I wouldn’t be here,” Allen responded truthfully. If he was stupid, he definitely would’ve been dead by now, he was sure of it.

“Everyone is forced to go to school whether you are smart or stupid. Stupid,” the boy said.
“I am slowly becoming aware of that,” Allen responded softly, scrutinizing the leader of the group. It wasn’t Eric this time. Perhaps there were more bad apples than he originally thought, “So, other than calling me stupid, did you need anything else?”

“Yeah what’s with your ugly eye, retard?” the leader spat out.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that you should stop playing in your mom’s make-up. It doesn’t make you look cool! It makes you look like a freak! Retard!”

Allen blinked. Okay, was this kid stupid? Even with his skills in face painting and make-up there was no way he could pull off creating a realistic scar like this every single day. It would take too much time and effort!

“This isn’t make-up. I would hope someone like you would know the difference between a scar created with make-up and one that wasn’t.”

“Shut up! You’re a liar! What’s with the hair, it makes you look like an old person!” the leader snapped, apparently not liking Allen’s comeback, especially when his friends began to whisper among themselves that the scar did look quite real. The leader reached over and tugged on a strand of Allen’s hair.

Allen yelped, his hand snapping to rub at the area on his head that was tugged, “Was that really necessary?”

“Shut up freak! Who would ever like some weird retard like you!? They’re only friends with you because they only feel sorry for you, ya know!”

“Wow. Is retard, freak, or stupid the only insults you guys know?” a voice called out. Allen whipped his head around to the entrance of the classroom, feeling relieved when he found the voice belonged to Lavi who had his hands on his hips, unamused. His emerald green eye narrowed, glinting dangerously towards the group of boys, “Honestly, you sound like a broken record. Why don’t you just come out and admit that you’re jealous that he has a bad ass scar on his face and you don’t? It’s obvious you suffer from an inferiority complex.”

“Shut up! Stop using stupid words that nobody can understand!”

“Why don’t you open up a dictionary and educate yourselves for once you neanderthals. It’s not my fault your brain is the size of a pea, you’re just going to have to try and catch up to my intellect or suffer the consequences!” Lavi snapped as he strode over to grab Allen’s backpack for him, “Let’s go Allen before they cause you brain damage, pure idiocy isn’t safe for normal people for long periods of time.”

“Uhm…okay Lavi,” Allen responded, getting up out of his seat quickly, thankful for Lavi coming to his rescue. If he hadn’t come sooner, Allen probably would’ve been in big trouble. He still didn’t know how to react towards bullies and was afraid that he would have to take Cross’s advice and attempt to drop kick someone on his very first day. He also didn’t know when the teacher would return, and it would be very bad if she caught him hurting another one of his classmates… although to be fair he did start it by pulling his hair.

Lavi put his arm around Allen protectively as they left the room and began their trek back to Lavi’s house.

“Don’t listen to them Al, they’re just doing what idiots do. They’re not satisfied unless they ruin
someone else’s day. It’s sad really,” Lavi sighed with an eye roll.

“Well, I mean, they have a point. The book I have to read is for kids a whole lot younger than me.”

“So? They started where you’re starting now like two to three years ago dude. They went through the same thing, that doesn’t make them smarter than you. You’ll catch up.”

“I don’t know. It’s pretty hard. I didn’t make much progress even after all the stupid workbooks Cross gave me and helped me with.”

“You got through the workbooks. I’d say that’s progress. Besides you’re actually reading words dude. Sure, it may be slow, but it’s a start. You can’t learn reading overnight. Besides, you know how to juggle and balance on circus balls. Dude most kids in my class still trip over their own feet. I ran into a door head on this morning,” Lavi chirped positively.

“Yeah…I guess you’re right. Thanks Lavi, though you really should try to not run into doors from now on,” Allen smiled, feeling a little better at Lavi’s explanation.

“I like to live dangerously Allen. Keeps life interesting.”

“Lavi, nearly concussing yourself with a door isn’t living dangerously. That’s just being clumsy.”

“Well sorry Allen, nobody can live as dangerously as you do. Sometimes all a person can do is nearly concuss themselves by running into a door. Don’t I get an A for effort?”

“I guess.”

“I wish those idiots back there could concuss themselves by a door. Listen Al, if people are bothering you don’t be afraid to tell me.”

“It’s fine Lavi. I’m used to it. It doesn’t bother me,” Allen responded, though he was lying through his teeth. It bothered the hell out of him. He refused to say anything though. Cross and his friends have done so much for him already. He’d figure out how to deal with these bullies himself. He couldn’t rely on them all the time after all.

“Still dude…if you need anything, let me know. We’re here for you.”

“Thanks, Lavi, but trust me…I’m okay.”

Chapter End Notes

(Hey guys! Merry Holidays! This is perhaps the longest drabble I’ve ever written! I hope I have done Miranda and Krory some justice and I hope you enjoyed the drabble. If you got any suggestions or things you’d like to see, go ahead and send me a message or suggest something in the comments! Perhaps I’ll write another drabble going off of this one? I don’t know yet. If I don’t write again before New Years, I hope you all have a happy and safe New Years and I’ll see you next year!)
School Life Pt. 2

Chapter Summary

basically a continuation of last chapter. Allen deals with some more bullying and a bitchy teacher.

Chapter Notes

(Some things in this chapter may trigger people. There is self-harming and bullying.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

So, Allen was officially in school, five days a week, eight hours a day. So far, he didn’t really mind it other than the reading and writing parts. Allen excelled at history, thanks to his history nerd friend Lavi. He found math to be interesting (especially when it came to money) and science. If Allen had to choose his most favorite subject of all though, it had to be music class with Noise Marie, Kanda’s older brother. If he knew he wouldn’t end up getting himself lost, he would’ve stayed after class to watch him play. Instead he was forced to look wistfully at the slick white and black keys from afar. He enjoyed singing to Noise Marie’s piano playing but disliked it when the whole class was forced to sing as a whole group. Why you ask? Well, it was because there was a seating arrangement and Allen was forced to stand/sit next to someone whose singing voice sounded like nails on a chalkboard. What made it worse was that this voice belonged to one of the kid’s that enjoyed bullying Allen at every chance they got and seemed to sing directly into Allen’s ear. They were in this seating arrangement because they were practicing for a Christmas concert that the elementary part of the school did every year. Sadly, Allen was placed directly in front because he was super short, the shortest kid in his entire class. Another thing that made him a total weirdo to his class. Great, his idea of trying to hide in the sea of kids was foiled by his shortness. Now all the parents of the elementary school kids will see the weird kid in the second-grade class. He could already see the crowd of eyes on him, the concerned glances of mothers wondering what kind of parent could let their kid look like such a monstrosity.

To make matters worse, Noise Marie had keen ears and instantly picked up on Allen’s talented voice, even though he was trying to sing as quietly as he possibly could. That being said, Allen was chosen to do a solo. Of course, Allen was honored, but he was also extremely uncomfortable at being thrusted into this position. Now he was going to be the center of attention. But, like it was mentioned before, he was honored. He hadn’t performed anything since Mana died, unless you counted the times, he had jam sessions with Cross. Though he wasn’t a blood relative of Mana, he felt the need to perform coursing through his blood. To express himself through music. It was the only thing he felt would keep the spirit of Mana beside him. To remember him. Mana would never want Allen to waste his talents. Allen just wished that he wasn’t showing his talents so soon. In front of so many people. For a crummy elementary school concert.

So, basically, he had a love hate relationship with music class, mostly love, especially on days he could tune out the idiot squawking beside him and when he would be pulled away to practice his solo. Those days he loved the most because it was just Noise Marie and himself in a separate room.
He could hear his piano playing perfectly without any squeaking, squawking voices ruining his playing. It also gave Allen time to psych himself up for performing in front of people. He was reluctant to perform his piece in front of the whole class, even with his friends in his class.

The parts of the school day Allen hated the most were the times where he was alone. Those times were when the bullies decided to strike, and Allen still haven’t figured out just what he was supposed to do. Should he tell an adult? Fight back? Just take it? Allen chose the latter. He could handle the jeering, and the insults, but bullies were getting gutsier. When he got to school, he’d be shoved against the locker, tripped whenever he walked down the rows of desks to his seat. Eric and his gang would do the more hardcore stuff, but most of the rest of the class were keen on trying to trip him. After all it was more subtle.

Gym class was a nuisance. The gym teacher quickly figured out that Allen absolutely refused to wear any short-sleeved t-shirts and refused to take off his gloves. It didn’t matter how hard the teacher tried, Allen was adamant about it which only caused his classmates to become more curious. However, the kids in his class figured out a new game when it came to person contact in gym class. They’d try to take his gloves off. Luckily, Allen had quick reflexes and they hadn’t managed to yank off his gloves yet. It did make Allen quite paranoid though. As far as athletics went, Allen was decent, or at least he thought he was decent. Based on some reactions from his classmates he guessed that perhaps decent wasn’t the right word to describe himself. His left arm still made things hard when it came to catching things, but he quickly found out he was the fastest male runner in his class. Lenalee was not only the fastest female runner, she was the fastest in the entire elementary. Some say she was so fast that she was invited to join middle school track team. When it came to catching balls and chucking them at people, Kanda was the best at it. If Alma was by his side, then they were a force to be reckoned with. Their classmates quickly found out that when the four of them were with each other on a team, they were unstoppable.

When it came to dodgeball the four of them easily found their roles and moved with each other rather smoothly. Allen was the most flexible and acrobatic amongst the four of them, not only that but he was smaller, so his job was to simply avoid the balls thrown at him and collect them for Kanda and Alma to throw. Lenalee used her speed to throw dodgeballs at unsuspecting members on the other team. By the time they tried to aim a ball at her, she was gone in a flash, off to strike someone else on their team. The whole class feared having a ball thrown at them from Kanda who had no mercy, it didn’t matter if you were a boy or a girl. Alma on the other hand was gentler when it came to girls and that was his downfall. When Allen and Kanda were on opposing teams it usually ended up with just the two of them at the end. This usually ended in a draw because Allen would mock Kanda by making weird faces and would be having too much fun to actually try to catch the balls Kanda was throwing at him. At that point Kanda was usually so angry that Allen would not have any hope in catching them anyways, not only that, but Kanda’s aim usually got worse with the angrier he’d gotten. Least to say, it was seldom that the four were all on one team, but the gym teacher always made sure to keep Kanda and Allen on the same team to avoid a draw.

In the end, Allen tried to find the best in the school day and he usually had pretty decent school days. He found the teacher was strict. If he did what he was supposed to and kept his mouth shut when he was supposed to, then it was fine. It didn’t make doing school work any less stressful though and it didn’t help the bullies were trying everything they had to get him into trouble. Allen just kept reminding himself to take deep breaths and to not give into them. He was used to dealing with a lot of shit and so far, they haven’t hurt him too badly. It was easy to hide it from Cross. It helped having his friends around because he could let his guard down a little bit, and he didn’t have to worry about Kanda being a total jerk to him either. Maybe Kanda actually had a heart and backed off when it came to being at school because people were already messing around with Allen.
So, it was a surprise to find himself cornered after school in front of his locker. Lavi had run off to grab something he had forgotten in the classroom and promised to return in just a moment to walk home with Allen. Next thing he knew Eric and three other boys were behind him and Eric and when Allen turned around, caught off guard, Eric sent a punch straight towards his left eye (which was a lot more sensitive than his other eye because of the trauma it’s already been through). Allen yelped, immediately holding his eye and staring at Eric in shock. His body also frozen in his shock.

“Come on Freak! You seem eager to show off during music class and gym class, why can’t you do anything now!?”

“Mana said-“ Allen choked out. Remembering when Mana pleaded with him against using violence back when they were both still at the circus, back when Cosimov had killed Allen, Mana’s dog. The stupid, abusive, drunken, bastard of a clown blamed the dog’s death on Allen and in a fit of rage he tried to attack him. Mana ended up taking his rage instead and pleaded with him to stop, that he mustn’t do anything as tragic as killing. He felt rage bubble up inside of him, but he was desperate to push it back down. He promised Mana he wouldn’t hurt people. Cross said to defend himself, but Allen still had not made that decision to ignore Mana’s wishes over Cross’s.

“What so you’re a mama’s boy to!?” Eric jeered, apparently mishearing him, “What kind of mother would love an ugly weirdo like you!? She’s probably a crackhead! You should just kill yourself!”

Allen pouted and stepped a few steps away from the other boys who laughed and jeered. He wondered if they would leave if he busted out the waterworks and if anyone was close enough where they could hear him bawling. Then again, this could only add more fuel to the fire if he acted like a total baby in front of them.

“Why are you always hiding your arms anyways Freak!? Are you just that much of a pansy that you’re scared of getting your hands dirty!?“ Eric continued, darting out his hand to try and tug one of his gloves off. Allen was quicker though and tried to move out from under Eric who grabbed his shirt but didn’t have a good enough grip to hold Allen back. Allen broke free and took off running with his backpack bouncing wildly on his shoulders in the direction he thought Lavi’s classroom was.

Crap! How am I going to hide my eye from Cross, Allen panicked. He could already feel his eye swelling shut and it wouldn’t be long before it had an ugly bruise on it. He wondered if Anita or any of Cross’s other mistresses happened to leave some make-up behind, he could try and cover it up if the swelling wasn’t too bad. He thought about moving his hair over one side of his face, but he felt it wasn’t long enough for that.

Allen dared a glance behind him, happy to see that the boys had not followed him. When he turned around, he figured out it didn’t matter because he realized he had bigger problems to deal with. He was lost. He was so freaking lost! This was nowhere near Lavi’s classroom! He doubted he was even in the elementary kid section of the school!

Allen sniffled and felt his bottom lip begin to quiver as he looked around at his unfamiliar surroundings. He whimpered, trying to take deep breaths in hopes it’ll keep him from beginning to cry but he found his emotions to be too overwhelming. His eye hurt, people kept trying to take off his gloves and bothering him, and now Cross was going to find out about it and become angry at him for not telling him sooner, then he was going to raise hell with the school and make it worse for him because they’ll want revenge. He was fine with the insults, the weird looks, and the whispers, he was used to it wherever he went, but he was concerned that the bullies were now becoming physical. It made him scared. What if others joined in? What if the older kids joined in? He couldn’t fight back, he promised Mana he wouldn’t! He would be good! He would be kind! He wanted to be like Mana!

Allen whimpered again as he shuffled around the hallway, trying to find something he recognized.
Anything. Was it possible that he could get locked in here for the night? He hoped not. The thought of that only made him begin to cry harder.

Meanwhile Lavi was in full-fledged panicked older brother mode and was currently running around the school in search of Allen. He knew Allen had zero sense of direction and got lost very easily. It was his job as his first bestest friend (well at least he designated himself as his bestest best friend in the whole universe) and designated older brother (also something he labeled himself as) to make sure Allen returned back home unscathed and on time. Lavi decided to go to the first place he thought Allen could be at, which were the bathrooms. Perhaps, he just needed to use the bathroom while waiting for Lavi, maybe he was just freaking out over nothing! However, when he got there, his heart sunk when he saw no Allen to be found there.

“Allen!? Allen where are you buddy!? Dude now is not the time to play hide and seek! Gramps is going to kill me and when he’s done your father is going to kill me again! Then Lenalee is going to kill me! I’ll be barely unrecognizable dude! Allen where are you!?” Lavi shouted, thinking of the worst. What if he was kidnapped? I mean there were some pretty suspicious looking janitors around here that would probably love to kidnap little boys. Maybe he was abducted by aliens! If that was true than the whole school was in danger! Sure, he could probably rescue Allen, but his brain might be scrambled or something! Damn it!

“Allen! Where are you!? I got gold fish crackers! I could buy you a donut on the way home! Maybe a hot chocolate!? Tea!? Candy bar!? Dude come on I don’t have a lot of allowance to go off of here. Work with me!” Lavi shouted, deciding he would just shout out food names in hopes his little white-haired friend would return to him because of his enormous appetite.

“Spaghetti! Ramen! Soba! Mac and cheese! Big Mac! Roast beef! Stir Fry! Meatloaf! Fried rice! Sweet and sour chicken! Lucky Charms! Strawberry shortcake!”

Meanwhile Allen was still wandering around, figuring he was probably in the middle school and high school section of the school since he didn’t recognize a thing. It didn’t help that he thought he heard a far away voice shouting out food items which reminded him that he was super hungry. Now Allen was bawling his eyes out. If he was stuck here for the night, he could at least probably feed himself with cafeteria food, but the problem was that he didn’t even know where that was at!

Lavi stopped shouting out food items, taking a moment to see if he could hear Allen’s voice. What surprised him was when he heard faint crying off in the distance. Oh, that definitely wasn’t good!

“Allen!? Allen are you okay!? Bud follow the sound of my voice!” Lavi shouted, sprinting off in the direction of the crying.

Allen sniffled, momentarily halting his crying in recognition of the voice that was shouting food items. Oh…oh that was Lavi’s voice!

“Lavi!?”, Allen shouted, wiping his face before running towards where Lavi’s voice seemed to be coming from.

“Allen!” Lavi shouted back, happy that he found his friend. However, he didn’t slow down in his excitement and ended up colliding with Allen and sending them both tumbling to the floor.

“Crap! Sorry man! Are you oka-What the heck happened to your eye!? Did I do that!? Oh, dude I am so sorry!” Lavi yelped, holding Allen’s face in his hands as he peered at the younger’s eye that had swelled shut.

“N-No! You didn’t do anything! I’m fine! Eric punched me in the face when you were gone, he’s a classmate of mine, listen Lavi you can’t tell Cross! It’s fine. It doesn’t hurt that bad. Look you have
to help me hide this from him or he’ll explode!” Allen explained.

“Allen, we can’t just hide this! They hurt you! That’s against school rules! Why didn’t you come find me!?”

“I tried to! But I got lost! Lavi, please Cross can’t find out about this! Nobody can! It’ll only make it worse, they’ll want revenge! Besides I can’t prove anything! It was only once! I’ll talk to them—“ Allen pleaded, but he saw a dangerous look cross Lavi’s eye and before he knew it Lavi had gotten up, dragging Allen along by his arm.

“Fine. We won’t tell Cross but they’re not getting away with this without something happening to them. Come on. You’re going to show me where their lockers are. Then, we’re gonna go to my house and we’ll put some ice on your eye. I think I got make-up somewhere to cover up the bruising,” Lavi responded, his voice low.

“Their lockers? Lavi, what are you planning to do?” Allen asked, almost tripping over his own feet.

“Nothing. It won’t hurt them. That bad. You let me worry about it.”

“Lavi, you can’t hurt them! Hurting people is wrong!”

“Well clearly not everyone else shares that view Allen, so maybe a little karma will make them have a change of heart!” Lavi snapped, his anger getting the best of him. Allen pouted and he looked about ready to start bawling again. Lavi felt his heart break and he felt his willpower crumble.

“Alright. Fine. I won’t do anything but if they do it again or hurt you even worse then I will do something. I don’t care what you say! Nobody will continue to hurt my pal and get away with it! You’re way too nice to people for your own good Al.” Lavi sighed, disappointed that he wouldn’t be planting stink bombs in people’s lockers tomorrow morning, but that seemed to be what Allen needed to hear to keep from crying all over again. That was something at least…though Lavi swore he’d get his revenge later in a way that wouldn’t upset Allen.

So Lavi took Allen back to his house to help him try to hide his black eye before Cross picked him up. Sadly, even with their best efforts, you could still see something was wrong with his eye. On the bright side, Allen could open his eye and they managed to cover up the bruising, the bad side was that he couldn’t open it all the way normally.

“You could always just tell him you got hit with a dodgeball or ran into something,” Lavi suggested.

“Do you honestly think he’d buy that?”

“It’s worth a shot dude. I don’t know what else to tell you. I don’t have any replacement eyes to let you borrow if you haven’t noticed.”

Allen sighed, deciding that that was probably the best he was going to be able to do. Why couldn’t they just punch him in the stomach? Why did it have to be the eye of all things?

“Sorry dude. I’m telling you, it’s easier to just tell the truth.”

“Cross can’t know about this. I can handle it myself.”

“What if you can’t?”
“Are you doubting me Lavi!? I’m not that weak!”

“Dude, I don’t doubt you. I’ve seen you fight with Kanda. I know you can fight back. You were outnumbered though. That’s a totally different situation!”

“Maybe I can talk to them, not everything needs to be solved with violence! Kanda is just different!”

“Dude, I’m sorry but I tried talking to those bratty kids. They won’t listen to words.”

“Then I’ll make them listen,” Allen protested back in determination.

Lavi sighed, knowing he wasn’t going to get anywhere with Allen right now,” Okay. If you think so, then I’m here to support you.”

“Allen! Your father is here for you!” Bookman called out from a nearby room, making the two boys look up in alarm. Lavi shoved the foundation they were using to cover up his eye into Allen’s backpack and handed it to him, “You’re going to need it for school. You don’t have only Cross to worry about ya know. If Lena finds out, she’ll start a freaking riot.”

“Thanks, Lavi! I knew I could count on you!” Allen smiled as he took his backpack gratefully before bounding over to Lavi’s front door to meet Cross who was already standing there looking down at his little imp. However, he knew instantly something was off. First, Allen wasn’t directly looking up at him. Second, one eye looked like it was squinting more than the other one.

“Oi brat, is your eye bothering you?” Cross asked, bending down to grab the kid’s chin to force him to look directly at him. He caught the flash of nervousness cross over his features and his eyes narrowed. It was very hard to get anything passed Cross. Maybe he wouldn’t know exactly what was wrong, but he knew when something was off somewhere, that was why he was good in the law enforcement field.

“Uhhh….yeah. But it’s fine. It’s just a little sore. I poked my eye with the back of my pencil earlier today,” Allen said, coming up with a lie that he thought sounded convincing. Cross narrowed his eyes further, studying him closer. After a few moments of staring into Allen’s soul, Cross seemed satisfied and he let his little victim go, “God you’re such a clumsy fool at times. Get in the car.”

“What the hell are you staring at you little butt pirate,” Cross growled, though Lavi had been around Cross long enough by now that his words meant nothing, and it was just his way of greeting people.

“Nothing. You just smell different when you are awake,” Lavi shrugged before returning to his room and closing the door.

“And then he wonders why I call him that,” Cross said, shaking his head as he got up to follow Allen to the car, shouting his thanks to Lavi’s grandfather for watching over him.

Once Bookman was sure the door was closed to the outside word, he shouted out, “Alright Lavi! Mind explaining to me why Allen walked in with a black eye?”

Lavi froze behind the door of his room. Dammit. Cross wasn’t the only one that could see all.

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Luckily for Allen the bullies seemed to have backed off a little bit over the next few days, giving his black eye time to heal. Cross kept staring at Allen and looking him funny, making the younger paranoid and touch his eye self-consciously. Once the swelling went down Cross seemed to relax
and little bit more and Allen felt like he could breathe again. In fact, he was actually excited about school, especially with the new project his teacher assigned them all to do. They were supposed to give a report in front of the class based on their heritage, where they came from, etc. This excited Allen because he thought this would be a great opportunity to try and show his class where he came from, to explain why he was so ‘weird’. He thought maybe he would be accepted more. Kids loved circuses after all, and he could try to make up a lie to explain why he had white hair and the weird scar on his face dealing with working at the circus. He wouldn’t talk about his deformed arm or the abuse he faced working at the circus, he would simply show off his performing talents that Mana had taught him like juggling or stepping on a ball and balancing on it. Simple things like that. They had about a week to put it together to present in front of the class which meant Allen had plenty of time to practice, I mean it’s been a while and he was a little rusty.

Cross didn’t bat an eyelash when Allen was practicing in the living room, although he warned him that if he fell and cracked open his head, he was going to let him lay there and die. Cross already used to seeing the boy contort himself as it was when he slept, so other than the usual wince or throwing a circus ball at him when he asked for it, Allen was free to practice. Cross didn’t know this brat was going to do a report and tell the whole class about his past. If he knew that, he would’ve at least let Allen know the consequences he may face if he decided to go about it. He wasn’t going to force the kid to pretend to be something he wasn’t, if he wanted to show off his talents then he wasn’t going to stop him.

So, when a week rolled around, Cross was surprised to get a call that said Allen had left Lavi at the school in a rush, apparently wanting to try and walk home himself. Thankfully when Cross sped home he was met with the sound of the shower running and loud sobbing and not the sounds of an empty house. Once his relief of finding his brat home faded, it was replaced with concern because Allen wasn’t the type of brat to cry this hard over just some little trivial kid problem. I mean he did, but it sure as hell wasn’t often.

Cross sped over to the bathroom door, knocking on it loudly and twisting the door knob to find it was locked, “Oi brat! Allen!? What’s wrong!? Allen let me in! Don’t make me grab the keys! You better not be hurting yourself in there!”

“Leave me alone!” Allen shrieked.

“Not until you tell me what the fuck is wrong!”

“Leave!”

“What the fuck, he left you out of there to?” Cross questioned, seeing Tim fly around and bump up against the door in concern for his little companion, “I’m getting the key. Stay here.”

It took a few moments to find the bathroom key in his junk drawer but soon Cross was back at the bathroom door giving Allen one final warning to open the door. Cross heard his shout of protest and decided to break into the bathroom uninvited. He reached over to the shower handle and turned the water off which was freezing cold.

“What the fuck? Why are you using cold water!? You’re going to make yourself sick,” Cross cursed, staring at Allen’s younger body to assess the damage. He had some deep scratches down his chest and some lighter ones on his neck. Allen’s fingernails were currently gouging deep scratches in his deformed arm. Cross cursed again and grabbed a dry towel down in the cabinet under the sink before grabbing Allen and wrapping it around him.
“Let go of your arm,” Cross responded softly, trying to pry his fingers away from it, “Let go Allen! Allen you’re hurting yourself! Stop! There we go. Calm your shit, you’re okay. I’m here now. Easy. Calm down so you can tell me what the fuck happened.”

Allen tried to explain what happened, but he was sobbing too hard to get anything coherent across.

Cross turned over to Tim and shouted at the little golem, “Do you know what happened?”

The man sighed when the golem shook his head no. Of course, he wouldn’t, he was probably shoved in Allen’s backpack all day.

“Breathe kid. Worry about breathing instead of talking right now,” Cross responded, patting Allen’s back a few times when he began coughing from how upset he was. Cross searched around for the first aid kit and began to clean and treat Allen’s scratches while he waited for him to calm down.

“No more of this bull shit. If you feel like hurting yourself, you come talk to me. If I’m not around, you call me. Do you understand? Remember what your therapist said? If you have feelings you can’t handle then you need to talk to someone, none of this self-harm bull shit. I’m here to protect you and provide for you dammit do not make my job any harder by clamming up and making me worry about you,” Cross growled out as he bandaged up his wounds. The worst of the scratches were on his deformed arm. (I know I haven’t made a chapter explaining the therapist thing yet. I will one day)

“Alright, let’s get you dressed,” Cross sighed out, holding the shivering child against him. He was ice cold. Once he saw to it Allen wasn’t going to die from hypothermia or some shit, he walked off to kitchen to make the brat some hot chocolate. The good shit to, not the instant bull crap that people make because they’re lazy (although Cross has been there and done that many times so like he could talk). Cross rocked Allen as he waited for the warm milk to heat up, letting him have a few more minutes to relax before he finally asked,” Alright. So, what the fuck happened? Before you start, don’t bother with the whole it’s fine, I got it handled tirade. It clearly isn’t fine if you’ve broke down this badly. Don’t sugar coat a damn thing, and I want an actually decent and plausible explanation for that eye of years a couple weeks ago to. Actually, let’s start there, Bookman told me you got a black eye. How’d you get it?”

“I got punched from one of the kids at school. I don’t know why, they just walked up and punched me and called me a freak,” Allen sniffled.

“Why the fuck didn’t you tell me?”

“Cuz you’d get angry?”

“So not telling me and having me find out from Bookman was better than just telling me and getting this shit sorted out? We had a promise. I trusted you to tell me if something was going wrong.”

“I wanted to handle it,” Allen pouted, his eyes filling with tears again.

“Allen, you already handled how much shit already, by yourself, on the streets, in the damn circus. Now you have people you can depend on. Use them. There should be no need for you to get beat up anymore than you have before Mana found you. There should be no need for a child your age to get the shit beat out of him as much as you have in the first place. This is your chance to be able to act like a fucking kid. You shouldn’t have to worry about being beat up and bullied at school, you shouldn’t need to handle that shit. At least not alone. Not like I have. That shit fucks up a person
and you are not going to turn out to be a fuck up like me if I have anything to do about it. So what else happened?"

“I got an F for the report I had to do in front of the class today, she wouldn’t even let me finish it. I barely even started it. It was supposed to be about where we came from, our heritage, our parent’s backgrounds and I was going to talk about Mana and how he taught me how to perform. I was going to show them the tricks I learned from him. I thought maybe they would think I was cool instead of weird. Once I started talking about working in a circus, she interrupted me and said she didn’t accept made up, wild stories like mine. She embarrassed me in front of everyone and said I would be getting an F. Everyone laughed at me. Then in gym class, I got distracted and one of the boys pulled off my glove and everyone saw my stupid messed up hand- “Allen said, tears beginning to roll down his face as he remembered the way everyone’s faces turned pale, how they stared at him like he was some kind of monster. One of the girls was on the verge of fainting and several others began to run away and cry, all except Lenalee. Kanda was shocked but stood his ground, instead looking at the chaos ensuing around them. Alma meanwhile ran towards Allen, tears in his eyes as he asked if Allen was okay. Of course, he wasn’t…and for once since he’s met them, he didn’t pretend he was. He just walked away and said he was going back to the classroom.

“I’m such a freak,” Allen choked out.

“You are not a freak!”

“Well I’m certainly not normal!”

“So, what!? There’s no such thing as being normal! Humans are so fucking complex that there is literally no actual normal! Everyone is different! The side of my face is messed up, your brat friend’s eye is messed up, Komui’s little sister has strange markings on her feet, Komui is a complete whack job at times, does that make us freaks?”

“Well you cover up your face!”

“I still look weird out in public! I’m just considerate enough to not make everyone see the jacked-up side of my face except for people who are not complete assholes! Just because you have some weird article of clothing, some weird hair color or weird mark on your face doesn’t make you a freak! Shit just happens with no explanation behind them! People have differences and some people are just so full of themselves and think they’re absolutely fucking perfect that they have to shove it into other people’s faces and make them feel bad over something that they can’t control. You are human! You have emotions and you are just like every other kid your age. It doesn’t matter if your arm doesn’t look like everyone else’s or your face doesn’t look like everyone else’s or your hair! You are a talented, good and polite little boy and you have friends who care about you and love you! Those assholes have nothing going for them and while you and your friends are out there kicking ass and taking name, they’re going to sit there and rethink all the nasty fucking shit they did when they were younger.” Cross lectured, surprised that he could even manage to sound this motivational. Shit. Why couldn’t he motivate himself like this when he was a kid?

“Alright,” Cross responded awkwardly,””Uhh so yeah. Don’t call yourself a freak, that word is now banned from being used in this household and since I am an adult, I can make rules like that!”

“O-Okay…” Allen trailed off, his eyes wide in shock as he looked up at Cross who smirked pridefully at the way Allen looked up him.

“Didn’t think I could be so inspirational?” Cross questioned, going from prideful to slightly disturbed,” I didn’t think so either. What the hell. Don’t make me do that again, at least not anytime soon. I don’t want to sound like Tiedoll.”
Cross busied himself with making a cup of hot chocolate for the two of them, thinking over how he was going to approach Allen’s teacher with the fact that she’s a fucking bitch for what she did and assuming Allen was making up his story. He couldn’t be a total asshole, because that would only make Allen’s life a living hell. As much as he’d love the beat the snot out of those brats that fucked around with kid, he knew that wasn’t legal and being thrown into jail would not be a good idea. Cross couldn’t think of anything nice to say at the moment to the teacher, so he decided to keep his mouth shut, and drink his hot chocolate. Judging from the way Allen’s eyes were unfocusing and how his grip was loosening on his almost finished mug of hot chocolate, he decided a nap was in order.

“You better not be thinking of spilling that shit on me. Drink it up, you only have a little bit left,” Cross said, eyeing Allen warily who thankfully woke up long enough to finish it and shove it against Cross’s face as if to say, ‘here take it.’ Cross gave a deadpanned look but took the mug anyways, set it in the sink and adjusted his hold on the child. Timcanpy, deciding he also wanted to partake in napping, fluttered over and bumped his face against Allen’s head who was beginning to nod off. Allen wrapped an arm around Tim and brought him to his body who made a sound that sort of resembled a purr if Cross had to label it.

So, Cross walked over to the couch, grabbed a blanket and laid down. Cross grunted in discomfort when Allen decided to move around to get comfortable and ended up jabbing his knee into his rib cage and nearly upper cutting his face when he stretched himself out and curled back into a ball. “Comfy?” Cross said with an annoyed blink, earning a content little sigh from the younger. Cross promptly rolled his eyes before passing the fuck out.

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Cross smirked from the back of the room, watching the teacher nearly have a stroke as she watched Allen at the front of the room balance on a ball and catch the random things Lenalee and Alma threw at him as he explained what it was like to grow up in and circus, and later on performing on the streets with a clown named Mana Walker. After some very strong words, Cross managed to convince Allen’s teacher to let him redo his report. Of course, he didn’t trust her or the kids in his class to act like decent audience members, so he invited himself to watch him do the report from afar, making sure the teacher kept to her promise. Kanda sulked in the corner because he wasn’t allowed to throw anything at Allen because he threw things too hard, although he couldn’t hide that he was impressed with Allen showing off. Of course, one of the kids couldn’t resist trying to ruin Allen’s focus during his report and threw a pencil at him in hopes of making him fall. As Cross resisted the urge to strangle the kid, Allen caught the pencil effortlessly and began juggling it with the other items he had like it was all a part of the act. The kid looked honestly disappointed that he hadn’t messed up Allen’s performance and Cross couldn’t resist a shit eating grin.

Of course, Allen had no intention of balancing on a ball and juggling shit throughout his whole report. So, once he grew bored of that and discarded the items he was juggling; he proceeded to bend over backwards and place his head between his legs before resting his hands on his hands as he continued the last part of his report without batting an eyelash. Cross winced, hearing some of his bones pop in response and even saw some of his classmates, shiver in disgust but Allen simply smirked at their disgust as he finished his report.

“Thank you. Any questions?” Allen asked politely, “By the way whoever threw that cool pencil at me, it’s mine now. You should know better than to distract a performer, that’s very rude.”

One little girl raised her hand timidly and Allen smiled politely up at her to let her know he was listening.
“How long can you stay like that?”

“I slept like this a couple of time, so I’d say as long as I wanted.”

“Doesn’t it hurt?”

“It hurt the first couple of times I did it, and it hurts if I don’t do it in a while so yes and no.”

“What the worse thing you ever seen happen during a show?” Kanda blurted out. Of course, he wanted to hear gory stories, but Cross had to admit he was curious to.

Allen thought it over for a bit before deciding on one story, “I can’t really choose just one. I saw a firebreather light his whole body up once and then an animal tamer was mauled by one of the lions. We were not a very good circus show until Mana showed up. We had more successful shows than unsuccessful ones, but not as many successful shows as other traveling circuses out there.”

“Can you do my make-up sometime?” Lenalee asked next.

“Why do you want to look like a clown?” one of the brats sneered.

“Sure Lenalee! Also, I don’t do only clown make-up,” Allen smiled politely though he was irritated that people would think he’d have such a narrow skill set. He repositioned himself, so he was standing like a normal person again before responding cockily, “You can’t survive in show business with such a narrow set of skills.”

Once Allen saw to it there were not anymore questions, he returned to his seat with a smug little grin, although he wasn’t the only one basking in his smugness. Cross walked out of the classroom with pride for his kid. Take that you fucking bitch, that’s what you get for calling my brat a liar, Cross thought victoriously as he made his merry way to the principal’s office to handle and discuss the bullying that occurring to his brat. He knew he couldn’t be there to win all of Allen’s battles, and perhaps just one simple visit to the principal’s office wouldn’t be enough, but at least he was trying to do something about it. There was no changing people’s asshole kids, but at least Cross would hopefully be more aware of it and can help in any way possible to make it less of an occurrence.

Chapter End Notes

(Merry Late Christmas! Hope you enjoyed this one. Next chapter I am hoping to introduce Link! Or at least a snippet of him and then perhaps write Krory and Miranda’s date so stay tuned! Feel free to shoot me any suggestions! Have a Happy New Year if I don’t write a new chapter by then!)
Allen Gets A Secret Admirer

Chapter Summary

LINK HOWARD FINALLY MAKES HIS APPEARANCE THANK THE LORD!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY LINK HOWARD! I LOVE YOU! Lavi is also jealous and Cross
is such a proud dad.

Chapter Notes

(Link is around 11 in this drabble and he is in Lavi’s class for frame of reference)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

So, the next couple of weeks of school went by with not too many problems. People still whispered
behind his back and there were a few stupid remarks by Allen’s bullies, but they weren’t being
physical with him. The thing that took up the forefront of the little boy’s mind was the upcoming
Christmas concert, on the one hand he was excited, on the other hand he was super nervous about
having people’s eyes on him. Back when he performed with Mana, he didn’t have the scar on his
face or the white hair. He looked like a normal kid as long as he covered up his arm. Now he didn’t
look like a normal kid and he didn’t know if a good singing voice was going to keep the weird
stares off of him.

It didn’t matter how many times Lenalee, Alma, Noise Marie, Kanda (begrudgingly) or Cross told
him that he had a beautiful singing voice. He still looked weird, he was still something that may be
feared because of his appearance.

“Just pretend everyone is in their underwear! I’ve heard that can help people sometimes!” Alma
suggested one day.

“Just listen to the piano playing. Pretend it’s just you and me in this room with nobody else. The
music is up there with you,” Noise Marie suggested another day.

“We’ll be right there behind you. You won’t be alone. We’ll be rooting for you, especially Lavi,
right Kanda!?” Lenalee said cheerfully to which Kanda grunted oh so cheerfully at her statement,
after another day of practice.

“You could just find me out in the crowd and pretend you’re just singing to me,” Cross suggested a
couple days before the concert, “That or stare at the wall and pretend you’re looking at the crowd.”

“You’re going!?”

“Well now I am! It’s a good thing I’m used to making plans at the last minute!”

“You’re only going to hit on the hot teachers!”

“Do you really think that low of me? I mean yeah that is part of reason…but I’m going there to
support you to because that’s was parents of children do! Apparently! Besides, my parents never did it for me and I’ll be damned if you experience the same thing so there! Also, Tiedoll would kill me.”

“Mr. T isn’t that bad.”

“You haven’t seen him when he’s angry. He’s gentle and nice around kiddos, not so much with grown ass adults.”

So now it was the night of the concert and Allen was standing in the bathroom with butterflies in his stomach, waiting for Cross to get tired of him wasting time and dragging him off back to the school for the concert. Allen fussed with his dress shirt, scared that his red arm was going to show through the white sleeves. Perhaps he should wear a jacket…but what if it got warm? He didn’t want to end up fainting or something stupid like that!

“Brat! Are you ready to go? You’re going to be late!” Cross called out, tearing Allen from his thoughts. Allen took a deep breath before walking out the bathroom door to face the music. Literally and metaphorically.

“You look great kid, don’t sweat it. Though a white shirt was kind of a stupid idea. You look like a ghost or something,” Cross commented with a pout, “Oh well. Too late to change it now, but for future reference a darker color would be better.”

“You can’t see my arm through this can you?”

“No. Stop worrying about it, kid. It’s going to be fine and if any of the other parents start shit, I’m right there with you. A couple of grown ass whiners don’t scare me. They wouldn’t fuck with a cop,” Cross responded confidently.

Allen fidgeted with his hands as he followed Cross nervously out the door and to the car.

“Also, I’m so videotaping the whole thing and you can’t stop me,” Cross laughed, moving quickly to the driver’s side before Allen could try to swat at him in protest.

“No, you can’t! What if I do something stupid!?”

“You won’t do anything stupid! Besides I promised Tiedoll I would! He’s trusting me to do this for him!”

“He’s going to be there! Why couldn’t he do it?”

“He’s not good with technology.”

“Why is he trusting you of all people to do it!?”

“I don’t know. Kind of weird huh?” Cross agreed with a shit eating smirk, waiting until Allen was in the car before he started it up and began the small drive back to the school. The drive sadly, didn’t go as slow as Allen would’ve liked and before he knew it, Cross and himself parted ways with Cross telling him to remember to breathe and that he would meet up with him afterwards. That left Allen to hang out with his friends in the classroom before their teacher led them down to the gym where the stage was decorated, and rafters and microphones were set up. That was the first thing Allen registered upon walking through the double doors of the gym and following his classmates to their assigned section to wait until their classes’ turn. The second thing he registered made his heart sink down to his stomach and escape through the toe of his shoes at the amount of people waiting for the concert to start. The bleachers were filled to the brim with people and Allen
was actually scared to death Cross wouldn’t even be there. He hated crowds almost as much as Allen did.

“Hey! I see Komui! Allen you didn’t tell me Cross was going to be here to! He’s right next to him! See?” Lenalee pointed out excitedly from behind him when they sat down to scan the crowd as the rest of the elementary classes filed in. Allen squinted, trying to figure out where Lenalee was pointing, “Hey guys Reever and Johnny are here too! So is Tiedoll and Daisya!”

“Of course, he’d freakin be here,” Kanda growled from beside her,”Daisya looks so pissed off right now.”

“Yeah, he hates these things. I guess he thought he would be able to avoid them now that he’s in middle school,” Alma sighed, “We should make it up to him when we get home Yuu.”

“Why should we!? He knows he wouldn’t be able to since we’re still stuck here for another three years and Tiedoll is a total weirdo when it comes to supporting your siblings so we’re going to have to all be here to support Marie,” Kanda bitched.

“Oh my god look at Lavi,” Lenalee laughed at Lavi, being quite comfortable with being a total weirdo proceeded to shout at the top of his lungs at Bookman in the crowd and grinning like an idiot. God, Lavi could be so immature sometimes, but sometimes his antics were funny and adorable.

Allen nodded and smiled, distracted by there being so many people and he was so very certain they were all beginning to stare at him.

“Don’t worry Allen, you’ll do amazing. We heard you practicing all these weeks and you sounded amazing! They’ll love you!” Lenalee said excitedly. Easy for her to say. She wasn’t right up front, being forced to stand there in front of a bunch of people. He wondered if he could still be burned for fear of being a witch in this time period. It didn’t help that when the concert started, they had to sit through two classes, so Allen was filled with more and more anticipation. The pitchy, squeaking voices of some of the kids was driving him up a wall with more anxiety to. Honestly sometimes he thought the kids tried to outdo each other in who could sing the loudest and awfulest. He got that they were still young and trying to still control their voices but was it really that necessary to screech like that?

When it was his classes turn, he felt himself shrink down a little bit in fear and began to sweat. Oh, shit they were looking at me. They were all looking at the weird boy with white hair and a weird scar on his face. He could feel their stares of repulsion and he almost made a bee line out the gym to avoid the stares until he caught Cross’s face in the crowd. Just pretend you are singing towards me and your friends, no one else, he heard in the back of his head. That seemed to calm him down, especially when he saw Johnny whom he’s gotten quite close to over the months since he knew him. He was around Krory and Miranda’s age, but he was still a super nice guy and was easy to talk to.

However, when the music started the kid that was next time immediately began to screech his head off, right into Allen’s eardrum. Sure, he’s been doing this for the past several weeks and Allen was used to it by now, but this time he seemed to be putting even more effort into it than usual. Allen’s eyes narrowed and pouted, deciding not to sing along with the class because the piano and everything was drowned out by the foul noise coming from this shrimp’s pie hole.

Cross seemed to find this extremely amusing as he watched his brat produce the most fed up, annoyed expression he had ever seen come across his tiny face. Johnny shot him a look of sympathy, even Reever cringed from his seat. One good thing about this brat screaming a
Christmas song in his ear was that he was so fed up with it that his nervousness dissipated completely. Okay then, fine, he was going to show these people and this little twit was real singing sounded like! If he wanted a screaming match to the death then that was fine, but Allen wasn’t going to be the one screaming his little head off. Oh no. He was going to wait until his solo to show off what he was capable of. Maybe then this kid will finally stop trying to make his ears bleed.

So, Allen stood up there, eyes narrowed in annoyance, letting the kid shriek into his ear in absolute silence until Noise Marie motioned him towards the microphone for his solo. He was performing ‘Believe’ from the Polar Express movie, which he already watched out of curiosity at hearing the song being sung by its original composer. He found that he really liked the movie and watched it a few more times, although he already knew Santa Claus didn’t exist. He knew that since he was what three? Four? Either way, it was still an interesting, magical movie that got him in the Christmas spirit.

Allen stepped up confidently to the microphone, no longer caring what this crowd thought of him. At this point he was so dead set on showing off to the brat who had been pissing him off to no end for the past several weeks that he could care less if he looked like a walking freakshow. He liked to sing and damn it he was going to fucking sing whether this crowd liked how he looked or not!

So, Allen had no problem belting out the lyrics in a voice that surely should not belong to such a pipsqueak second grader like Allen. That was what Link thought as he sat there, in his usual stoic, bored expression. His eyes lit up in surprise and interest however when he heard Allen’s voice that sounded like…well I know this is cliché, but like an angel from heaven. He never heard a voice like his before and the young Link Howard couldn’t help but lean forward in his seat as he continued to listen. It took a lot to interest Link Howard, or at least that’s what Lavi liked to think. Link was quite simple actually. He just had a hard time sharing the same interests as his peers. As far as he knew, nobody liked to bake like he did, nobody liked to take care of his siblings like he did, and nobody liked dancing like he did. So, Link didn’t have any friends in class, which was fine by him. It was a waste of time anyways. He had all the socializing he needed with his siblings.

You’d think Link would be subjected to bullies, right? Especially since he had two red dots smack dab in the center of his forehead. Wrong. Nobody dared to mess with Link because his father was the town mayor, a very powerful, charismatic man. Of course, Link had never referred to Leverrier as ‘father’. In fact, they didn’t even live together. Link lived with his siblings in a separate house though Leverrier would stop by and visit from time to time. He was much too busy to be with his ‘children’, but that was fine by Link. He was perfectly capable of taking care of himself and his five siblings, for he did that when he lived on the streets with them. Nobody also dared to mess with Link because one day someone decided to pick on Kiredori. Well, Link was standing right there when it happened and the next thing that bully knew was that he was on his ass with Link looming above him with glowing red eyes, filled to the brim with malice, restrained with ease by the boy. Link simply told the bully he was to not pick on Kiredori any longer or any of his siblings if he wished to have his limbs intact any longer.

That was a story that spread around the school like wildfire and thanks to Leverrier, Link got off scot free. That was the day kids realized that Link may be a quiet, studious, calm child, but he had many surprises. He was sort of the class phenomenon. All the class knew about Link was that he liked to bake, he was amazing at it, he was a great dancer and excelled at competitions, he was super smart, he had five siblings, and he was not to be messed with at all costs. All the girls fawned over Link because he was ‘so mature for his age’. Well, Link probably deemed them as not being mature enough for him and did not show any interest whatsoever. So, it came to Lavi’s surprise to see those red eyes come alight with interest at his best friend’s singing. It wasn’t every day you got to see Link Howard become so animated! Of course, Lavi couldn’t blame him, this was the first
time he heard Allen sing and he was floored! Who wouldn’t be!? How could such a rich, smooth voice come from some second grader!?  

Allen of course, wasn’t paying attention to anyone’s reactions, instead he was too busy singing the song and enjoying the sound of Marie’s piano playing to really care. So, when the song finally finished, and he looked at the crowd, he was met with utter shock and silence. Oh crap. Did he do something wrong? Suddenly the nervousness that had been chased away moments before, returned full force and he was preparing himself to run before he jumped out of his skin at the sound of applause and whistling. He was pretty sure he heard a ‘Fuck yeah!’ in the background, which may have been Cross. He wasn’t sure. All he knew was that he was surprised that the audience actually liked it, and it was a little overstimulating. All he could manage was a tiny, timid smile and a wave before returning to his spot on the rafters. He was thankful that they could finally leave and return to their section after performing, his body felt wiped out and he felt a little dizzy from the adrenaline rush it had given him. He could barely pay attention to Lenalee who was babbling excitedly with Alma about how good Allen did, and how they swore he nearly made Kanda cry from his singing. Of course, Kanda immediately told them to shut up and said that it wasn’t him who cried, but it was Tiedoll! Like always (for Tiedoll was a soft-hearted man)!  

“Did you even see Cross!? Dude he was beaming! I’ve never seen him pumped up like that before!” Alma said excitedly.  

“I don’t think anyone has, my brother certainly was surprised,” Lenalee laughed, “He must really love you Allen!”  

“Nah, he’s just drunk out of his skull,” Allen tried to brush it off, but he was feeling all warm and blushy at the thought. He wasn’t the only one feeling warm and blushy though, Link was…well he was acting stranger than Link usually acted. He was actually blushing first of all and his red brown eyes softened in a way Lavi had never seen before when he finally locked onto the person whose voice he had been listening to. Lavi felt himself burn a little on the inside at how Link was looking at his bestest best bro in the entire universe. Lavi had no problem sharing Allen with Lenalee, Kanda, Alma, or the rest of their friend group, only because Allen would usually sit beside him and hang out with him the most. He didn’t know Link very well though, and he sure as hell didn’t want some blonde-braided pompous asshole to take his Allen away from him!  

Allen was not aware of the newly built tension in the fifth-grade class, nor was he aware that he had acquired a secret admirer. He was too tired to really pay much attention, or keep awake, as Lenalee kept having to shake him awake throughout the rest of the concert. Link found himself watching Allen intently, watching the way his eyes would flutter closed as he began to nod off before they snapped open at Lenalee shaking him awake, until it was the fifth-grader’s turn to go up on the rafters. Even then, he found it hard to concentrate on what he was doing because he couldn’t stop thinking about the little white-haired second grader. He just wanted to get this done and over with, so he could keep looking at the cute little second grader with unnatural fluffy hair and the red, beautiful scar that stood out against the side of his face.  

His face looked as smooth and white as a porcelain doll’s and though many were taken aback by the large scar on that childish face, Link felt a need to gently trace it over with a finger, enamored that even such a painful looking wound could look so beautiful. The way the red stood out against his pale face was so perfect. The boy was so small to. He looked so fragile and Link always had a weakness when it came to young children. His siblings usually called him ‘mother’ or ‘mama’ because he acted like such a mother hen. He couldn’t help it. He adored his little siblings and he adored little children. However, this was a little different. Link didn’t feel like how he did when he was around the ‘littles’ at home. Oh no, he felt something different towards this child. His heart was beating rapidly, and he found that his stomach sort of flip flopped whenever he looked at him.
But what could it be? It couldn’t be love. Link didn’t like boys. Link didn’t like anyone actually. Nobody interested him. But this child…this child was something else…and it kind of scared Link.

So, when their performance was finally over, Link quickly left his class behind for the sole purpose of rounding up his siblings, but also to see if he could catch another glimpse of the boy with the angelic sounding voice. He had to at least figure out his name!

Lavi narrowed his eyes at Link’s retreating form distrustfully, but sadly, he was sort of the class clown/troublemaker, so he couldn’t exactly run after him. No, sadly Lavi was under the watchful eye of the fifth-grade teacher. He didn’t mind it too much though. She was really smoking hot. However, at a time like this he was kind of annoyed by it and inwardly cursed himself and his prankster ways. He wanted to keep an eye on Link and figure out what his intentions with his bestest buddy were.

Link was disappointed when he found out walking ahead of his classmates for a chance to steal one more glimpse at the white-haired beauty were all for naught. All there were was a sea of kids and no white head of hair in the midst of them. Well surely it couldn’t be too hard to hear his name somewhere. He wasn’t the only one who was shocked by his singing after all. Link was relieved when he actually tuned into people’s conversations (something he didn’t do very often as eavesdropping was rude, and he also was not interested), trying to find out which two words came up the most often, specifically a name, a first and last name.

“Dude, did you hear that kid? No way he could sing like that! He must be faking!”

“He’s that weird new kid in second grade. There’s no way he could fake it. The microphone wasn’t rigged at all!”

“I heard from one of my friends that he can bend in weird positions. He can also juggle and balance on balls!”

“Yeah! I’ve actually seen it! He’s a total weirdo!”

“Well I think he’s cool! He’s such a cutie! I’m going to dress him up in all sorts of fancy things and I’m gonna marry him one day!” a petite girl with spikey black hair and dark eyes piped up. Her name was Road Camelot. She was a third grader, a sadistic one at that, but she was also a part of the school dance team and she was also quite talented at that.

“Of course you’d like someone like him. You always like the freak shows,” a fourth grader said with an eye roll. He had black hair and looked like he prematurely hit the emo/scene kid phase like a brick wall. His name was Devit and had familial ties with Road, his twin brother was ride beside him who also looked well…quite something else. His name was Jasdero. Those two were annoying and loved to pull pranks on people, they were also inseparable. They insisted on sharing one desk, however they still did their homework separately. Tests were another thing, they did them together, the twins were adamant on always being by each other’s sides that the teacher’s had no choice. Nobody dared to anger the Noah family, the richest and powerfulest family in the whole nation. Link knew Leverrier was rich, but the Noah family was something else entirely. Many people questioned why they would even enroll their family in a public school when they could afford the most prestigious private ones the nation had to offer.

“Shut up! He’s not a freak show! He’s a gem and don’t act like you’re not curious! We could use him on the team! I’ve seen him in gym class plenty of times, he’s very acrobatic and light on his feet!” Road fired back.

“We could use him on the cheer squad to!” a preppy girl shouted out.
“Like hell! Not unless we get to him first!” came Road, “Besides, you don’t even know how to get him to like you!

“You guys already have plenty of people on your stupid dance team! We need him on our cheer squad! It’s not a secret Road, we know he loves food! Anyone can see it with the way he eats at lunch!”

“Yeah, well we got someone on our side that you don’t! We got Link!”

“No way! If he needs to be anywhere it should be choir!” came another voice.

Link rolled his eyes, getting fed up with their childish bickering of who would get the new kid onto what team. Though knowing about his acrobatic ability was a pleasant surprise, it still didn’t give Link the information he needed.

“I think his name was Alex or something.”

“No, you idiot! His name is Allen! It says so on his locker on the second grader’s side! Allen Walker!”

“I don’t know any Walkers in town…”

“That’s because he’s adopted by the town drunk Cross Marian.”

“Wow it sucks to be him. He must be all sorts of messed up…”

“I heard that Cross Marian likes to beat him.”

“He doesn’t have any bruises though!”

“Doesn’t matter, he’s good at make-up to. He could just be covering it up!”

“Dude no way! Cross doesn’t act that way around him at all. You guys are just giving into some stupid rumor!” came Lavi’s voice.

“How would you know!”?

“My grandpa is great friends with him! Allen and I hang out all the time and he’s never had any bruises from Cross! I know it’s hard to believe but it’s the truth! I’m a Bookman! I know!”

Link focused in on that information. While Lavi was quite annoying and childish in the classroom, he was smart, and he knew how to dig up reliable and truthful information. If Lavi tried harder in school and actually settled down, then he could probably even outrank Link with how smart and studious he was. Link repeated the name in his head over and over again, so he wouldn’t forget it. Allen Walker. Allen Walker. Allen Walker. This was his name. Walker…it wasn’t a last name Link was familiar with, but it sounded strong and unwavering. Link was determined. He was going to find Allen Walker’s locker and remember its’ location. So, Allen liked food? Well Link loved to bake. However, Link refused to become a pawn in his peer’s game to try and lure Allen Walker in choosing between sides. No, Link had a bigger goal in mind. He was going to use Allen’s love of food to better his skills in baking and to show his adoration to him for his beautiful singing voice.

The more he learned about the mystery that was Allen Walker, the more Link yearned to see him again. He told himself that he was merely just curious. Who wouldn’t be at hearing a second grader sound like a professional singer? Not only that but a little second grader having the appetite of
someone three times his size? Someone who was talented in make-up and acrobatics? Of course, Link was curious, even if his heart was beating erratically with the sound of Allen’s name. He blamed it on just being excited in his curiosity.

While there was a huge uproar amongst children and adults alike, Allen was so tired he could barely walk straight because of the overstimulation. Apparently, all those times Cross kicked him out of the house and took him where he’d be surrounded by people (all for the sake of trying to get him to be used to being around people for a decent chunk of the day) wasn’t enough. It felt like a lifetime waiting for Cross to finally come back to the classroom to collect him and when he did see him waiting for him, he shuffled up to him, rubbing his eyes tiredly. Instead of greeting him, Allen simply put his arms up in a silent request to be carried. He knew it was kind of babyish considering he was in second grade and in front of his peers, but if Cross minded, he didn’t show it and lifted him up with ease.

“I am so very proud of you. You know that? I would shit myself and run away screaming if I was in your shoes. That’s no joke either,” Cross said, grinning happily, “Not to mention I got your whole pissed off attitude on tape when that kid next to you attempted to become a pterodactyl. That was great! I also video taped you nearly falling asleep with Lenalee trying to keep your ass awake! This blonde kid kept looking at you weird to. I think he likes you!”

“He was annoying. He almost made my ears bleed,” Allen whined tiredly as he set his head on the older man’s shoulder. He wasn’t in the mood for conversation, all he wanted to do was sleep.

“I was sitting several feet away from that twerp and he nearly made my own ears bleed,” Cross agreed, rubbing Allen’s back soothingly as they walked out of the school building and back to the car.

Allen grunted his agreement, whining in slight annoyance when Tim decided to come out and congratulate his little companion on a job well done by proceeding to bump his face against his.

“Thanks Tim,” Allen mumbled tiredly as he was set in the car. He pouted crabbily at how cold the car was and the lack of body heat he had.

“It was hard to keep the little shit still when you were performing. He kept trying to pop out to see you and everything. I swear people thought I was going to have an alien burst out of my chest like I was from Alien vs. Predator or some shit.” Cross complained, but gently pet Timcanpy with his index finger to show he really didn’t give too much of a shit about it.

Allen shivered when he remembered walking in the living room in the middle of the night after a nightmare and walking in right when the alien burst out of the guy’s chest. Allen promptly screeched and ran back to his room like his ass was on fire, leaving Cross who was half asleep to jolt awake and nearly shoot a hole in the wall when he grabbed his gun because he thought there was an intruder. (Heh Heh…good times…not. Cross learned that he needed to stop sleeping with his gun next to him after that. Well okay, after many times of nearly shooting holes in things.)

“That’s not Christmassy…” Allen whined.

“It is if you put a Santa hat on the alien. God you’re so whiney. Come here, lay your head down and go to bed, I’ll wake you up when we get home.”

“But that’s illegal, we'll get picked up.”

“Boy I am the only cop in this god forsaken town that doesn’t follow every single god damned law. I’m not starting now,” Cross responded as he forced Allen to lay down across the seat before
starting up the car and driving back home. By the time they got home Allen was absolutely passed out and snoring so Cross picked up his little ankle biter and brought him inside. Once he saw to it that Allen had his pajamas on (of which he didn’t help at all and whined the whole time. In fact, he nearly fell over backwards as he began to nod off while standing up.) Cross tucked his brat into bed, smirking cockily as he remembered all the parent’s looks of utter astonishment at Allen’s performance. He knew he probably acted totally unlike himself (but I mean it was already weird for Cross to actually have a kid and take care of said kid) but he couldn’t help but think ‘Fuck yeah, that’s my kid! Betcha your kids can’t sing like that! You fuckers sitting there with those looks of repulsion are probably eating your own fucking words now!’ He knew he’d never live it down with his entire friend group who were surprised when Cross shouted a fuck yeah after Allen’s performance. Was it appropriate for children? Hell no. But that wasn’t the point. The point was that the look that came across Cross’s face was one of pride and love for his kid. Cross, a man who was a womanizer, a drunk, vulgar, and rough around the edges, actually doing something like that!? They already thought the fact he adopted a kid meant the world was ending! Nah, that day, Cross revoked the right to make fun of Tiedoll and how he acted with his kids.

Well shit…hard to say Cross regretted it though.

~ Just some random snippet because I need to see these two playing around like father and son. I just have a desperate stupid need okay?

So, we all know Cross loathed the stupid nerf gun he got Allen, well that was until he decided to get one of his own. Never would he thought he would be hiding behind the corner of a wall with a stupid toy gun in his hand planning his brat’s utter annihilation through foam bullets. He may have Timcanpy on his side, but Cross was great with a real gun, a toy gun was dare he say it, pure child’s play. Never would he thought it would be fun to mess around with a children’s toy, nope, not at all.

The brat was hiding in the living room somewhere. He knew it. He could smell his fear. However, there was one thing Cross didn’t think about and that was the remote-control car he forgot he bought Allen. While Cross was busy ducking behind furniture and shit, trying to find an opening to blast the brat to the heavens, Allen decided he’d use Tim to his advantage. As Cross ducked behind the couch, he heard the sound of a tiny motorized car coming his way and as Cross looked over to his left, he raised an eyebrow when he saw Tim sitting in the little seat of the car grinning at him.

“The fuck you want-“

Thunk. Cross was hit directly in the forehead. Tim fired a foam bullet from his mouth straight at Cross.

“What the fuck kid!? That’s not fair!” Cross yelled out, peeking over the couch at Allen who rubbed some war paint on his face by rummaging through Anita’s make-up. Okay, now Cross was a little more pissed off. He wanted some war paint to!

“All is fair in love and war!” the brat screeched, poking his head “You said I could have Tim on my team and he wanted to play to, so I found a way for him to play! It’s not my fault a big bad cop like you got taken down by a kid and a golem!”

Dammit. He should’ve never underestimated those two!

“Well fine. If that’s the way you want to play it,” Cross smirked demonically before aiming at Timcanpy who was grinning with his sharp little teeth just moments before, stopped smirking as Cross aimed and fired at the little yellow orb with wings.
“No Timcanpy! You monster! I’ll make you pay for that!” Allen shrieked dramatically.

“Come at me bro!” Cross laughed maniacally. “What are you gonna do now that your best friend is dead?!”

Timcanpy twitched on the ground, trying to fake playing dead which only made Cross laugh harder. Allen had a hard time keeping in character because Tim looked like he was having a seizure with his twitching and weird robotic sounds that sounded like a mix between a fucked-up blender and a bird being strangled.

“Well shit, I didn’t know Tim was such a good actor! Those sounds are nightmare fuel!” Cross commented, before he turned serious, because in Allen’s moment of character break, the man managed to fire a bullet at his leg!

“Gah! No! My favorite leg! Agh! You monster!” Allen screamed, holding his leg and rolling around like he was in great pain, “The pain! Oh, the agony! What cruel fate brought me here! I never got to see France or hold my first born child-”

“God you’re just as dramatic as Tim,” Cross groaned in annoyance before walking over to Allen, aiming his gun at Allen, “Kiss your ass goodbye!”

“Well if you say so,” Allen responded nonchalantly, actually attempting to do so which made Cross roll his eyes before firing three foam bullets at him. One at his chest, his other leg since he was bitching about the one, he fired at earlier, and his head. Allen coughed oh so dramatically before laying still for a few moments.

“You guys really are over dramatic. It’s so painful to watch really,” Cross commented.

“Oh, like you aren’t!”

“Hit me. I’ll show you how to pretend dying like a man.”

Allen looked up at Cross, before shrugging and sending a direct bullet towards Cross’s crotch.

“Gah! What the fuck! It didn’t really hurt but still! A nut shot!? The fuck kid!? Men don’t shoot each other in the dicks that’s just plain dirty! Get over here you!” Cross shouted, throwing his gun to the side before advancing on Allen whose eyes widened.

“Oh god no! I’m so sorry! Tim save yourself! It’s too late for me!” Allen screamed as Cross grabbed him and pinned him to the floor.

“Sorry doesn’t cut it! You never mess with a dude’s family jewels! Now you’re gonna pay,” Cross growled before shoving his fingers under his victim’s armpits and wiggling them around. Allen squealed, trying to squirm away from Cross’s assault.

“N-No! I-I have a w-wife a-and kids!” Allen shrieked through peals of laughter.

“Link and Timcanpy doesn’t count brat!” Cross said as he continued his assault by poking at Allen’s sides which made him squeal harder.

“N-No! S-Stop! I-I can’t b-breathe! I-I’m going to pee m-myself!” Allen screamed, his face beginning to turn red as tears formed in his eyes.

“Well, you should’ve thought of that before you decided to resort to something so vile and low,” Cross responded, tickling him for a few more moments until Allen could barely breathe. When he
finally relinquished his hold on his tiny captive so that he could regain his breathe he continued to mutter things under his breath like ‘can’t believe you’d stoop so low’, ‘I should tell Anita on you.’, ‘can’t believe I got violated by a fucking foam bullet what the fuck kind of world do we live in.’

This only made Allen laugh harder to the point he was sobbing.

“Well damn kid don’t kill yourself. I may know CPR but it doesn’t mean I want to test out if I actually know CPR or not,” Cross commented as he went off in search of something to make for dinner as he let his brat calm down. After a few minutes passed, Allen regained his composure, but had a look of confusion.

“Where’s Timcanpy?” he asked.

All of sudden a bunch of foam bullets hit Cross and Allen at the same time.

“An air raid!? Are you fucking serious!?” Cross shouted, grabbing his toy gun, “Not cool dude!”

“Against your own brother in arms Tim!? You traitor!” Allen screamed, grabbing his own gun.

“You’re so fucking dead Tim!” Cross shouted as he ran after Timcanpy who had the biggest grin on his face as he bolted away.

“We should cook him up and eat him for dinner the traitor!” Allen threatened.

“Really? I don’t think he’d taste all that nice,” Cross commented.

“Well we should put him on a fire anyways! Traitors die by fire!”

“Damn you are a violent little imp,” Cross commented.

“I shall take that as a compliment!” was Allen’s response.

Chapter End Notes

(Hiii! Another chapter!? Wow right!? Whatever I’m wasting my life during break and honestly, I kind of like wasting it this way. I hope you enjoyed it! I’m glad I finally introduced Link! Happy birthday to Link by the way! I originally was going to make this a super long chapter and write about Krory asking Miranda out and Link flirting with Allen, but I decided that nahhh, maybe next chapter! It’ll be a lovey dovey chapter! Besides, after I wrote the nerf gun snippet I couldn’t resist cutting this chapter off and putting it up sooner! Please feel free to add suggestions of what you might like to see written out if you’d like! See you next time!)
In Which Red Makes An Appearance

Chapter Summary

Allen's inner Red rears his head!

Chapter Notes

(So yeah, I decided to take a break from the sappier lovey dovey stuff and take a sharp turn into Allen’s trauma that was inflicted on him in his younger years. With that being said, please enjoy. Triggers in this include traumatic flashback, animal abuse, and animal death, past abuse etc. Allen’s Age is 8 once again.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Allen was a well-behaved child for his age. Sure, he got snarky with Cross and he did stupid things like all other kids did, although with Allen is mostly involved him trying to juggle dangerous things or balancing on a high stack of random ass things he found around the house. It didn’t take much for Cross to discipline him, in fact yelling did the trick just fine. Allen was smart for his age and knew when he crossed a line or when he was about to and usually backed off. The kid has been through a large amount of abuse in his life, and he tried to avoid being hit at all costs, especially when he found Cross wouldn’t hesitate to exercise such a technique to discipline him.

However, Allen may be a well-behaved kid but that didn’t mean that he didn’t have meltdowns. No, all kids his age had a meltdown here and there. When Allen had meltdowns though it tended to be because he was triggered by something. They tended to be intense and violent. Cross was familiar with Allen having panic attacks, he was familiar with him having nightmares and he learned how to help the brat handle it. What he didn’t know how to handle is when the kid exploded in unadulterated fury. He didn’t know how to handle Allen when ‘Red’ was released.

Who is Red exactly? Red is the name Allen was given before he had a proper name. He was named Red because of his deformed left arm, although he had the temper of the color Red as well. Before Allen became Allen, his left arm was paralyzed, and he worked as an errand boy for some traveling circus. Red was a snarky, foul mouthed little boy that always seemed to get himself into trouble because he couldn’t keep his mouth shut or he was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Red was accustomed to daily beatings from the drunken clown Cosimitov or the ring leader when he acted up. Red had wild, long reddish-brown hair and a scowl on his face. Though Red was an angry child, Red was also a hurting child. Red didn’t know what it felt like to be loved. He knew abandonment. Anger. Hate. Disgust. Pain. Hunger. Cold. Illness. It was until the lunatic, lively clown Mana made his appearance and showed Red what love felt like that the little boy’s tough exterior melted away.

With Mana, Red was still Red. Red was still a foul-mouthed little boy that got angry with Mana cooed at how cute he looked in his little clown outfit or how soft his hair was after he finally had a proper bath and haircut. Mana could see the scared, hurting boy underneath the glare, yelling, and scowling. With Mana, Red became Allen, and Allen started to become a little boy instead of a little troll that spat every time someone came by that he didn’t trust (which was a lot of people). A little
boy that still swore like a sailor, but a little boy that was learning how to be a good, polite, kind, gentle little boy through Mana.

Cross was only familiar with Allen who wore Mana’s mask. The Allen that stuffed all the negative feelings deep down inside before they bubbled to the surface in violent waves. This is the way Allen learned how to cope with Mana’s death, the first person to ever show love to him. It all started with a dog named Allen who was Mana’s partner during his clown routines. The dog named Allen was the first living being that ever came up to Red and touched his ‘cursed’ arm. Even after Red kicked the dog away in annoyance, in confusion, the dog came back. The dog wanted to play with Red. Allen was Red’s first friend, and through him he met his father named Mana.

Allen refused to take away Mana’s mask and Cross had a hard time forcing him to. He was functioning. It wasn’t exactly healthy, but he was functioning. He was coping…somewhat. Besides, Red showed himself through little bursts. Red showed himself through the bickering the two had. Cross found if he pushed Allen hard enough, that Allen would fight back like Red used to. Most parents would be appalled at a child disrespecting his parental authority and immediately take disciplinary action, but Cross welcomed it. Allen was a special case. Cross wanted Red to bleed through, he wanted to nurture that part of Allen because that was the real Allen.

However, the real Allen was also a mess. The real Allen was still a little boy and little boys did stupid things. Little boys had a hard time controlling their emotions and did stupid things because of those emotions. Little children became little demons sometimes and even though Cross tried to nurture the snarkier side of Allen, he couldn’t allow the nastier side of Red to take place. He couldn’t nurture a violent, raging inferno, that was Allen, that was Red. So, imagine his surprise when he finally got to see the red, burning inferno that was Red and the conflict he had on how to go about this.

It all started on a perfectly normal day. I know it’s a boring way to start the story, but it’s important because it meant there was nothing remotely wrong with Allen, at least in Cross’s eyes. He didn’t seem to be on a verge of an emotional breakdown from stuffing his emotions too much. He was perfectly happy and chasing Timcanpy in front of the somewhat decent, somewhat broken-down house that Cross called his home. Let’s just say, things ran as they were supposed to and that was good enough for Cross, although with this kid living with him, his things were having a hard time running the way they were supposed to sometimes.

So, it came at a total surprise to Cross what happened next. Cross was standing in front of window, watching his tiny dim-witted brat run around, tiring himself out and didn’t think nothing much when a man came strolling along on the sidewalk across the street walking his dog. However, this dog kept getting distracted, sniffing things on the ground, wanting to run across the street to see what that golden ball was that the child across the street was playing with. The dog itself looked to be a little on the skinny side, but nothing too awful. However, the man seemed to be in a huge rush and kept tugging the dog on the leash to keep moving. The dog moved, albeit reluctantly, the leash pulling on his collar with such force that Cross knew his air way was cut off every time the man tugged on the leash. Apparently, the man just fucking had it with the dog and after one last tug and another bout of distraction the man sent a hard kick towards the dog’s side, sending the animal flying. This wasn’t enough for the man to satisfy his anger and Cross watched as the man proceeded to walk up to the dog lying on the sidewalk, trying to regain its’ composure and stomp on the poor fragile body below him.

Cross wasn’t the only one watching though. Allen peered up at the man abusing his dog as well and froze. Not in horror. Oh no, Allen was having a flashback back to Allen the dog laying in front of the portable heater, sleeping. It was after Cosimitov told Red (Allen) to put glass into the dog’s bowl out a jealous rage that Mana was the audience favorite and not him. Red refused, and Red
was beaten senseless because of it. That was the last time he saw Allen alive. Next thing he knew Mana had dug a little hole and what was in that hole was the battered, bruised remains of Allen the dog. Cosmitov had beaten him to death.

As Allen’s eyes watched the man continue to stomp on the dog mercilessly, shouting at it, calling it names for simply doing what dogs do, his little body began to shake in rage. Allen knew how the dog felt. He knew what it was like to be the weaker one, to have people bigger than you stomp you down into the dirt. Oh, the rage Allen felt coursing through his little boy was rage that he hadn’t felt in many years and his little face burned with such a fiery fury he was afraid he might start on fire. His blood boiled, his vision turned red and before he knew it he was on the other side of the road, sinking his teeth deep into the man’s arm.

The man yelled and flung him to the ground, hard. Allen felt the gravel dig into the palm of his hands, but the rage prevented him from caring. He tasted blood in his mouth and found it satisfying. He wanted to watch this filthy, awful man bleed and hurt just like the dog he was kicking. Just as the man turned back to the dog, Allen was on him again, sending a hard kick the back of the man’s knees. Just as Allen was reeling his leg back to send another hard kick at the man who had knelt because of the kick to his knees, a pair of strong arms locked themselves underneath Allen’s armpits, the forearms restrained the front of his shoulders, so he couldn’t move forwards. Then he was being lifted and carried back into the house. Allen couldn’t hear a thing with the blood pounding in his ears, but he could make out muffled yelling of male voices.

From Cross’s viewpoint, he wished he would’ve acted sooner, but he really didn’t expect Allen to move as fast as he did. One moment the child was there and the next thing he knew there was a flash of white and the kid was sprinting across the road (which already triggered Cross because sprinting out into the streets without looking both was a very bad thing! Especially when he had Allen, the kid who had quite a bit of bad luck!) assaulting the man with a fury he had not seen that kid express, not even to Tiedoll’s brat Kanda!

Cross slammed the glass of water he was drinking of on the counter and sprinted outside to collect the raging terror that Allen Walker became. Cross wasted no time with formalities. The man’s forearm was bleeding quite badly, and blood was dripping down Allen’s mouth. His eyes were shining bright with blood lust and even after being pushed harshly to the ground the brat was still wailing on the man, growling like a demon possessed his body. Cross did the only thing he knew to do and that was to get Allen the fuck out of there before the man could beat him within an inch of his life. He’d deal with the damages later. For now, his focus was Allen. He grabbed Allen, surprised that he was met with such resistance from the tinier body struggling and kicking at his own.

Allen was screaming at the top of his lungs, screaming unholy death threats at the man, threatening to tear off his genitals and shoving them down his throat so he would choke on it, telling him he didn’t deserve to call himself at man. Cross would’ve found this funny in a different circumstance, especially since the man deserved it, but he found the drastic change in Allen to be frightening. Cross ignored the car honk as he crossed the street, his tiny, screaming bundle of well fury struggling with such gusto that Cross almost dropped Allen quite a few times before he made it back to the house.

“Let me go! Let me go you fucking wanker! That fucking bastard! He deserves to die! I’ll fucking kill him! I’ll fucking kill him dead!” Allen screamed in a voice that belonged to Red, he wasn’t aware that he was screaming such filthy things from his mouth that would have Mana rolling in his grave. All he could hear was blood pounding quickly in his ears. His face was on fire and the rage he felt threatened to consume him whole.

Cross grunted as Allen sent a hard kick to his gut, he gritted his teeth resisting the urge to paddle the brat senseless. First, he ran into fucking traffic, then he bit a man!? The hell was this fucking
kid thinking!? Taking on a full-grown fucking man!?

“Kid if you do not calm the fuck down, I will paddle your ass I swear to God,” Cross responded through gritted teeth as he carried Allen to the bathroom. The kid’s face was a dark red and for moment Cross was afraid the kid was going to have an aneurysm.

This threat only fueled Allen’s rage as he screamed obscenities at Cross, “You lay your fucking hand on me and I will bite your fucking hand off you wanker!”

Cross was so tempted to beat Allen right then and there, but all it took was the look at the bright, blood shot, rage-filled eyes of Allen to keep him from doing so. Cross had quite the temper on him to, but he also knew that what he saw in Allen’s eyes in that moment was the eyes of an animal. An animal that was caged, that was beaten and bloodied. That anger wasn’t directed at him. It was directed at someone else. It was the rage he suppressed towards Cosimitov.

So, Cross turned on the tap in the bath and ran ice cold water. What better way to douse the flames of rage than some water that was cold enough to make your testicles retreat into your body in shock. As he waited for the tap to cool, he held the screaming, squirming Allen tight against his body, ensuring that this kid wasn’t going to escape and finish what he started.

“Sorry kid, this is going to be cold,” the man said when he deemed the water cold enough. He proceeded to dunk Allen’s head under the freezing water pouring from the tap. Allen yelped, trying to struggle out from underneath it, but Cross was determined to douse out all the rage Allen had vibrating throughout his body, “That’s it kid just breathe.”

When Allen felt the initial shock of cold water on his face, he tried to take his face out of the water, but a firm hand held his burning face under it. He could still breathe, which he was thankful for as he felt the cold water pour around his burning ears and over his forehead, down his eyes. It was a dizzying rush of relief and clarity. When he stopped resisting against the hand holding him under the cold water, he felt it begin to massage the water through his hair. He almost killed that man out there. He was sure that with his rage, he would’ve done anything in his power to kill that man out there. It made his stomach clench in guilt. He let Mana down. He was violent. He was a monster. A sick, gross monster. Allen felt his stomach lurch violently at the taste of blood in his mouth, that man’s blood. The burning rage that boiled deep within him made an exit through his mouth, or at least that’s what Allen thought it was.

Cross wrinkled his nose when Allen proceeding to vomit profusely into the bathtub. It wasn’t Cross’s first-time comforting people vomiting their guts out after a night of drinking. He could stomach it, but it didn’t mean he liked to. If this is what Allen had to do then fuck it, Cross would let him do it. It was almost painful to watch Allen’s body convulse so violently and Cross found that he had to look away a couple of times to keep his own nausea at bay.

It took several long minutes for Allen’s body to settle down and as it came to a calm, Cross slowly warmed the water until it was a comforting warm easing Allen back into a state of calm. The two sat like that for a long time, Cross washing the water through Allen’s hair, pulling him back to reality little by little. Once Cross deemed him calm enough he turned the water off and pulled his head back to rub his head dry with a towel.

Once that was accomplished, Cross picked Allen up and exited the bathroom, sighing when he saw a police car parked outside and the man speaking with said police officer. He looked to Allen and then back outside, hearing a knock at the front of his door.

“Yeah yeah, gimme a minute!” Cross yelled out, walking over to the couch to lay Allen down on it, “Oi…wanna watch some Peter Pan?”
One of things he found out from Allen was that he was a huge fan of Peter Pan. Most times he wasn’t interested in what was playing on the television, but one night Cross set the television to a random ass channel that was child appropriate enough and next thing he knew the brat sat and watched it quite intensely. He didn’t move an inch from that screen and out of pure experimentation, Cross brought up the T.V. guide, intending to turn the channel. The kid whipped his head around with a threatening glare so intense that Cross raised an eyebrow and immediately took the guide off and discarded the remote. He also found that he adored the song Lost Boy by Ruth B after hearing it on the radio and that song came in handy when he needed to calm the kid down. All the kid needed was to have that song sung to him or played to him and he quieted down. At least it wasn’t Frozen, if Cross had to hear Let It Go one more fucking time…

So yeah, Peter Pan was Allen’s happy place and Cross was glad to indulge Allen in something that children his age liked. So Cross bought the DVD and was surprised to find that Allen did not grow tired of it. He kept watching it over and over and over. It took Cross a good couple of weeks to get Allen to resort to watching it once a week. Anyways, Cross popped in the DVD and let the movie play for the brat as he went outside to talk to the police officer and the man. He trusted Tim to keep Allen content while he was away.

After much heated discussion Cross managed to wheedle Allen out of the predicament, it helps that he was a member of the force himself and the officers up at the station adored Allen. All Cross had to do was pay the man’s hospital bill (even though he really didn’t want to because the fucker was a monster for beating his dog to death, Cross later found out.) for the bite. The man didn’t get away total scot free though. The officer did arrest him for animal abuse which Cross resisted the urge to smirk at. By the time Cross was done talking to the officers, Allen was asleep on the couch with the knuckle of his index finger in his mouth and his other arm draped around Tim who pretended to also sleep.

Cross knew he should talk to Allen about how it was wrong to bite people, no matter how angry you got, and no matter how much they deserved it. It was also wrong to run out into the road in a fit of rage. Cross wasn’t in a hurry though and decided that Allen needed to sleep it all off for the moment. He’d discuss it with him when he was less tired emotionally and he’d play the stupid fucking movie as long as he needed to to make it fucking happen.

~ Enjoy this tiny snippet!

“So, what the fuck do you see in this show? I mean I’m proud of you for finding something you like, but like what the hell drawn you to this?” Cross asked his brat as he stared at the ending credits rolling across the screen. He didn’t dare talk to Allen while the movie was playing. Not unless the kid threatened to burn him alive with his glare.

“Cuz I like it. I wanna be a lost boy to and live on an island and fight pirates,” Allen responded, “I wanna be like Peter Pan and not worry about stuff and fly.”

“Yeah but you’d be fighting pirates. Ya gotta worry about swords and walking the plank and stuff.”

“I’ll be fine. Besides you remind me of Captain Hook and you don’t scare me,” Allen responded.

Thanks kid…Cross thought to himself in irritation.

“I’m a helluva lot better than that guy. Who the fuck would that weird ass right hand mate of his be then?”

“Mmm Tiedoll? Maybe Johnny? I dunno who would wanna be your right-hand mate,” Allen responded honestly, “You don’t need one.”
“What about Tim?”

“Tim is Tinkerbell! He can’t be Smee!”

“Whose Peter Pan then?”

“Lavi!”

“Really? Then whose Wendy?”

“I wanna be Wendy! But also, the fox kid lost boy! I don’t know stop asking weird questions! It doesn’t matter! It’s a movie!”

“Alright alright, touchy. Jeez. You already watched it three times today though, no more. You’ll rot out your brain.”

Allen turned to glare at Cross-

“No glaring either! I’m doing you a service! Did you even get your homework done?”

Cross was met with silence.

“That’s what I fucking thought. Get it done!”

“I don’t want to read!”

“I don’t want to go to work! We gotta do things we don’t want to do!”

“Not if I’m a lost boy. Then I don’t have to do work or grow up!”

(Which D Gray Man character do you guys think would fit which Peter Pan character?)

Chapter End Notes

(Hahaha instead of sleeping I wrote this fucker because I was hit with inspiration and I couldn’t sleep until I wrote it. It’s currently almost 5am here, fucking end me. I hope you liked it though and when I heard Lost Boy all I could think of was Allen. I can see him really loving the film, not just because Captain Hook reminds him of Cross either lol. I think Allen views himself as a lost boy and a weirdo misfit and that’s why he relates to the movie so much and adores it. I also headcanon Cross singing Lost Boy to him during a nightmare or thunderstorm to calm him down and that Allen will sing it to himself when he gets nervous or hum it.)
In Which Allen Doesn't Sleep For Three Days

Chapter Summary

Basically lil Allen has a bad case of insomnia and Cross doesn't know what the fuck to do. Poor Allen. Also poor Timcanpy Enjoy the angst!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Cross knew ever since he first took Allen under his care that it was extremely rare when the child slept well. The statement of ‘slept well’ was when the kid managed to sleep fully through the night without waking up and slept nearly eight hours like most kids his age should be averaging. Allen averaged sleeping about five hours a night but that included waking up once in that five-hour period. On days where there were thunderstorms or rain, he averaged three to four and would be somewhat irritable during the daytime but not extremely fussy. The most Cross had managed to do so far is get the kid to sleep those five hours at night instead of randomly throughout the day. Whenever Allen did sleep it was fitfully and he was prone to twitching a lot in his sleep. Even with the little sleep the child got, Cross was thankful that he was respectful enough to stay in his room and quiet when he knew the older was sleeping. Cross even accommodated to Allen by setting food out before he went to bed himself, so the kid wouldn’t starve himself waiting for Cross to wake up.

Any other parent would scold him for enabling Allen to continue his sleeping schedule the way it was (Ahem, Tiedoll for instance) but Cross decided it wasn’t his place to intervene. The kid grew up on the streets, so he figured he was accustomed to sleeping in small increments, his body alert enough where he could jump into action at any given moment. That was an instinct that has been so deeply embedded into Allen that it didn’t matter how safe Cross tried to make him feel, so Cross decided to leave it be. Was he concerned about it? Sure. He was concerned about a lot of things with Allen, like how he wore ‘Mana’s mask’, how he wasn’t growing like normal kids even with how much he eats, how that effects his body, how sometimes the littlest things could trigger him into a panic but other times he is barely affected. The kid’s flight or fight mode seemed to fluctuate from highly sensitive to none at all sometimes. Cross already knew some of his triggers like how the sound of a truck rumbling on by the house freaks him out because it sounds like thunder. Allen hated being around crowds and got overstimulated easily. Of course, Allen absolutely hated thunderstorms. When it came to jump scares though, it depended on was ‘setting’ he was on that day. If he was highly sensitive, he’d be sent into a full-on panic attack. If he wasn’t all that touchy the most Cross could expect was an annoyed pout or him stomping his foot on the ground and yelling at him in irritation.

So, yeah, Cross was concerned, but there were also some things that were just simply how Allen functioned. Some of those concerns were going to take time to resolve, if they ever do resolve themselves. Was it irritating sometimes to have to ‘figure out’ how the brat was feeling that day? Yeah, it put Cross on edge because he didn’t know when or what was going to set him off. Not like Allen could help it though, if Cross was constantly worrying about whether he was going to eat that day, where he was going to sleep, or if he was going to get severely beat that day, he’d be a fucking mess to.
So, Cross didn’t exactly question it when Allen seemed a little more irritable than normal on his way to school this morning. The brat woke up pouty and seemed reluctant getting out of bed today. He still got out of bed, but he was slower, and he wasn’t talkative. Cross figured he just needed to wake up a little more and perhaps he had an even more fitful night’s sleep than usual. Nothing that a better night’s sleep tonight couldn’t cure, right? The brat always had circles under his eyes which were more pronounced with his fair skin, so Cross couldn’t just go off of eye bags alone. Other than that, there was nothing new, nothing that seemed to stand out to Cross.

It was the second day when Cross knew something was up. It was a weekend which gave the man more time to observe Allen’s behavior. First off, Cross woke up before Allen, which sometimes happened but it was rare, even then Allen only slept an hour more than Cross. However, Allen slept in almost two and a half hours so that made Cross concerned. Perhaps he was sick? So Cross went up to Allen’s room to check on him to find that he was staring at the wall with deeper bags under his eyes.

“Wow you must’ve had the most wonderful night’s sleep in the whole entire world,” Cross commented sarcastically. Allen slowly turned around to give Cross the evilest glare that Cross had ever received so far from the brat. Oh…this was serious, but while this was serious, it wasn’t Cross’s fault the brat wasn’t sleeping, and he wasn’t going to take the child glaring at him like that. If he was in Allen’s shoes, his ass would be grass.

“Oi, you better wipe that look off your face before I wipe it off for you and trust me you will not like that method, I use boy. Not my fault you can’t sleep,” Cross growled out a warning as he stepped over to press his hand against the boy’s forehead. No fever. The brat was just tired. Well, as much as Cross knew he needed sleep, he wasn’t about to fuck up Allen’s already touchy sleep schedule. It took months for him to get him to sleep at night and he wasn’t about to have to re-unfuck his sleep wake schedule again.

“So, you can’t stay in bed forever, you sure as hell can’t,” Cross commented, taking off the bed covers from Allen’s body. Allen responded by whining and proceeding to shove his face into his pillow in an act of resistance.

“Nu-uh nope, we’re not doing that. If you sleep all day you won’t sleep at night. You will get up, even if I have to drag you up out of bed,” Cross said, grabbing Allen’s body. Allen growled and attempted to kick at Cross. Oh, that was so not going to fucking happen. Cross grabbed Allen’s leg, his eyes flashing dangerously.

“I know you did not just fucking try to kick me you little runt. If you try that again I assure you that I will beat your ass and then you will have something to pout and whine about. You are getting up now whether you want to or not,” Cross growled. Sure, he was angry at Allen’s defiance, but he was also concerned. Allen never dared to hit Cross other than that time where he was full of rage or if they were play fighting. The first one Cross let go because he knew if he fought back, he was going to piss the kid off more and the second one Allen never lashed out with the intent to harm. If he did, he immediately apologized. So, Cross grabbed his little whiney bundle of sleep deprivation and left the boy’s bedroom, closing the door behind him. Allen squirmed, attempting to bring his head around to bite Cross.

“You bite me, and I will pull out all your teeth. I will not say it again. Being tired doesn’t make it okay for you to kick and bite at me or anyone else, alright? You don’t see me kicking you or biting you if I’m tired. If you feel the need to do so, you can put your ass on that couch right over there and stay there. I don’t want to be near you when you are acting like this,” Cross responded, dropping Allen unceremoniously on the couch. Allen growled in response.
“Go ahead. Growl at me. I don’t give a shit Allen,” was Cross’s response before he left the child alone to go searching for ways to get him to sleep.

Allen, being left to his own devices and feeling pissed off at the world because he wasn’t allowed to sleep (not that he could at the moment), pouted and kicked Timcanpy (who was trying to cuddle up to him to make him feel better) to the floor rather harshly. Tim made a weird robotic sound that sort of sounded like a whine, like how a puppy would make when its owner was angry with them. Allen was used to not sleeping well. He was used to the occasional insomnia, but this was perhaps the worst case of insomnia he had. His brain refused to turn off. Every time he closed his eyes, he could see Cosimitov’s ugly sneer and see his fist pulled back. Sometimes he’d see Mana’s face, his eyes glistening softly as he looked at Allen with endearment, then it would shift to the bloodied, battered, unrecognizable face of Mana’s after the car wreck. Whenever he did manage to drift off it was short lived. Usually it would be just as dawn broke over the horizon. He’d sleep for maybe an hour before he was rudely awakened by a nightmare or he’d think he heard Mana’s voice or the ringleader yelling at him to get off his lazy arse and get to work. If that didn’t wake him it would be the soft noises of the house creaking at night that would jolt him awake.

The child whined, feeling frustrated tears well in his eyes. He rubbed at them harshly with the heel of his hands. He hated Cross for forcing him out of bed. He was being a jerk face and Timcanpy was being needy. He knew Tim only meant well but for some reason it just pissed him off and he had a hard time controlling his emotions right now. Timcanpy, who apparently didn’t get the memo that Allen didn’t want to be bothered right now, flew back up on the couch and waddled his way towards Allen. His wings drooped like a sad puppy just wanting to make his human companion feel better. Allen growled, sticking both of his fingers in Tim’s mouth and stretching it really wide. You’d think this would hurt Tim, but surprisingly Tim was fine with Allen taking his frustrations in this way to him. Or at least Allen thought Tim was fine with it. He didn’t fight back or bite down on the little boy’s fingers.

Cross was watching his brat from the other room, rolling his eyes as he watched him beat up on Tim. Cross was calling Mother to see if she had any tips to get the kid to sleep since all the things, he already tried to get Allen to sleep on a daily basis were clearly not working. He bought the kid comfortable pajamas, a soft blanket, made sure he wasn’t watching T.V. before bed time, forced him to eat a small snack (so he wasn’t hungry at night) and drink something warm before bed. He wanted to avoid using drugs to help him sleep because while short term they helped, long term they started to lose their effect. Plus, the kid was already being pressured to take other medications for anxiety, depression and shit like that (which Cross was still deciding whether or not to let Allen take), he refused to add something for sleeping on top of that.

After a minute of beating up on Tim, Allen grew tired. His body not having enough energy to want to move too much. His eyes burned every time he blinked, and he found it difficult to stay focused on one thing without spacing out or whipping his head around because he thought he heard someone’s voice. Tim used this opportunity to waddle his way up Allen’s torso to push his metallic face up against his cheek, rubbing affectionately as if Allen just didn’t kick him off the couch heartlessly or stretched his face out to painful proportions. Or at least it looked painful. Tim was surprisingly flexible and was pretty stretchy.

Cross sighed, hanging up the phone after talking to Mother who told him to keep trying his methods and observe him. If he’s still refusing to sleep then she wanted Cross to bring him over, so she could do her own methods which involved herbal medicine shit that she refused to tell Cross because ‘you would screw it up. I’d rather show you myself to make sure you didn’t.’ Great. Glad to see she still had faith in him to not fuck shit up. Not. Cross preferred to call it witchcraft himself because…well that’s kind of what she did. She was sort of like a witch doctor of sorts hence her name ‘Mother’. She lived about two hours away but everyone in that town and surrounding towns
came to her for aid. She used all sorts of things to aid people, like herbs (which Barba grows in her
garden), rocks, etc. Cross thought it was a huge load of crap, it was just a bunch of placebos, but
Mother insisted that, placebo or not, they work. Cross was a man of science (which was fucking
weird considering he was a law enforcement officer. Yeah, college life did some weird shit
sometimes. One moment you’re a psychology student and next thing you know you somehow in
chemistry shit. Life was weird), he relied on shit that was proven to work and made sense as to why
they work. Warmth sounds of someone’s heartbeat, soft blankets, it made sense as to why such
sensory things would provide comfort because it was like what it was like when one was still
a fetus in the womb (although maybe wombs were not really soft). Fetuses were warm, they could
hear their mother’s heartbeat and her voice, and it was relatively quiet.

When Cross returned to the living room, he saw a very zombieish looking Allen staring at the wall
with slitted eyes. The kid looked like he was doped up, except every time his eyes closed for more
than fifteen seconds, he’d jolt back awake. Allen looked like he was so ready to pass out, but it was
like his body just couldn’t shut down all the way, refusing to relax fully and let Allen fall
unconscious. His mind forced him to stay alert even when his body was clearly drained and
needing sleep. It was interesting to watch because it showed just how much power someone’s mind
can have over their body, but it was also painful to watch the kid fight with his mind. Instead of
walking over and trying to see if he could push Allen further into unconsciousness, Cross decided
to sit in a different chair and watch Allen a little bit longer. There had to be something that was
triggering him this badly where his body was on high alert and maybe if he left the kid alone, his
behavior would tell him what it was, because he knew Allen wouldn’t. At least not in the state he
was in. Cross didn’t feel like being kicked or yelled at by a little imp at the moment.

So, he watched him for a good thirty minutes or so. The kid cycled between being half asleep and
having ‘microsleeps’ before jolting awake again. Periodically the kid would snap to attention and
look over his shoulder, looking confused, before returning to his zombified state. Was the kid
hearing shit? If so, was this a reoccurring thing or was it just because he was sleep deprived. What
or whose voices were he hearing? What were they saying to him? After thirty minutes the kid
actually did drift off to sleep, but Cross wasn’t done observing him. Allen might’ve drifted off to
sleep but that didn’t mean his body fully succumbed to sleep yet and it showed. The kid was
twitching excessively, more than he usually did when he normally slept. His body was fighting to
keep awake.

The kid was asleep for about forty-five minutes and Cross was about to say ‘fuck it’ to getting any
answers, maybe the kid’s body finally had enough and was going to let him sleep. No. Of course
not. This was Allen we were talking about here. After forty-five minutes, the kid yelped his body
violently snapping to defense mode as his hands immediately went up to cover his face like
someone was about to hit him. A small whimper sounded from the little boy who began to cry in
frustration because all he wanted to do was sleep peacefully but no matter how tired he got it just
didn’t seem like a possibility. That was enough for Cross. The red-head walked over, pausing when
Allen’s body tensed, and wide, fearful, watery, suspicious gray eyes peered at him. Allen blinked,
his eyes losing the fearful look when he realized who was walking towards him.

“Alright kid. You’re going to tell me what’s going on in that little brain of yours, whether you want
to or not,” Cross responded seriously as he got down on Allen’s level. He reached up and grabbed
Allen’s arm, pulling it down from his face.

“Why did you put your hands up like that?” Cross asked slowly, knowing very well that Allen was
exhausted and would need extra time to comprehend what Cross was saying (even though Cross
wanted to fire a bunch of questions at once at the kid).

Cross let several long moments go by watching Allen slip into his spacey state again before talking
again, “Who was about to hit you?”

Allen jumped at the question, looking at Cross in confusion, apparently forgetting what Cross was talking about. Oh, this was going to be a long process.

“When you woke up you put your hands against your face. Who was about to hit you?” Cross responded calmly.

“Ringleader?” Allen mumbled, though he sounded unsure. Honestly things just blurred together at this point. He couldn’t remember who or what he dreamt about last. It just all melded together in one constant nightmare.

“The circus ringleader,” Cross clarified, reaching up to snap his fingers in Allen’s face to keep him from zoning out. The kid glared at him but didn’t seem ready to attack him so that was nice.

“What are you dreaming about—“Cross asked, pausing when Allen’s eyes widened and his head whipped around to the side towards the door, “Oi kid! Kid focus on me, there is no one there. Are you seeing shit?”

Cross sighed in frustration when the kid refused to look at him, apparently spacing off again. Cross grabbed Allen’s face, ignoring the way he tried to flinch away before turning his head to look directly at him.

“Who did you see?”

“Cosimitov.”

“What did he tell you?” Cross asked, not exactly knowing who that was.

“He was angry and shouting at me. I don’t know what he said cuz he was drunk,” Allen slowly replied.

“So, you are hallucinating about your past,” Cross murmured, mostly to himself, “Why didn’t you tell me you were having a hard time sleeping?”

“Cuz you were sleeping…?”

“So? I would’ve liked to know anyways so you didn’t get to this point Allen.” Cross sighed.

“Stop yelling at me!” Allen suddenly snapped.

“I’m not yelling at you,” Cross tried to clarify but whatever he did apparently tipped the already fragile balancing scale that Allen had right now because Allen wasn’t having it.

“You are to! You are angry at me!”

“I am not angry at you and I am still not yelling at you. You are yelling at me,” Cross said, trying hard to keep his voice calm and collected though he was pissed at Allen’s accusations.

“No, I’m not!” Allen yelled, his eyes dark and menacing or he looked like he was trying to make it that way. All Cross saw was an extremely tired child that desperately needed a good long nap. Timcanpy, trying to comfort Allen, attempted to nuzzle at his face but Allen not consolable. The child glared, grabbing Timcanpy and throwing him off into the corner.

“Allen, Timcanpy didn’t do anything to you. You need to calm your ass down. I know it is difficult
and you are tired but lashing at me or Tim isn’t helping shit,” Cross said his voice rising a little bit against his will.

“He was going to bite me!”

“No, he wasn’t! Allen listen-“

“You’re gonna sell me back to the circus because I’m a demon child! You don’t love me! Mana loved me! I wish I died with him!” Allen screamed hysterically, his eyes hazy with delirium. Cross tried to grab him, but Allen only scrambled away from him distrustfully. Timcanpy, defeated and sad that his companion treated him so harshly, settled on top of Cross’s head eyes staring forlornly at Allen (or as forlornly a golem could look). Allen growled, his eyes glinting like an abused dog baring his teeth out of fear, “Don’t you dare touch me. I’ll bite your hand off. I. Will. Not. Go. Back. There.”

Even with his words Allen’s voice cracked, betraying his feelings. Cross didn’t make a move to comfort him or discipline him for his actions. Cross only nodded and got up to leave Allen be. The child looked up, pressing himself against the couch in expectation that Cross was suddenly going to explode in fury at him if he let his guard down, but he was surprised when he watched the man leave the room. That didn’t mean he was going to let his guard down. What if he was going to try and poison him and knock him out? What if he was grabbing a weapon?

Cross wasn’t doing either of those things. Instead he held Timcanpy in his hand, petting him thoughtfully with an index finger. Originally, he wanted Allen to not sleep until it was closer to his bedtime, but if he was having such an issue sleeping and staying asleep now not to mentioned hallucinations, it probably was better to try and get the kid to sleep regardless. Cross sighed, walking over to one of the cabinets to grab himself some ibuprofen. This was going to be a very long day and a very long night. He could feel it. Cross stayed away from Allen for a good ten minutes, trying to psych himself up for the task at hand and making sure he gave enough time for Allen to calm down before returning to the living room.

Immediately Cross resisted the urge to explode in anger. Allen decided to have an accident on the couch. Granted, Cross had ‘night time underwear’ to help combat the kid’s bed wetting problem, but apparently Allen forgot to wear them and was currently sitting the massive wet spot on the couch. Great. Cross thought they were over this, but apparently, they weren’t. Cross took a few deep breaths before slowly walking over to the child who was staring at the blank television screen in a daze.

“Allen? Allen?” Cross asked, snapping his fingers in front of the child’s face who snapped out of his daze to look at Cross. He was eerily calm, like he didn’t just throw Timcanpy or yell at Cross about ten minutes ago.

“Allen. Why didn’t you go to the bathroom when you had to go?” Cross asked.

“I was but there was a creepy old man in there,” Allen responded, “I was waiting for him to leave and he never did. I couldn’t hold it anymore.”

“Well why didn’t you come get me?”

“I didn’t know where you were at.”

Cross sighed.

“You’re mad at me,” Allen whimpered, on the verge of crying
Oh, fuck no, they weren’t doing this again, Cross refused to.

“Oi. Hey. Look at me. I am not mad at you. Okay? We’re going to get through this. Alright?” Cross responded in the softest voice he could possibly muster, even though he wasn’t looking forward to cleaning up this mess.

Allen sniffled and nodded his head.

“Alright. Let’s get you cleaned up,” Cross sighed.

Allen pouted, lifting his arms up, wanting to be carried. Cross slumped his shoulders. He really didn’t want to be in contact with the kids, urine-soaked clothes or anything.

“Oh, better idea. I’ll get the bath started and then I will come back for you okay?” Cross responded, ignoring the tiny needy whine he got in response, “I’ll be back.”

So Cross left to run the brat a bath and get him a new change of pajamas before returning to Allen who went back to staring off into the void. He didn’t trust the kid to be left to his own devices for too long or to do the simplest things by himself. It was clear that the kid was too tired to barely sit up on his own as Cross lifted Allen up from under his armpits and carried him to the bathroom.

“Maybe a nice warm bath will make you relax and sleep. What do you think?” Cross asked as he pulled Allen’s shirt up and over his head. He got no response from Allen. Well, that was fine. As long as the brat was calm. With the back of the couch not there to support him, Allen kept nearly tipping back out of exhaustion. Cross would’ve found it adorable under different circumstances.

“Alright kid. You like baths, right? So, this shouldn’t be traumatic on you,” Cross said as he picked Allen up and carefully deposited him into the bath water. Allen gave a content little sigh and Cross could see the tension almost immediately melt off of him. That was another thing that Cross used to his advantage. Baths. Allen loved them and especially loved to stay in the bath for quite a long time to wash Timcanpy and make him nice a sparkly. He also loved to watched Tim swim around the bath tub happily, which Tim proceeded to do so when he heard the word ‘bath’. Tim bumped up against the tired Allen’s leg, expecting his companion to wash him like he always did, but Allen was practically napping in the bath tub.

“Sorry Tim looks like he’s too tired. I’ll wash you up later,” Cross said, lathering up a washcloth with body wash before rubbing it over Allen’s body who was content to rest his head on Cross’s shoulder to nap.

“God if I could keep you in the bath tub to get you to sleep I definitely would. Tim could practically live here to,” Cross commented, watching Timcanpy swim laps around the bath water and play with the bubbles in the water when Cross washed the soap off of Allen. Next was washing his hair which Cross was kind of gun shy about. Allen jolted awake when he felt Cross pour water on his head and whacked him in the face.

“Excuse me? What the fuck was that about kiddo?” Cross asked, more out of surprise than outrage because that blow sure didn’t have a whole lot of force behind it.

“You’re gonna drown me,” Allen slurred, almost incoherently.

“I’m washing your hair. I’m not drowning you. If I was, I would’ve held your whole entire head under the water,” Cross shook his head as he continued washing his hair, happy that Allen relaxed when he felt Cross massage the shampoo into his hair. The kid looked like he was on Cloud Nine. After the amount of nightmare fuel, he endured over the past two days, Cross couldn’t blame him.
Getting him out of the bath tub was a different story. Allen wasn’t too happy about that and whined his displeasure at Cross picking him up out of the bath water into the cold air, so he could rub him dry with a towel.

“Suck it up kiddo. You won’t be cold for too much longer,” Cross said, his chest hurting a little bit when he noted that Allen barely at the energy to even whine or cry anymore. It was just soft little whimpers or him trying to cuddle up against Cross (heat source) to try and sleep. At least he wasn’t trying to push Cross away, which helped Cross to get his pajamas on with ease.

“Alright you needy little shrimp, come here,” The man said, picking Allen up who was blindly trying to find his way into Cross’s arms to sleep,” You better get some sleep brat. I don’t feel like driving for two hours to go to Mother’s tomorrow. Though she probably would like to see you anyways.”

Allen’s only response was to unleash the most jaw breaking, body shaking, hugest yawn his little body has probably ever produced in his young life.

“Holy shit. I almost thought you were about to have a seizure or some shit brat. Damn,” Cross commented, snagging Allen’s soft blanket and draping it over him before settling on his Laz-Z-Boy with the little child curled up against him. He seemed like he was already back asleep. Cross only hoped that he would be asleep longer than an hour or two.

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The good news is, Allen slept rather peacefully. The bad news is was that it only lasted for two and a half hours before he woke up screaming and crying which pulled Cross from his nap rather rudely. For someone who only slept for two hours the brat sure screamed and cried with enough energy from a good night’s sleep.

Cross groaned in frustration, beginning to rock Allen back and forth in the chair, hoping that this wasn’t going to be the trend throughout the rest of this shit show of a day or throughout the night.

“Just relax kid. Please go back to bed. I’m begging you kid,” Cross sighed in defeat, “You can’t keep going on like this.”

Well unfortunately Allen could because he proceeded to alternate being awake and having issues falling back to sleep, before sleeping for small increments (like ten to thirty minutes) and proceeding to wake back up to restart the cycle. The bath was only a temporary solution. He continued to cycle like this well into the night and until early morning until Cross finally decided he had enough. He tried everything he could think of. He tried running another bath for Allen who refused and proceeded to throw an entire fit that left Cross with a sore side and a small bruise on his chin. He tried getting the kid to drink some warm milk which resulted in one broken mug because Allen thought Cross was trying to poison him. Cross tried feeding him which went just as smoothly as the milk incident. He tried laying down with him in bed. He tried letting him listen to music, which almost worked but apparently whatever voices Allen heard over took the music playing and he proceeded to rip the earphones off in frustration. He tried forcing the kid to run around and get rid of the extra energy he had, but the kid was too tired to even walk a couple steps let alone run. He tried massaging his back. Rubbing his head. Talking to him. Humming to him. Singing to him. And nothing was the fix he was looking for.

So, morning hit and Allen was thankfully in one of his microsleeps. Cross left him on the chair and walked out to talk to Mother to let her know they would be coming over before giving her a run down of his symptoms. Allen Walker basically had not slept for three days and Cross was equally
exhausted and concerned that Allen wouldn’t be able to sleep again. Once he got off the phone Cross grabbed a small bag to pack up spare clothes, some comfort items that may be of use to get Allen to sleep, and pain killers (for Cross. He was already getting another headache.). Lucky for him, it didn’t take him that long to gather these things and he managed to get both the bag and Allen into the car before the child had a chance to wake up.

When Allen did wake up all hell broke loose (which Cross knew they would, so he locked all the doors, so Allen couldn’t try to get out and buckled him the seat before telling Timcanpy to guard him.). Allen tried to wrench his door open, frantic to get out of ‘this death trap’. Apparently having the kid wake up sleep deprived and in a moving car was a bad idea, but at this point Cross didn’t have a choice.

“We’re gonna die! We’re gonna die!” Allen shrieked, hyperventilating in his seat once he realized he was trapped in the car.

“We’re not going to die, I promise. But it would be helpful if you tried to calm down, so we don’t get into a car accident,” Cross suggested.

“You’re a liar! I hate you! You’re selling me back to the ring leader! I don’t wanna go! Don’t make me go, please,” Allen bawling in full hysterics.

“We’re not going to the circus. I don’t even know the ring leader. We’re going to see Mother. Don’t you want to see her? You liked running around her house and helping Barba in the garden, right? Once you get some good sleep, you’ll be able to run around and get some fresh air and relax,” Cross mentioned, hoping to calm Allen down. He reached over to turn on the radio,” Here listen to some music. It’ll calm you down.”

Plus, it’ll hopefully drown out the noise of him crying which was starting to get on Cross’s nerves. Honestly how many tears did this kid have? It was two hours of Allen staring at the dashboard (after he had his fit), slipping into a microsleep, or whimpering pitifully when another night terror woke him (although some fucking trucks were being assholes and passing past his car with those loud ass engines, scaring the brat awake. That pissed him off).

“You’re okay. Mother will know what to do and you’ll feel better in no time,” Cross soothed, petting Allen’s head when the child began once again to whimper, “We’re almost there.”

It was a long two hours, especially since Cross was also tired, but they made it. Cross was just thankful Allen didn’t throw another huge fit like he did trying to get out of the car because Cross’s nerves were already so frayed. It took everything in his power to remind himself that Allen didn’t have any control over his paranoia or hallucinations and hitting the child into submission would only make things worse. He was misbehaving out of being tired, not because he wanted to. Cross sighed in relief, resting his head on the steering wheel when he pulled into Mother’s driveway. He took a look over at the kid who was resting his head on Timcanpy who was vibrating and making a noise similar to a purring cat. Apparently, this was weirdly soothing to the boy, or at least that’s what Cross thought because it stopped him from whining.

“Alright, let’s see what kind of shit Mother has in store for you, shall we?” Cross responded, unbuckling Allen, picking him up, before getting out of the car and walking towards the house.

Cross frowned at the strong smell of lavender in the air and at Mother’s greeting, “Wow Marian you look like shit.”

“You mean more so than usual or my usual looking like shit?” was Cross’s response.
“Well you must not feel as awful as you look considering you are still a sarcastic ass. How’s the child? Did he sleep any on the way over?”

“Of and on. Not well. Nearly caused me to have an accident on the way here because he was trying to tear off the door handle to get out of the car,” Cross sighed, walking over to a chair so Mother to assess Allen who refused to be torn away from Cross, “The hell is up with the strong lavender bull shit?”

“Lavender is used to promote calmness and reduce anxiety,” was Mother’s response, clucking her tongue as she took one look at Allen, “The poor child looks absolutely awful. Why didn’t you bring him sooner Marian!”?

“You told me to wait a little bit!”

“Well that’s because I didn’t realize he looked this bad. Having constant anxiety is not good for anyone, let alone a little one like him,” Mother scolded, holding up a hand to stop Cross from protesting,” Never mind that now. I blended up a drink to help the child sleep.”

“Good luck with that, he’s not too happy about anything I give him.”

“Well that’s why I’m putting you up to the task of making him choke it down.”

“Really!? Do you want your entire collection of glasses broken old hag!”?

“Lower your voice, we are trying to promote a relaxing and calm environment and your yelling will only stress him out more.”

“Like hell! Look at him! He’s a fucking zombie right now!”

“Then it shouldn’t be a problem to get him to drink this,” Mother responded as she handed Cross a mug of tea. It smelled very strongly of…well shit. He could pick up some chamomile and lavender from the strange concoction but also something earthier.

“It’s a mixture of chamomile, lavender, valerian root, and kava root. It should help. Kava is especially useful in low doses, it’s a muscle relaxant, but in higher doses it can cause hallucinations. I will teach you how to properly measure out each ingredient and it will be very important for you to keep that in mind,” Mother explained.

“Well if this is just a one-time thing-“

“Marian you only know the surface level of what kind of trauma this child has been through. I am sure this will not be a last time, especially when he’s prone to have issues sleeping in the first place,” Mother deadpanned, “Now hurry up and give it to him. You can have some yourself, you could stand to use it. I’ll be right back.”

“Your weird ass witchcraft shit better work old hag.”

“Really? You’re doubting me now?”

Cross sighed but turned his attention to Allen,” Well you heard her. Drink up. Come on, open your mouth.”

Allen whined, threatening to throw a fit immediately but Cross wasn’t going down without a fight. He was going to get this kid to drink this weird ass shit whether he wanted to or not. After some very forceful coaxing and prying open the kid’s mouth, Cross was surprised that he managed to
make the kid drink that shit without spilling too much of it. Granted, Cross figured he only drank it because he was excessively thirsty based on how he chugged it so fast he barely tasted it. That didn’t change the fact he tried to push Cross away from him. God forbid Cross make him drink something that was good for his health, right?

“Kid stop I’m going to end up dropping your ass on the floor!” Cross said, growling in annoyance when he felt Allen’s hand push against his face, “Where the fuck is all this energy coming from now??”

“I aint gonna sleep you dirty old man!”

“Dirty old man? Kid I am so close to tanning your hide I swear to God,” Cross said losing his patience, especially when he received a nice little kick to his stomach from said angry brat.

“You will do no such thing. I will not have you cause him even more distress Cross! I told you to lower your voice-Oh never mind you’re both crabby! Give him here. Drink some tea and take a nap before you lose your temper,” Mother scolded, seating herself in her rocking chair. She had a necklace with a tiny bag attached to it in her hand. Cross had no qualms about handing Allen over to Mother and did so gleefully before walking out of the room.

“Now now, stop acting like a little fool and calm down. The tea should take effect soon and then you’ll be able to get some good sleep.” Mother soothed, beginning to rock Allen in her arms (*She’s like 4’8 last time I checked, I think it’s plausible considering Allen is around 3’2 in this story. He’s a fucking midget, I know. But I love smol Allen so much.). She attached the necklace to his neck when he began to calm down to a point where she felt he wasn’t going to resist.

“The fuck’s in the necklace?” Cross asked, chugging down Mother’s stupid ass tea because…well okay he was curious as fuck about it. Even if he didn’t believe in this stupid ass shit.

“There are crystals in the pouch to help promote sleep and calm. Some amethyst to help with deep sleep, hematite for any emotional pain, some black tourmaline for deeper relaxation and rose quartz for healing and relaxation,” Mother explained, petting back Allen’s hair who was beginning to squint, losing focus. Mother smelled intensely of lavender and it was almost dizzying, but he could feel his muscles that were taut over the last few days loosening up.

“All that in a tiny ass pouch?”

“Don’t question me Marian. I could’ve refused to help you.”

“Bull shit. You fell in love with the boy the moment I brought the runt here the first time.”

“And you didn’t? Don’t be all high and mighty Marian. I’ve seen how the boy affected you. This little boy is going to be quite charming when he grows older.”

“If he ever does. He hasn’t grown much at all over the months.”

“Beansprouts need time to grow Marian.”

If Allen was able to focus on their conversation at all he’d probably be furious at being called a beansprout, especially since Kanda always called him one. He wasn’t that freaking short! Well…he was but he was gonna grow big and strong one day! He’d tower over Kanda and then he’d be the beansprouts. Stupid Bakanda! He could hear the ring leader yelling at him to move his ass, threatening to beat him if he didn’t, but he couldn’t move his body at all. He was the most relaxed he had ever been in days and in that moment. He didn’t care if he heard the shouting or not, in fact it was getting quieter. Just fuzzy noise. He almost forgot what peace and relaxation even felt like.
Allen didn’t even hesitate when he felt his eyes completely lose focus, he just let his body float down into the dark abyss of sleep his body craved and needed.

Cross looked on in interest, “No way in hell that fucking worked that fast.”

“Well he is quite small and already severely deprived of sleep. It’s not that hard to believe. You just don’t want to admit that my methods are equally as effective as prescriptions and over the counter medications. He’ll be out for quite a while.”

And quite awhile he was. By the time Cross collected his brat to keep an eye on him and also catch a little shut eye the brat was snoring and absolutely dead to the world. Nothing woke him up, and Cross tried much to Mother’s annoyance.

“The hell are you doing Cross!? Do you want to give him Shaking Baby Syndrome!?”

“He’s not that young!”

“Young or not, you don’t need to shake a kid that fucking much! Knock it off, sleep and leave him alone!”

So, to avoid Mother’s wrath and her cane of justice, Cross stop messing around with Allen and dragged himself to the spare bedroom where he laid down next to his brat and zonked out alongside him. By the time Cross woke up after nine hours of pure blissful sleep, Allen was still dead to world. Mother had to constantly reassure him that Allen would wake up again and to be patient. That still didn’t stop Cross from making sure Allen was still breathing and checking his pulse from time to time. All in all, Allen was out for a good day and a half in total. Which meant two things. That kid got some major sleep. However, it also meant that he was going to absolutely ravenous which forced Cross to stock up on a bunch of food for the brat to consume once he was done hibernating. Cross almost jumped out of his skin when the kid, finally waking up after nearly two days of sleep, padded up to him to rest his head on his leg.

Allen turned his head to look at the man with my most pitiful puppy eyes in the entire world.

“What the fuck do you want kid? I was just getting used to not having a bratty kid around to take care of.”

It wasn’t Allen who answered Cross, but his stomach which unleashed the most unholy, loudest growl Cross ever heard in his life.

“I’m so hungry.” Allen whined in response. Fully confirming that, yes, Allen was back to his normal self which Cross was relieved about. He’d never thought he’d be so happy making food for the brat.

“Good because I have enough food to feed an entire army and it’s all for you,” Cross said as he got up to go grab food for the kid before his stomach could growl at him again.

“I love you.” Allen sighed happily.

“I know.”

“I don’t even care if you’re being egotesticle right now. I still love you.”

“Ego what!??”

“Egotestical. Lavi taught me that word.”
“It’s egotistical brat…Jesus Christ slow down you’re going to make yourself choke!”

Allen tried to say something in response, but it was muffled around the food he was shoving into his mouth.

“Don’t talk with your mouth full! Ugh just shut up and eat. We’ll settle this later.”

Chapter End Notes

(Hi all. Sorry for all the angst but I was playing with this idea for a while. I swear I haven’t forgotten about Krory and Miranda’s date and Link’s little crush on Allen lol. Just taking a break from all the sweet shit to give you angst. Anyways, I’d thought by letting you guys know that as a Psych and Addiction Studies major, you should be careful with the drug Kava. It is a controlled substance (I guess in some other areas because here you can get Kava tea easily in Walmart. Guess it's not as potent though), but it is easily abused and can produce hallucinations. It does help relax the body and help sleep, but do not drive under the influence and please do not mix alcohol with it. Stick with methods such as reading a book before bed or limiting blue screen exposure to help with sleep before trying something like Kava. When it comes to crystals though…well I mostly looked up stuff on the internet and the information my friend gave me with my own set of crystals he gave me. Away from book knowledge, I do plan on introducing Anita sometimes and dedicating a chapter on how Allen meets Anita! I am sad to say I will not be updating as frequently nowadays since I have some pretty heavy workload classes and I am planning for an anime convention at my school. I am also participating in a reverse bang. I will still try to update as frequently as I can though. Get your sleep kiddos and enjoy! Thank you for the kudos and comments!)


**Allen Meets Anita**

**Chapter Summary**

So. This is how Allen meets Anita.

**Chapter Notes**

(Warning some of the things mentioned here are NSFW. Hope you enjoy! This is the time Allen first meets Anita!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Over the few months Allen had known Mr. Cross, he had brought over plenty of mistresses to the house which always pissed Allen off. There were mistresses of all kinds. Skinny as twigs, big thick thighs and a big round ass, those with pale porcelain skin, those with skin of dark chocolate. They were beautiful women through and through. Some had wide, innocent doe-eyes. Others had curved almond eyes. Cross went to both extremes and in between. When it came to women, Cross’s preference was that they were ‘good women’. It wasn’t the idea that his guardian was a womanizer. He actually tended to treat his lady friends quite well. What pissed Allen off was the way they looked at him. He always hated women. Women were sneaky. Women were manipulative liars. They would pick out your weak points and act all sweet and nice to you before using those things against you. Leaving you more broken than when they had started with you.

Allen remembered when he was on the streets or looking up at the audience from back stage during a performance. He saw the way those men and women acted towards the little children they brought with them. Oooing and aaah-ing at all the fantastical tricks the performers were doing in the ring for them. He saw how the mothers would kiss their children’s cheeks, the way they would fuss over them, wiping their mouths when they got candy or food all over them. The way they would stroke back their hair and smile endearingly at them with a gaze only mothers could produce. Allen looked on with curiosity and yearning. He was thankful to have met Mana, because he got the taste of a father’s love through him and later on through Cross, although it was of a different ‘flavor’. It was still love though. Allen never felt what a mother’s love was. Sure, he met Mother who would stroke his hair sometimes or call him endearing pet names, but when Allen tried cheating at cards or did something really stupid, she wasn’t afraid to let him know. He shivered just thinking about feeling Mother’s cane on the back of his legs or his head.

Even though Allen wondered what a mother’s love felt like, even though he yearned for it, he really really really distrusted women. Cross found this out quickly after one too many of his mistresses suddenly decided to up and leave whenever Cross left the room for a few minutes. At first, he didn’t understand what was going on. He did have quite a way with the ladies after all. It was one night where he got his answer after inviting yet another woman into the household. Allen was standing right there, with a soft smile on his lips. No one would’ve known it, but Cross did. That smile was fake, and it was full of bad intention. He saw the way Allen looked at the woman that night when he thought Cross wasn’t looking. He glared daggers at her and wrinkled up his nose. The brat was behind this…
After another failed date night, Cross rounded on Allen who stared up at him innocently.

“Cut the crap kid! What did you say to her? It’s rude to meddle in someone else’s love life ya know?” Cross growled.

Allen pouted and shrugged,” I didn’t say anything to her. She just doesn’t like the way I look and ran off.”

That was a fucking lie. Cross knew it. Allen wasn’t going to give him an answer though. Cross already tried after a few more times of Allen meddling with the mistresses he brought home at night. Each time it was the same old excuse “They don’t like how I look.” or “They saw my arm.”. Cross threatened to hole Allen up in his room until he was finished with his lady friends, but he knew the little brat was going to throw a fit and make them question what on earth was going on in his house. So, most times Cross and Allen just fought, resulting in each of them going their separate ways. Cross, in his room, pissed off and confused as to why Allen was fucking around with his love life. Allen, crying softly in his room.

So, Allen distrusted women, that was one problem he had with Cross and his mistresses. Another thing he hated was sharing Cross with his lady friends. Allen grew up not having much or having anything at all, so whenever he did have something, he tried to hold onto it as tightly as he could. More so, after Mana’s death. Allen didn’t want to share his father with anyone else. He wanted Cross to stay his and have his attention on him. Not only that, but whenever a new woman came over, Allen felt scared. He felt scared that they were going to try and convince Cross to get rid of him because he was ‘ugly’, ‘a freak’, that he was ‘a burden’. Some of them looked at him with pity, but he knew in their hearts they could never imagine having to put up with someone like Allen just to have Cross. They’d try to get rid of him in a heart beat and make it look like it was ‘in the best interest of the child’. Then there were those who instantly looked at him in disgust and try to steal Cross’s attention at any minute. Either way, Allen took care of them pretty quickly.

What made Allen distrust women though, leads back to an incident back when he worked in the circus. One of the acrobats, a skinny woman with red eyes and white hair decided to turn little Red into her little pet. Oh, she was a beautiful lady and she moved with such grace, the grace only acrobats could have. She was quite a tall woman though which was an interesting sight in itself. She did sky acrobats and Red loved to watch her. Especially when she did performances with aerial silks. Red loved watching her slender, red-tipped fingers stroke the silks as she wrapped them around her thin body. It always gave him such a rush (not sexually of course.). The rush of fear when he saw her body suddenly drop a few feet, only to be held above the ground by some silk fabric. He always wondered when or if he’d see the day that body would fall to the floor with a loud, sickening thump. It happened before. He’d seen it before. Oh, it would truly be a shame to see such a graceful looking body get so bent out of shape because of one little accident.

This was why Red came to distrust women. Especially beautiful women. The women Cross always seemed to bring home. That woman took an interest in Red, for whatever reason. Maybe it was because she was bored. Maybe it was because she saw the way he looked at her. Either way that woman decided she was going to play ‘mommy’ to Red. Red, who was still rather young while working at the circus, had not yet fully realized that nobody could be trusted, especially the circus folks. The freaks. The ones who were supposed to love him because he was like them to. Cosimo was not beating him up quite so much at this time, nor the Ringleader, though he was beginning to have food being taken from him because he was working too slow in the Ringleader’s eyes.

This woman started off with inviting Allen into her tent to stay warm on the cold winter nights. She would give him food. Would stroke his hair back like those ladies did with those kids he had seen in the audience. Sure, Red was afraid and distrusted the woman’s advances at first…but Red
wasn’t to the point yet where he had much resistance. Red was so smitten with the woman and the way she performed, and he yearned the touch of a mother that the little child was putty in her hands. She made Red feel safe. She let him sleep on her lap. Her ministrations lasted a week. A week. Red didn’t know what happened or what he did to make the woman do what she did. But she turned on him. One moment she was kind and wonderful to him. Next, she treated him like trash. Beat him, slapped him, clawing him with those blood red fingernails of her. She kicked him out from her tent. Called him disgusting names and told him nobody would ever love such a child like him. That was it. That was all. Red didn’t know why. Red didn’t understand at all what had happened and his hurt him so very badly.

That women was merely bored and wanted Red to feel comfortable with her before turning around and breaking him. She gave him a taste of what he desired and took it all away in a heartbeat. Women were cruel.

So, Allen did what he could to make them stay away from him and to keep the things he had right now. He did everything he could think of:

“Hi. My name is Allen. I’m Cross’s child. I can see dead people, in fact I see someone right behind you now.”

“Hi. I’m Allen. I’m prone to chronic nightmares, screaming fits, bed wetting, and I hear voices. One of the voices is named Neah. He doesn’t like you. He wants me to kill you.”

“Hi there. Oh, don’t worry about me, I’m just Cross’s sacrifice to Satan on Friday.”

“My daddy cries after sex. It’s very loud. I can hear it from my room. I hope you have Kleenex.”

“My daddy beats me to the sound of Never Gonna Give You Up by Rick Astley. Sometimes if he’s really feeling it, he’ll beat me to the sound of Baby by Justin Bieber. Last week he changed it up and beat me the song Yakety Sax.”

“So, Dad asked me to ask you if it was ok to watch.”

Sometimes Allen didn’t have to say anything messed up to the women that Cross brought home. Sometimes he got away with saying something like “He puts the toilet paper on the wrong way.”, “He mixes M&M’s and Skittles together.” Or “He feeds me instant mac & cheese and not the good kind.”

Most times he had to go the messed-up route though, which was fine. Allen had a huge arsenal that he could use. Such as telling them innocently that he was surprised they were there and that perhaps his father’s rash must’ve cleared up. Sometimes if it was a woman who loved their hair, Allen would bring down a barbie doll with mangled, cut up hair, and tell them Cross said he could practice on them. Either way, Allen was determined to drive every single woman from the house. He would do whatever he could to make it happen.

Until Cross brought home a woman that simply would not be deterred by anything Allen told her or showed her one night. That night Allen was beyond angry and frustrated. That night was when things changed anew for Allen, in a surprisingly good way, although Allen sure didn’t think so that night or the next morning afterward. That woman’s name was Anita.

It started off like it always started off. Cross brought her home just as Allen was walking over to greet his father. Allen would plaster the same fake smile on his face but when they walked away, he would glare at the woman and begin to scheme. What will it be this time? He found a dead cockroach the other day. Maybe he could shove that in her face and make her freak out? What
would be her weak spot? Maybe her hair? She had a short bob for the most part with a long pony tail in the back. It was a weird hairstyle, but perhaps she loved having her hair long so the threat of Allen cutting it off might make her leave. She wore an ordinary t-shirt and jeans that night and had ruby red lips. Her eyes were curved so Allen knew she was of Asian descent. She moved gracefully like that woman back at the circus. She was dangerous. She had to go as soon as possible!

So, when Cross left for a few minutes to fix supper. Allen pounced at his first opportunity. He grabbed the cockroach carcass he found the other day and ran right up to Anita. Without explanation, he held it up right in front of her face. Allen was expecting a squeal of fear or disgust. What he didn’t expect was Anita gasped softly, a smile striking her features.

“Oh, neato! You found a bug!” Anita said with a grin, taking it in her hand which shook Allen to the core. Oh, he was not dealing with an ordinary woman! Ladies didn’t like bugs! They weren’t supposed to!

“Guess what,” Allen said, refusing to be deterred from his goal.

“What?”

“I see dead people. There’s someone right behind you. They look angry.”

“Oh, that must be that one bitch I shanked the other month. Well she deserved it, she threatened one of my girls at the brothel. I could’ve sworn she survived that though.” Anita explained, “That’s very cool though! Maybe you should be a ghost hunter when you grow older.”

What the fuck!? Allen thought to himself, feeling his confidence waver a lot more. This woman… did nothing- no there had to be something that affected her!

“I’m guessing since you are here my dad’s rash must’ve cleared up.” Allen chirped innocently.

“Oh yes, it has,” Anita agreed, totally unfazed. It was like this bitch knew what Allen was going to throw at her! She was totally unfazed.

“My dad makes me eat dog food,” Allen mentioned, refusing to back down.

“Well you sure seem healthy for someone who eats dog food. Who am I to judge though,” Anita smiled sweetly at Allen.

“My dad throws rocks at elderly people.”

“Oh, I’ve seen that. If only had as good of aim as he does with his gun.”

Allen felt anger begin to flush his cheeks. This bitch! Nothing fazed her! She wasn’t even being a bitch with Allen! She didn’t talk to him in a bitchy tone like some women did when they didn’t buy what he was talking about and fired sass right back at him. She was talking to him like this was a normal conversation! It wasn’t even condescending! What the fuck what up with this woman!?

Unbeknownst to Allen though Cross was watching Allen interact with his last few mistresses, some of them even came from Anita’s strip club and told the things Allen said to them to see if it was true. Most ended up staying away because they didn’t want to deal with a bratty little kid, but Anita had fallen in love with Cross over the many months he came to her strip club. In fact, they didn’t even meet at the strip club she ran. They met up at her day job as a stocker at Wal-Mart. Cross was attracted to her strip club though because she ran one where they didn’t serve alcohol (which was quite unheard of, but Anita was sick and tired of seeing older, drunk men grope her ladies). So, Cross could get women and not relapse. Perfect. You’d think she’d be jealous with
Cross being with other women, right? Wrong. Surprisingly Cross didn’t always have sex with the ladies he chose to keep in his company. In fact, he treated them and paid to treat them like a real woman. For those that deemed stripping was not enough and chose to sell their bodies. That wasn’t to say he didn’t do naughty things to them, but it seems he got off more on pleasing women than getting pleasure himself. Of course, the ladies would never leave without showing their appreciation.

Ever since the first time he met her though, Cross had his sights on Anita. Not because he wished to conquer her…although that was part of the reason. He had a deeper connection to Anita than any other woman he had encountered. Anita sensed that and that was why she didn’t harbor a lot of jealousy in the first place. After all, Cross was not hers, yet. Not until tonight where Cross finally manned up and decided to invite her over to his house and make her dinner. Cross filled her in on Allen, but Anita knew what she was dealing with when she walked in the door and saw Allen. She saw a child who was jealous and scared to have his daddy taken away from him by a woman. It was a shame though, because Anita wasn’t budging. That didn’t mean she was going to fight Allen for him. Oh no, she understood how the little boy felt, she’s seen the situation so many times and heard of it from her girls that she hired.

See, when Anita walked through that door and her eyes landed on Allen. She fell in love with the little boy at first sight. Anita couldn’t have children, or so she was told, even though she really badly wanted them. Her girls were her children and she was quite the mother bear when they were treated poorly. She was going to win over Allen. One way or another. Cross smirked from the other room, watching Allen’s interaction with Anita and how his cheeks begin to flush in embarrassment and anger. As much as it pissed him off to her Allen say such things about him and hurt him that Allen didn’t trust him that much to still keep him around, even when another woman came into the picture, it was cute to see him try so hard. It also hurt to see him try so hard.

Allen resisted the urge to pout or puff out his cheeks in irritation. He had to keep his cool.

“Well I just thought you should know. See ya,” Allen said, exiting the room. Tears filled his eyes in frustration as he stormed off to his room to scheme some more. Okay so words were not going to get him out of this. Maybe if he proved to be an unruly child? Screamed into the night and made it hard for them to get a good night sleep? He was already good at that last one without even trying. Allen decided he’d lay low for a while. So, he ate his supper and went to play outside in Cross’s mediocre backyard. There he found the next object he would use for the next part of his plan. He saw a garter snake slithering across the lawn. Perfect.

So, while Cross and Anita were making out on the couch, or so he thought, he snuck back inside with the snake in his little arms. The snake didn’t seem too thrilled by this, but he didn’t wriggle too much in displeasure, so it was easy to shove him into Anita’s purse which was conveniently located in the closet. Just for good measure, he even stole some money from her purse. About 20$. Also, some lipstick. Allen liked make-up to. Then he decided to make like a tree and leaf (pun intended). Allen went to bed early that night, smiling evilly to himself.

Well, the plan would’ve worked if Cross didn’t catch Allen out of the corner of his eye messing around in there. Once his little brat made his way back upstairs, Cross went to investigate. Cross frowned at the snake wriggling around in Anita’s purse. Fucking brat. What if it was poisonous!? He could’ve gotten himself hurt and Anita, god damn brat! This jealousy had to stop! Anita followed Cross and looked over him to look at her purse. She blinked at the snake in her purse but didn’t squeal or run away.

“Wow…poor little fella,” Anita sighed.
“To the snake or to Allen?”

“Both.”

“I swear to God he doesn’t act like this…”

“It’s okay Cross-“

“No, it’s not. The kid probably stole something from your purse too. That isn’t okay. I don’t give a shit if he’s jealous or not.”

“Cross,” Anita said seriously, stopping him with a hand over his chest, “It’s okay. I will sort it out. You’re having me watch him tomorrow while you’re at work. Right?”

“Yes but I don’t want to put you in charge of a little tyrant.”

“Cross, I can handle it. He’s doing this because he feels threatened. If I prove to him that I’m not a threat, then he will be just fine.”

“Fine, but if he gets to be too much of a handful tomorrow, you let me know. I’ll straighten his ass out real quick.”

“Has he ever been around other women before? Other than the women you brought home?”

“Well, he’s been around Mother.”

“Mother is an old lady Cross. How do you know a woman hasn’t done something awful to him before?”

“Yeah but he’s fine with Komui’s little sister.”

“She’s a little girl Cross. She isn’t a woman. Look, I’ll handle it. Just you see. After work he’ll adore me.”

“Yeah, whatever you say.”

~

“Alright kid, so Anita is going to watch you today while I’m at work,” Cross deadpanned, looking his kid dead in the eyes who looked shook as hell for a split second before he covered it up with his fake ass smile. It was tomorrow morning and Cross was leaving to go to work. Instead of leaving Allen with Timcanpy and checking in on the phone every once in a while, now he had a babysitter. Allen was not pleased at all that his daddy was leaving him with a woman. Why couldn’t he just be with Lavi’s grandfather? Or Tiedoll? Or go to work with him!? Allen would much rather prefer to go to work with Cross. Being home alone was so boring at times.

“You better behave for her. If I hear anything I will come back and beat your lil ass until it is bright fucking red. Ya got me?” Cross threatened, “In this house we treat people with respect. We may use sarcasm, but we use it respectfully.”

Anita smirked at Cross’s remark. Apparently Cross also thought it over and realized that sounded stupid. It sounded better in his head. Sarcasm was in no way respectful to someone at all, but it sure was great to use.

“Yeah,” Allen responded softly. He had no intention being nice though.
“Good. Have fun.” Cross called back, leaning down to kiss Anita’s cheek and ruffling Allen’s hair before leaving. Allen felt himself fuming at watching Cross kiss Anita. It was gross, especially when she had only God knows what in store for him! He can’t believe his dad was leaving him here with a woman! Was he nuts!? Allen pouted and resisted the urge to cry when he watched Cross walk out of the door. He felt so betrayed.

“Alright Allen, so what do you want for breakfast?” Anita asked cheerfully.

“I’m not hungry,” Allen huffed, not holding back his disdain for the woman.

“Well that’s okay, we can have breakfast for lunch.”

“I don’t want breakfast for lunch.” Allen responded back snootily

“That’s okay to.” Anita said, unfazed. That only made Allen even more angry. Clearly, he was giving her attitude, but she didn’t even notice, if she did. She was totally underestimating Allen.

“Do you want to watch T.V.?”

“No.”

“Do you want me to read you a book?”

“No.”

“Do you want to go to the park?”

“Nope,” Allen said, glaring at Anita and over pronouncing the ‘p’.

“Wow. So, you just sit here and do nothing all day? Don’t you get bored?” Anita asked.

“You wouldn’t be interested in what I do.”

“Well I can’t really say if I don’t know what you do.”

“Don’t you have anything else to do? Like do your hair or make-up.”

“Well I guess I could, but I seemed to have lost my lipstick yesterday.” Anita smiled sweetly, her eyes soft as she looked at Allen. It only unnerved him more. He didn’t like those eyes. He didn’t trust them. Where was the attitude? Where was the insults? Why wasn’t she calling him a little brat? Why wasn’t she calling him ugly? Why wasn’t she trying to slap him silly!? Allen had to look down to avoid those eyes.

“Not like it would make you any less ugly,” Allen sniffed, remembering that he took it from last night.

“Well that’s a little hurtful.” Anita pouted.

“I don’t care! You’re stupid and your face is stupid looking to! Stop staring at me like that!” Allen said, finally snapping. He turned on his heel and ran off.

“You know that you’re even cuter when your mad!” Anita called out, smiling to herself when she heard a loud slam of a door being closed. She looked over at Timcanpy, “I think it’s going to be a long day for you and I. Oh well. I heard that little boy has quite the appetite and no one can resist my cooking. No matter how hard they try.”
Timcanpy grinned encouragingly as Anita went off and decided to make one of her famous breakfast dishes which was an extremely fluffy omelet.

~

Allen hid out in Cross’s bedroom for quite a long while. He sadly took his hat and his jacket which he loved cuddling up to the most so he thought the next best thing would be his bed. Which was okay as long as he buried his nose into Cross’s pillow. The rest of the bed smelled like the woman and Allen hated it. What’s worse that even Tim seemed to take a liking to the woman! They were supposed to be friends and agree on the same thing! But Tim fell victim to the woman’s snake like charm! This woman was only here for a night and already she was taking everything Allen loved. It was probably better if he just left then.

What would he do though!? He can’t just work at the circus again! They wouldn’t let a kid like him work there! He could try and live at the orphanage, but he doubted they would accept him. Plus, he’d miss Lavi and Lenalee and Alma and though he really hated to admit it…he’d miss Bakanda too! Not that he’d miss him back. He could gamble, but he wouldn’t be able to get into bars. Plus, if something went wrong, he’d be screwed. He didn’t know what to do! Big fat tears began to roll down Allen’s face as he realized how hopeless his situation was. He was stupid to believe that he could finally be happy.

He’d find something. He’d keep walking forward, like Mana said. He’d keep walking…

~

It took several minutes for Allen to pop up again once Anita finish making omelets and when he did, he had a little backpack slung on his shoulders.

“Hey. Where are you going?” Anita asked.

“None of your business,” Allen responded, his eyes were rimmed in red. Anita felt her heart break. Awhhhh he was crying.

“Well you should at least eat something first before you decide to venture off. I never let my girls leave hungry. They may not always say what’s going on in their lives, but I always make sure they’re sent home with full stomachs and knowing someone has their back.” Anita explained. Allen didn’t budge.

“You know I’m not going to let you walk out of that door without at least eating something. I will tackle you to the ground if I have to little one,” Anita responded, her tone serious. Allen had to admit, that food smelled amazing…plus she was offering free food. That was one less meal he’d have to worry about. He reluctantly set his backpack on the floor before slowly coming up to the table and climbing up on a chair.

Anita smiled before setting a plate up for Allen, “I didn’t poison this either…unless you consider butter to be poisonous, then I guess I poisoned it a lot. Tim can vouch for me.”

“Tim is a traitor,” Allen sulked. Timcanpy made an upset whining sound in response he wings drooping like the ears of a sad dog.

“Why is he a traitor?” Anita asked.

“Cuz he likes you.”

“He might like me, but he loves you.”
“No, he doesn’t.”

“He doesn’t love you because he doesn’t dislike me and yet you do?”

“Yeah.”

“You know you can love a lot of people. Even if someone hates someone that you like, it doesn’t mean you love them any less. It’s cruel to make someone choose sides like that. Especially when this world is already filled with so much hate.”

Allen huffed, annoyed with her lecture. He took a bite of the food she set down in front of him and he had to resist the urge to melt. Oh my god it was amazing! It was the most fluffiest omelet he ever had and practically melted in his mouth. He had to remind himself that he was supposed to be angry and sulking right now instead of enjoying this woman’s food.

“How is it?” Anita smiled.

“It’s awful,” Allen deadpanned, but his tone totally didn’t voice his displeasure.

“Good. Then I made it just right,” Anita smiled.

“Stop doing that. That pisses me off.” Allen complained, glaring at the woman though he shoved more food in his mouth.

“Doing what?”

“Stop being so happy. I’m insulting you. You’re supposed to be angry. You’re supposed to hit me. Yell at me. Discipline me,” Allen explained, rolling his eyes like he was explaining things to a three-year-old.

“Is that what you think?”

“Yeah.”

“Well I think I’d rather be happy.”

“Well then you’re stupid.”

“I’m stupid because I choose to be happy instead of letting you get to me?”

“Yeah.”

“Then I like being stupid. It’s a lot easier to breathe when you’re stupid. Sure, I still get angry when guys mess with my girls up at the club. Or if they yell at me. But after I handle it, I let the anger melt away. Sometimes you can’t fix people who wish to only hurt other people. That’s okay. It’s not your job to fix them. All you can do is say what you need to say and leave them to their own devices. If they know what they said had gotten to you, they won. But if you don’t let it get to you and you decide to be happy, then they lost. You can’t erase what’s happened in the past, but you can learn to let it go and move on. Sometimes in order to learn to let go we have to let people in and show us that the world isn’t as cruel as it seems. It’s scary. But if you never try then how do you move forward? You’re just stuck there being angry and hurt,” Anita explained.

That sounded like something Mana would say, Allen thought to himself. He missed Mana. If Mana was here, he’d know what to do. Maybe. He’d probably be disappointed in Allen for treating a lady
in such a way. Allen felt tears gather again in his eyes. I’m sorry Mana…I failed again. I hurt someone again. He was continuing this cycle of anger again.

“If you don’t mind me asking, why do you hate me?” Anita asked.

“I don’t hate you. I hate pretty ladies. Pretty ladies lie. Pretty ladies use people and they like to hurt people. They do it for fun.”

“Yeah pretty ladies can be like that. I’ve met plenty of them in my life. I’ve also met pretty men who do the same thing. Men with fancy suits. Anyone has the ability to be cruel depending on the situation. How many pretty ladies have you met that hurt you?” Anita asked.

Allen shrugged,” I don’t know.”

And he didn’t know. There were things he couldn’t remember. He could remember the beautiful acrobat lady. He could remember the hurtful, disgusting stares thrown his way from both ladies and men alike. Even children.

“Were there many men that hurt you?”

“Yeah.”

“Then why would you trust Cross then? He’s a man.”

“Cuz he’s not like them.”

“Do you think I’m like most women?”

“No. You like bugs.” Allen responded.

Anita laughed, “That’s right. I do. So, Cross isn’t like most men. He’s also a very smart man. He’s been hurt just like you. Don’t you think he’d be good at choosing women?”

“He’s stupid to sometimes.”

Anita laughed again,” Yeah I can see that. But we all are stupid sometimes. It’s all apart of being human. But you wouldn’t think he’d leave someone he didn’t trust to watch his little boy. Would you?”

Cross did say that he would do anything in his power to make sure Allen would be safe. That was one of the first things he told Allen and so far, he hadn’t let him down yet. Sure, he did stupid things. Sure, Allen got scrapes and bruises and there was that time he nearly fell out of his death trap of a car, but Cross was there. He was there to treat his wounds. He was there to quiet him after a nightmare. Where it counted and when Cross was able to, he kept Allen safe. If Allen got hurt, Cross was there to take care of him. He let him learn and he definitely didn’t take shit as he soon found out. He wasn’t afraid to punish Allen. But he was fair. He wasn’t the type of man that hit a kid without a good reason to.

“No.” Allen whimpered, his tears falling down his cheeks more rapidly. He felt stupid.

“Ya wanna know a secret?”

“Ok.”

“I can’t have children. I have tried for years and I can’t have them. I always wanted children. In a way, I started working and owning a strip club because my girls are my children. Many of them
come in looking for work as children, barely even adults yet some of them. Some of them sell their bodies because they don’t make enough stripping. They have to make money though because they can’t depend on their parents. Some people just shouldn’t have kids. The way they treat them sometimes, makes me feel like they’re mocking me. It’s a different story preventing children. I’m talking about people who have kids and beat the shit out of them just because they can. Having kids is a privilege. If you can’t handle having a kid then don’t bear them, don’t subject them to suffering. Look at me ranting,” Anita laughed, a faraway look in her eyes.

“I’m sorry…” Allen trailed off, unsure of what he is supposed to say. I mean sure, he knew that there was woman who wanted kids, but usually they were also the type that wanted ‘healthy’, ‘normal’ kids. That’s what he thought anyways.

“Tell ya what. I think we can come to a solution here. You wanna hear it?”

Allen shrugged. Not like he had anything to lose.

“I always wanted to be a mother. I can’t guarantee that I will be good at it…but I’ll show you what a mother should act like, if you trust me in return. I won’t take your daddy away from you, but you better bet your little behind if things don’t work out between us that I’m fighting for visitation rights. Ex-girlfriend or not. Does that sound like something you’d be willing to do?” Anita asked, “I’ll be real with you if you be real with me.”


“What do you mean why?”

“I’m ugly.”

“Well last time I checked your name was Allen,” Anita smirked,” You look perfectly fine to me.”

“I…but my arm,” Allen responded, lifting up his gross looking arm and hand.

Anita shrugged, “It’s just an arm. I don’t think it’s gross at all.”

“You don’t?” Allen asked, his eyes wide and watery.

“No,” Anita responded, reaching over to hold Allen’s left hand in her own. She didn’t pull back or flinch when she touched his hand like many people did. Instead she ran her thumb over the rough reddened skin with gentleness that reminded Allen of Mana. That wasn’t to say Cross had any issues with Allen touching him with his deformed hand or letting the younger hold his bigger hand with it when they were walking outside. However, Cross always seemed afraid of grasping it too tightly or Allen hurting his arm in some way. Allen was fine with it though. I mean, at least the man wasn’t avoiding it. The way Anita held his hand was gentle, but it was also firm. She wasn’t afraid of his arm or afraid of hurting it. She treated it like it was like a normal hand she was holding. His hand was never grasped in this way before.

Allen looked from the hand grasping his own and then back up to the woman’s face. Awestruck. Even after Allen the dog, even after Mana, even after Cross, Allen never could get used to someone touching his left hand. He remembered the first time Mana let him touch his cheek with his hand. It was strange to see something he thought was so ugly, be put up against such a handsome face that was Mana’s. Something ugly was never supposed to be against something beautiful. That was not how the world worked. Allen looked back down at the hand and felt his eyes fill with fresh tears.

“Do you think you want to give it a shot?” Anita asked the bewildered child.
Allen nodded slowly. He felt like he did when that lady at the circus began to manipulate him with promises of affection and safety. He felt so small and so trusting. It was scary. It scared him to death. But surely...surely he could put his trust into this woman, he thought. He could do it one last time.

So, in order to show Anita that he was willing to put his trust in her, the little boy climbed down from his chair and walked shyly up to her. Allen slowly laid his head down on her knee, much like a dog would rest their head on their owner’s leg when they wanted attention. It was something he found worked well during the earlier month of being around Cross. If he wished for attention, he would lay his head down on Cross’s leg since he didn’t know how to verbalize it. Cross would respond by rubbing his back or his head.

Anita slowly rested her hand on Allen’s head before gently carding her fingers through his hair, Allen jumped a little bit at the contact but easily relaxed under her touch within a minute. His head buzzed happily at the contact. It felt different from Cross’s touch which still felt good but it sure wasn’t like this. Maybe it was because Cross didn’t have fingernails like Anita did. Or that his hands were a lot rougher than Anita’s which were soft. Cross needed to use a lot more moisturizer.

Allen sighed, shivering when the woman ran her fingernails up and down his back. He practically melted.

After a few moments of just staying like that Allen finally broke the silence, “You’re not stupid.”

“Thank you.” Anita smiled.

“Tim isn’t a traitor either.”

“I’m sure he’s happy to hear that.”

Tim ‘gaah-ed’ his agreement.

“I’m sorry.”

“That’s okay, I forgive you.”

Another beat of silence. Then Allen reluctantly pulled away to walk back to his room. In about a minute or two later, the boy returned, his face downcast in shame. He shoved his hand out at Anita, which held her lipstick and money he stole from her. Anita smiled sweetly and held out her hand for the items which Allen relinquished to her.

“Thank you. That’s very sweet of you.”

“I’m sorry I stole your lipstick and money.”

“I forgive you.”

“It’s a pretty color.”

“I know isn’t it?” Anita agreed with a laugh.

Another beat of silence.

“I’m sorry for putting a snake in your purse.”

“I forgive you, although I think you should apologize to the snake. He didn’t seem too happy about that.”
“...I’m sorry for shoving a cockroach in your face.”

“I kind of liked that. It was interesting. Nonetheless, I forgive you,” Anita said patiently.

“...I’m sorry for all the things I said about Cross.”

“I forgive you although I think that’s something you have to tell him.”

Allen nodded softly in agreement.

“Alright. Well that’s enough of sulking and pouting,” Anita said, clapping her hands together, “We settled it, didn’t we? No more tears, okay? Can you try a smile?”

Allen hesitated, before his face lit up in a genuine grin. Anita’s heart melted and she resisted the urge to pinch his little cheeks.

“Beautiful!”

~

“Well I’ll be damned,” Cross whispered when he walked in after coming home from work. There he found Anita smiling sweetly up at him from the couch, cradling his little imp, fast asleep, “You weren’t joking.”

“Welcome home,” Anita responded, continuing to smile sweetly.

~

So, Anita quickly became part of the family. Over time she began to stay over more and more frequently and soon enough, so stayed at the house. Allen always happily ran towards her and her open arms whenever she visited and reveled in the kisses, she gave him. Though she only carried the title of ‘Cross’s girlfriend’ so far, she quickly became ‘mother’ to Allen. As far as he could tell, she didn’t need a ring or needed to share his blood. She treated him like all the other mothers did to their children, so she was ‘mother’ and Cross was ‘father’. Although Allen and Cross always found it awkward to call each other those titles, even though they slipped out sometimes.

Even though Cross wasn’t sure yet if he wanted to settle down and marry Anita, he had to say it was nice to have a family of his own. It was no longer just Tim and himself. Now he had a woman and a child. It was cute to see the kid run around and call Anita ‘Mama’ and it brought him joy to see Anita glowing in pride and love at having a child to call her own. He was thankful for Anita. For one, she was a good cook and though Allen always ate what he made, there were many times where Cross felt bad that he did so. Some of things he made simply did not look good. Another thing he was thankful for was that Anita was better at nurturing Allen. That wasn’t to say Cross didn’t try his best, but the kid had a lot of problems and it was easy to get burned out. Soon, they had a system going. One night, Cross would be the one to help Allen sleep and to comfort him during the nightmares or thunderstorms, whichever came first. The next night Anita would take over so Cross could sleep in. If Allen was simply having a rough night in general, they took turns. One would take him for a couple hours and then the other would.

Although when he thought Anita wasn’t looking Cross would watch her rock and sing Allen to sleep. He found moments like these to fill his chest with so much warmth and he could feel himself slipping further and further in love with Anita. She wasn’t a good woman. She was a perfect woman. One day he actually got around to asking her what that song was that she sung to Allen on those nights. She sang it in Japanese instead of English.
"It’s a Japanese lullaby called Tsunaida Te Ni Kiss Wo," Anita explained to him (A.K.A my lovely readers, the song we know as the 14’s melody. You thought I wasn’t going to include it in here!? You were wrong!). Cross later looked up the lyrics and was surprised how well they fit to Allen. Later on, Cross learned the song to sing to him as well and it became another ‘go to’ song to calm Allen, the first being ‘Lost Boy’.

One thing that Cross learned about Allen because of Anita (which shouldn’t have been a surprise now that he thought about it, after all. He was a clown’s son at one point) was that he loved getting into her make-up. Sometimes he’d use it to make him look like a clown, other times he used it to actually make himself look pretty, and the brat was good. He was really really good. It became a point where he’d whine and beg Anita to let him do her make-up in the morning. It became a point where he’d want to practice on Cross which after several refuses…finally gave in. With one condition though, that Allen made him look beautiful. Not like a fucking clown.

It didn’t only stop at make-up. Allen loved to paint Anita’s nails for her and tried to paint Cross’s nails on numerous occasions (although Allen didn’t paint them in girly colors. Oh no, he saved them for Anita. He liked painting Cross’s nails black and making them spooky. You’d think Cross would try to get the nail polish off before he got to work right? Oh fuck no. There was just something bad ass about pointing a gun at a criminal with skulls painted on your nails. It gave him a fucking thrill. Allen loved to their hair as well, which Cross already knew about because Allen was insistent about brushing Cross’s hair in the morning himself, even before he met Anita.

Cross didn’t see a problem in it. After all, the kid was a circus brat, specifically a clown brat, of course he’d have an affinity to make-up. However, many people didn’t share Cross’s views and there were many times Allen came home from school (when he became enrolled in it) looking like a kicked puppy because they forced him to wash his face off. That was also a story for another day though.

Chapter End Notes

(Awwwhhhh it’s the end of this drabble already!? Yeah fam, sorry, but I have a literal 10k drabble that I gotta get back to and a ton of other school stuff. However, I had much fun writing this one! I almost actually cried bros! Wow! Anita doesn’t get enough recognition in my opinion, so I really enjoyed writing this and introducing her to my drabbles! I would die if someone drew a picture of her holding little Allen. Allen’s little scheming was partly my doing but also one of my friend’s on discord’s doing, Octi! Thank you Octi if you ever read this. She helped me create some suggestions a while back on what we thought he would say or do to try and get rid of Cross’s mistresses! I hope you guys enjoyed it! I promise I had not forgotten about Krory and Miranda…I have just lost the plot of what I was going to do in my head, and I am hoping it comes back soon! I hope you guys enjoy the new DGM chapter. I’m excited to see it! Also, if you guys wish to interact, I have made a roleplay/ask blog of Cross Marian based on these drabbles. It is Crossyourheartpreparetodie. What would you guys think about a drabble dedicated solely to Cross’s past?)

(Also cuz I like this version and I think it's adorable: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJrn3DES43U)
“Dude, what is he staring at?” Madarao asked his sister Tewaku, a little concerned at how much Link’s attention kept wandering back to staring at a group of kids under the playground’s climbing wall.

“I literally have no idea. Usually he has his head in a book. Don’t tell me he actually took an interest in other people!” Tewaku said in amazement.

“Our Link is branching out!” Madarao said, pretending to wipe a fake tear from his eye.

“Maybe he’s plotting revenge on someone!” Kiredori piped up, smirking demonically at the thought of watching Link beat the crap out of someone. Kiredori was the youngest of the group and the most violent.

“Oh my god. Are you guys dense!? I figured it out! He’s in love!” Tewaku finally came to the conclusion, rolling her eyes in annoyance.

“Love? His love belongs to the kitchen and taking care of us, Tewaku. There’s no way Link is actually in love with someone,” Madarao shot back to his biological sister.

“I don’t know. Have you noticed who he has been looking at?” Tewaku prompted.

“Yeah, the weird Bookman kid and his band of freaks.”

“It’s not like we’re much better.”

“Shut it, Kiredori!”

“Make me, Madarao!”

“Yes, but there is a new kid with them and rumors say he’s a bottomless pit!”

“So?”

“So, it’s a match made in heaven! Link always makes so many things at home. We can’t even eat all of it! Now he’s found a human bottomless pit! Of course, he’s enamored, stupid!”

“That doesn’t mean he’s in love Tewaku. He’s just curious!” Madarao retorted.

“It doesn’t matter! I don’t like it! Link isn’t paying attention to us,” Kiredori responded in jealousy, tearing Link away from staring intently at the group several feet away from them, “Link! Pay attention to me!”

Link made a soft humming sound, blinking as if he was pulled from his thoughts as Kiredori threw herself at her older brother.
“Link! Why are you being so weird!? Pay attention to me! I demand it,” Kiredori squeaked dramatically.

“I’m not being weird,” Link deadpanned, “Besides, I pay attention to you several times a day, why is now important? You know I’m not available every second of every day, right?”

“Yeah yeah, whatever! But you are being weird! You’re spacing out way too much!” Kiredori huffed, crossing her arms across her chest.

“Don’t tell me you’re having a weird boy crush on that kid over there,” Tewaku joined in with a teasing smile, “Just because he’s rumored to be a bottomless pit, doesn’t mean you have to be the one to prove it true or false.”

“Nonsense! Let him experiment as much as he wants! I’m curious to see how much that kid can eat myself actually,” Madarao admitted while Link rolled his eyes.

“I’m not planning on experimented on him or seeing how much he can eat. I am merely trying to guess what he might like. He has an extraordinary singing voice and I want to express my admiration of him because of it,” Link stated.

“So you are in love! Awwwhhh Link is in love!” Tewaku crowed.

“I am not! It is perfectly fine for someone to show their admiration to someone else without holding any romantic interest,” Link huffed, his cheeks turning pink at feeling flustered. Tewaku was too young to understand.

“It’s okay Link, we’ll keep it a secret for ya! We won’t tell anyone! Cross our hearts and hope to die,” Tewaku squealed.

“If it’s death you seek, then I can remedy that quickly with one of my new poisons I’ve been experimenting with,” Kiredori cackled.

“Kiredori, don’t threaten Tewaku and stop making poisons! Little girls your age should not be experimenting with strange, deadly substances!” Link scolded as he forced himself not to look back over at Allen and his group of friends. Allen seemed angry at whatever Kanda said to him and the two children were currently glaring at the other rather heatedly. Since Link was a few grades ahead of Allen, he didn’t have the opportunity to really interact or get to know him. The only times he caught sight of that puffy, white head was at lunch or during afternoon recess. Sometimes he’d catch a flash of him here and there, but when it came down to being able to interact with the kid, there was no time. Sure, he could walk up to him and talk to him right then and there, but just by the few moments Link had watched him he figured out how shy Allen could be around other people.

When Allen was around his friend group, he came alive a lot more, but when he was around his other classmates, he seemed to draw inside of himself. He seemed to flinch and hunch inward on himself a lot more. He figured, his best option to show his admiration would be through means that did not require face to face interaction. That way Allen wouldn’t have to feel wary around Link. It’s a good thing they didn’t lock lockers down in the elementary part of the building or that would’ve made Link’s plan more difficult (this is how my school worked as a little elementary school, yeah pathetic security. I know.). See, when he was sure everyone was at lunch and the hallways were vacated, Link decided to sneak around to the second-grade lockers with a Ziploc baggy full of chocolate chip cookies he made the previous night. He approached the last locker of that section marked in bold letters ‘Allen Walker’ with a border around it depicting pencils, books, and other school items for aesthetic purposes. He looked around once before opening said locker
and setting the cookies gently within the nearly empty space, except for some scattered papers (which Link resisted the urge to organize). Then he closed the locker as softly as he could so he wouldn’t draw attention before promptly walking away and acting like nothing happened.

Before he knew it, recess was over, and he wouldn’t be seeing Allen anymore for the rest of the day. Link’s heart sunk a little bit in disappointment. As much as his siblings loved to tease him that he was in love with Allen, he personally couldn’t see it. Was he curious about Allen? Yes. Did he love his singing voice? Oh absolutely. But did he love love him? Link wasn’t sure and he wasn’t at the age where he really knew what love was. All he knew was that he liked to see Allen and felt a strange urge to interact with him. Link didn’t have friends outside of his siblings and he didn’t interact much with the people around him. If anything, Link was looking for a friend. Now that he found someone that interested him and also loved food, Link Howard wanted to interact with someone. That’s how he rationalized his feelings towards Allen Walker at this time in his life.

~

Allen blinked once. Then twice. Okay so it wasn’t a dream. There was a Ziploc bag full of cookies in his locker! It was at the end of the day and as Allen was getting his things out of his locker, he noticed the present laying there, right in the middle of his locker with a tiny note attached to it. When he picked up the note it was really hard to read, although the penmanship was really really pretty! It was all curly and fancy looking! It was a shame he couldn’t find a name to match this lovely gift though.

“Whatcha got there buddy? Oh wow, someone left you cookies! Can I have one!?” Lavi exclaimed, his eyes lighting up as he also looked inside Allen’s locker. Even though Anita said she was going to pick up Allen at school, Lavi still wanted to walk back with him.

“Yeah sure,” Allen said as he dug one out and handed it over to Lavi. Although he hated sharing food, he didn’t know if this batch of cookies were poisoned or safe to eat. He intended to use Lavi’s generous offer of eating one as his means of finding out whether or not they were. Sorry Lavi.

“Hey Lavi, do you think you can read this piece of paper for me? I don’t know what it says.” Allen explained as he handed the note over to Lavi, who immediately recognized that flowery handwriting. Of course, he grew suspicious before he even had his hands on the letter. He had taken a bite of the cookie and knew in an instant that that was Link Howard’s baking skills at work. The letter said ‘You have the most amazing singing voice I have ever heard. Please accept these cookies I made as a token of my appreciation of sharing your lovely voice at the Christmas concert.’

Wow. What a fucking weirdo, Lavi thought as he shoved the rest of the cookie in his mouth. What would Link want with Allen anyways? The guy was creepy, and his ‘father’ was even creepier. He was a nasty dude that was in it for the money. Link was just a robotic, calmer carbon copy of Mayor Leverrier. He didn’t trust him, and he didn’t trust him making any sort of advancement on Allen either. Especially since the guy was on the dance team! He heard the rumors after the Christmas concert. Link was probably trying to lure Allen on their side through his weakness. Food. The cheer leading squad would be sure to follow soon. Well Lavi wasn’t gonna let that happen. If Allen wanted to join something, then he should join without feeling pressured into it! Also, Allen was his friend and he wasn’t going to let some creepy two-spots like Link wheedle his way into Allen’s life either! Allen had plenty of friends! Four was already a huge number, five was wayyy too much!

“Ahhh don’t worry about it. It says something stupid anyways,” Lavi mentioned as he flicked the
piece of paper back at Allen who caught it with his hand. Seeing that Lavi didn’t keel over and die from eating a cookie, Allen began to nibble on one tentatively. In an instant his eyes lit up and a soft flush rose into his cheeks in pleasure.

“Wow! These cookies are amazing!”

“Allen, you think all cookies are amazing,” Lavi commented as he shut Allen’s locker and began the trek outside with him.

“I know but these are something else! They’re not like store bought cookies or the kind you get in those stupid packets where you only add water. These are made from scratch!” Allen mentioned, his palette able to tell the difference.

“Wow, you can figure that out just by a taste?”

“Yeah! It’s really easy to tell actually,” Allen deadpanned.

“Whatever you say man. You’re the foodie. Not me,” Lavi shrugged, although his eyes flitted around suspiciously. He was looking for Two Spots. Was he watching them like the creepy mole he always knew he was? Lavi was a little disappointed to find that there was no Link in sight. He was ready to throw some hands with that weirdo after all. Oh well, guess he’ll have to wait until tomorrow. Once Lavi and Allen reached Anita’s car, the two children got in. After the first time of Anita picking Allen up she insisted on also dropping Lavi off, Lavi tried to protest but Anita was scary when she was determined so Lavi kept his mouth shut and always got in anyways.

“Oh, cookies? Where did you get those?”

“They were in my locker!” Allen chirped, happily chomping on another one.

“Oh, so you got a secret admirer? Better be careful, I don’t think your daddy is going to be fond about you getting a little girlfriend yet.”

Allen rolled his eyes, “They didn’t leave a name and it’s not like I’m going to date them either! Their baking is good though…”

Lavi resisted the urge to smirk at Link being called a girl indirectly. Once he closed the door, Anita began to drive away from the school building. That’s another thing he could use if Link got too close Cross Marian. Though the man would never admit it, he was very protective over Allen. He wouldn’t let just anyone date Allen, especially someone whose associated with Leverrier. If Link wasn’t going to back off with Lavi’s warnings, then he could use Cross to push Link back away from Allen.

“You say that now but what if they decide to show themselves to you? Maybe they’ll end up being cute and you’ll end up liking them. Then before you know it you’re kissing them-“

“Ewww gross! No way!” Allen retorted, making a gagging noise. Lavi smiled, feeling a little better that Allen seemed disinterested. However, Link was not a little girl. He was a boy. When or if Allen met the one behind the delicious cookies, Allen may want to become close to Twink Howard. No, it wasn’t a maybe…Allen would get close, especially since there was food involved. It didn’t matter if it was out of friendship or wanting a relationship, Link was a master at baking and Allen was a bottomless pit. All Lavi had to offer was his jokes and weird facts. Link would quickly take his place as Allen’s best friend in a heartbeat and Lavi didn’t want that. Anita shrugged but smiled at Allen who was acting like the typical eight-year-old when it came to things like love and kissing. She wasn’t aware of the tension that was slowly growing or the dark look
that came over Lavi as he thought about ways, he could deal with Link.

The time for Lavi to get out of the car came all too soon, at least for the red-head. Allen seemed more focus on inhaling the cookies to really focus on Lavi’s change of mood. Lavi didn’t mind though. Well, no he did, because he wished he was the reason why Allen’s eyes were glowing happily as he munched away at his treat. Lenalee, Kanda, and Alma were different. Lavi didn’t feel threatened by them because he knew them. He knew that they would never take Allen away from him. Each of them had their own special thing they did with Allen. Kanda fought with Allen. Alma loved playing in make-up with Allen (plus he kept Kanda from getting too violent to the other). Lenalee enjoyed talking about clothes with Allen and playing ‘house’ (although she usually joined Alma when it came to playing in make-up and kept Allen from getting too violent with Kanda). Lenalee was Allen’s sister. Lavi was Allen’s older brother. Lavi and Allen would take naps together, cuddle and joke around. Kanda and Lenalee protected Allen while Lavi wasn’t there to do so. Alma took care of Allen mentally.

So, why did Link threaten him? Well, Link was the whole package. At least that was how Lavi saw him. He saw the way he interacted with his siblings. The guy was like a mother to them. Link was a part of the dancing team to. He knew costumes. He knew make-up. A whole lot more than Lenalee and Alma probably did. Link could bake. Link could protect. With Link around, what would be left for Lavi? What would be left for Lenalee? Or Alma? Or even Kanda? Lavi also just simply did not trust Link. He didn’t trust Leverrier either. He was too weird. He was a hard guy to read. He was only soft and human-like to his siblings or when he danced. To everyone else he was cold and indifferent. Why did he show interest in Allen? Or maybe it wasn’t because he was interested…maybe Leverrier wanted him to keep an eye on Allen because he was different.

Pfft, it didn’t matter though. Lavi wouldn’t let him near his Allen. It didn’t matter what Link wanted from him or what he saw in Allen, Lavi would keep him away. He’d figure out a way! It was for Allen’s good! It wasn’t because he was jealous! He wasn’t jealous! He was only protecting Allen!

“Alright, see you tomorrow Allen!” Lavi said, masking his thoughts with a soft smile to his best friend.

“See ya tomorrow Lavi!” Allen chirped back with a huge, grin. His lips were messy with crumbs as he leaned in to hug the red-head. Lavi smiled endearingly at Allen as he returned his embrace, setting his resolve as he got out of the car, closed the door and walked towards his house. Once Allen made sure Lavi walked inside the house he tapped Anita on the shoulder and handed her the note that came with the cookies. He didn’t mention it to Lavi, but he noticed how quickly the red-head dismissed the piece of paper. He figured that perhaps the red-head was only messing with him, but Allen was curious to get a definite answer for what the note said. It’s not everyday someone makes you cookies. Good cookies, nonetheless. He wanted to know the reason.

“Mama, can you read this to me? It came with the cookies but Lavi wouldn’t read it to me,” Allen asked as he thrust the paper at her.

Anita took, blinking in surprise at such beautiful handwriting before reading it out loud,” You have the most amazing singing voice I have ever heard. Please accept these cookies I made as a token of my appreciation of sharing your lovely voice at the Christmas concert. Awwhhh well whoever this person is they must really love your singing.”

The woman passed the piece of paper back to Allen who seem perplexed as to why Lavi couldn’t simply read this to him. It wasn’t that weird. Was it? A soft blush rose to his cheeks and he wished he could’ve met the person who loved his voice and express his own gratitude for their amazing
baking skills.

“I wonder why Lavi didn’t just read it to me.”

“Maybe he’s jealous,” Anita smiled.

“Jealous? Why would Lavi be jealous?” Allen asked, thinking that was absolutely absurd. Lavi had no need to be jealous. Lavi was his first ever friend that accepted him the way he was. He would never throw that away, even if this person was good at baking.

Anita shrugged,” Beats me. Sometimes people just get jealous of other people. It’s not a bad thing to be a little jealous. It becomes a problem when the person tries to control you or who talks to you.”

“Lavi would never do that. If he was jealous, he would’ve said something to me,” Allen stated, although he felt a little unsure about that. Lavi would tell him if something was wrong, wouldn’t he?

“You know him more than I do sweet pea. I sure hope he would,” was her answer as she drove the two of them home.

~

Allen thought the cookies were a one-time thing but as the days went on, he was surprised to find baked goods in his locker on a daily basis. After the cookies, there was a two-day lull before it became a daily thing. There were cinnamon rolls, snickerdoodle cookies, macarons, fudge, donuts, strawberry shortcake, etc. Each little gift had another note that said something poetic or encouraging. With these gifts, Allen began to love school even more, even on the days when Eric was being especially troublesome. One of their recent tactics was leaving sticky notes in his locker filled with insults that Allen had to quickly take down before his friends could see. Every day had a happy end because of this stranger leaving him tasty gifts in his locker. It got even better when he found the stranger began to take the awful sticky notes down for him.

Link thought the cookies in the locker were going to be a one-time thing as well. He really only intended to leave little gifts here and there, but that quickly changed the more Link watched Allen. He saw in passing the boy’s acrobatics when the second graders were having gym class. He saw the way his classmates acted towards him in the mornings, the way that they would try to trip him in the halls or how the boys would try to pull at his hair in passing when his friends were not around him. They were knocking books out of his hand, and later on Link realized the sticky notes that began to appear in his locker scrawled with insults. He heard the rumors being passed around since day one of Allen’s appearance, but he didn’t realize the extent to what he was going through at school. He heard in passing the shock when someone managed to get one of his gloves off to reveal his deformed hand. That didn’t stop the boys at recess from continually messing with him to try and get it off, apparently wanting the whole school to see how deformed and ‘ugly’ he really was. Allen was quick on his feet though and would dodge their advances easily. That didn’t stop the numerous occasions where Kanda had enough with the group following them around and antagonizing them and taking matters into his own hands. There were many times the boy had to be dragged back inside the building because he got a little too rowdy.

After witnessing these things, Link began to bake more things to put in his locker. He didn’t know why, he just had this unrelenting urge that told him he had to do it. He wanted to brighten Allen’s day. He blamed it on his ‘motherly’ tendencies, but he couldn’t deny that he felt for Allen as well. He felt like a black sheep himself. Sure, Lavi Bookman was a little strange himself, but he wasn’t strange like Link was. Link was too mature for his age. He had to be.
He found it hard to relate to his classmates who could afford to be immature and childish. They didn’t have to worry about meeting so many expectations, they didn’t have to worry about failure. If Link failed, then his siblings wouldn’t have a home to go back to. They wouldn’t have food, they wouldn’t have shelter if Link screwed up. Link had to be the top of his class. Link had to be an excellent dancer. Link had to be excellent in everything because if he wasn’t then it would make Leverrier look bad. Link’s siblings had a little wiggle room because they were not expected to be Leverrier’s future replacement. They had to stay within their own lines, that was true, and it was quite a bit of pressure put on all of them, but Link had more of it because Link decided to step up to the plate and do it. He took on the responsibility, so his siblings didn’t have to. He wanted them to be kids while they still could be kids. Goushi was the eldest one out of all of them, older than Link by a year. He had his own expectations to deal with as the eldest out of all of them, but for some reason Leverrier decided to choose Link as his ‘heir’. Just because Goushi wasn’t chosen however, didn’t mean he could goof off like his siblings. Goushi became sort of like the ‘dad’ of their family. Goushi was the one who took over when Link wasn’t able to (like if he was ill or whatever). Least to say, Link had his own set of problems and pressures to deal with and that would be a story for another day.

He couldn’t exactly pin point the reason why he felt such a pull to Allen Walker, but all he knew was that it was a must for him to set aside time to make something to put into his locker. It was routine for him to stay behind during lunch or sneak back inside from recess earlier than the other kids to sneak his gifts into Allen’s locker. He would take down the offending sticky notes from within his locker, replacing the negativity with something positive. He began to write things of encouragement, random thoughts he had, random quotes he liked to go with the treats. He was surprised when a couple weeks went by before he began to get notes from within Allen’s locker directed back at him. Sometimes with something small as well like a small rock, or a bead, or a charm, a piece of string. The handwriting was atrocious and hard to read at best with several grammar errors, but Link soon found himself carrying on a conversation with Allen. Every day after school Allen would enjoy the treat and pass the note up to Anita to read back to him in the car. He stopped giving them to Lavi to read and began to hide his treats from Lavi because he noticed how irritated the red-head seemed over the next few times he received something. Lavi didn’t seem to know that Allen knew something was up though, he didn’t realize that Allen could see through him. Allen was good at picking up facial expressions though, he was good at it because he relied on those microfacial expressions to figure out if he was going to get beaten up or not when he worked at the circus. Or really at any time in general. Sure, there were times he got those facial expressions wrong (cough cough, Cross as an example), but he was more times right than wrong.

The notes were small, sometimes a bit longer and said things like

‘Good work today! You deserve a cake. This one is for you!’
‘I baked you this in case you were having a bad day.’, ‘The pain you feel today will be the strength you feel tomorrow’
‘My first thought in the morning is always you’, or ‘Do not underestimate yourself by comparing yourself to others. It’s our differences that make us unique and beautiful.’

Sometimes they were random thoughts alongside the encouraging words like, ‘I’m trying out a new ingredient with the frosting. I hope it is still good!’

‘Have you ever heard of [Fight song] by Rachel Platten? One of my sisters was blasting it from her room the other day. It sounds very empowering.’
Or there were a couple times where the notes had drawings of hearts and glitter on them with a small apology scrawled in parenthesis below the actually note that said ‘Sorry my sisters got ahold of this and wanted to make it pretty. There is still glitter all over my bed.’

Anita always got excited to read the new note Allen got and always teased him about it with words like ‘Ooo this person really loves you’ or giggling when a note had excessive glitter or hearts because of the secret admirer’s sisters. Cross was another story. He was interested at first, only out of the sake of protecting Allen from a ‘nasty girl’ but after trying one of the treats Allen brought home, he deemed this ‘secret admirer’ to be decent because ‘no awful girl would ever bake like that’. As far as the notes went, Cross stayed updated because Anita wouldn’t stop squealing about them and cooing over Allen having a love interest. Although Allen tried to tell her many times that they weren’t giving him these things out a love interest, they were trying to be friendly. Weren’t they?

Either way, after two weeks, Allen decided he would practice his new-found writing skills and give them notes back. He started out simple, like asking what their name was and including a ‘cool looking rock that I found’. He knew it wasn’t anything like the treats they gave him, but it was what he had to work with until he could find something different. Timcanpy even helped Allen find some things to include in his notes like little beads, or a piece of ribbon, he even included a screw one time.

Allen found himself smiling when he began to get notes back that continued to the conversation.

‘My name? Well I thought about giving it to you straight out, but my name is rather unique, and I don’t want the fun to end just yet. I will include my initials though which are L.H. Thank you for the rock, it does have a beautiful color. What songs do you like to sing?’

‘That mean! You now my full name! I gues I stand owt thow. Sorry my riting iz bad. This iz my ferst yer lerning how to do it. I’m beter at singing and other things. You have amasing baking! It is real good. Real real good! You shoud be a baker! I like to sing a lot of songs like Flooarance and the Masheen. Have you herd of them? She sings real good. Here is a beed Tim fownd! I like the culer. Blew is pritty. How menny siblings do you have?’ (I can feel my Microsoft Word trying to kill itself by the mass amounts of errors in this).

‘I have five siblings. Kiredori and Tewaku are the ones who have dumped glitter and drew hearts on the previous notes. You may have seen them around. I have three brothers Madarao, Tokusa, and Goushi, Goushi is in middle school and so is Madarao. Tokusa is in elementary school. It’s okay if you’re not good at writing, everyone starts at the same place. It will become easier for you the more you practice. I have never heard of Florence and the Machine, but I looked them up when I got home from practice. The vocalist sounds fantastic. She has such an amazing range! Thanks for the bead, Tim has a good eye for beautiful things. It is such a wonderful blue. How many siblings do you have? Is Tim one of them? What is your favorite food?’

Allen began to keep Link’s notes out, copying the words he used to learn how to write out the words better. Like writing out the word writing and definitely Florence and the Machine. He hoped it helped his writing look more legible.

‘I do not have no siblings. Tim is my friend. He is smart like you. He does not go to skool thow. I am far behind everyone in my clas, so it seems not troo that everyone starts at the same place. Did I writing that rit? It is so kunfewsing! It makes my hed spin. Are you shure we kant meet fase to fase? Pleez I am giving you this tinny bownsy bal! I begg you! One of the bois at school throo it at me and I took it. You practice? Did I writing that rit to? What do you practice? My favorite food is meetarawshi dango. I droo it to. Real good! Real real good! At leest tel me what you look like! Are
you boi or gurl? What clas you in? No won ever did this for me befour. I wont to know you.’

As much as it drove Link nuts to see Allen spell so many things wrong, he also found it to be adorable, especially when he noticed some of the words he spelled wrong before were corrected. Allen was trying his hardest to learn how to write, that much was obvious. It almost made Link want to meet up face to face with him, but he was afraid to. He didn’t want to scare him away. Plus, he noticed over the past weeks that Lavi Bookman had been glaring at him during class. A lot. He didn’t know what his problem was but if Link had to guess, it had to deal with him giving treats to Allen. Perhaps he should stop…but he was afraid of hurting Allen’s feelings. With everything that he was enduring at school, he didn’t want to take that away from him. Allen didn’t seem to have a problem with it after all and if he was fine with it, why let Lavi get in the way of that?

‘Yes, you may be further behind everyone in your class but when they were beginning to learn how to write they also struggled through it like you are doing now. Do not lose hope. Yes you wrote the phrase right, but I think the phrase you are looking for is [did I write that right?]. You also wrote practice right as well! Good job! You learn fast! I practice dancing. I’m on the dance team at school. You may have been getting bombarded by people asking you join it. Same with the cheerleading squad. Either way, you should make your choice based on what you want, not what other people want. Although based on how you move, I think you would be really good at both things. I looked around and I think you meant mitarashi dango, right? I’ve never made that before. I will have to try my hand at it. I would like to run my own bakery one day, but I don’t think my adoptive father would approve of that. I guess that makes me a hypocrite huh? Anyways, if you want to meet face to face, we can. I just didn’t want to scare you or overwhelm you. Plus I have been told I am not good at talking to people. That boy that threw the ball at you was not being very nice, but you shouldn’t steal other people’s things. I guess if he threw it at you in the first place, he really didn’t want it though huh? I am a fifth-grade boy. My eyes are reddish brown, mostly red. I have blonde hair and I put my hair into a braid. Another dead giveaway feature about me is that I have two dots on my forehead which were tattooed on my skin. My siblings also have markings on their faces. I don’t know why they were given to us. Maybe you’ll be able to pick me out now. If you want to meet, I usually go by your locker while everyone is going to recess.’

Allen hopped up and down excitedly as Anita read the long note to him. Two dots on the forehead? Braid? Oh yeah, he could definitely pick him out now!

“He sounds adorable. A fifth grader though? Wow. He must really like your voice. Are you going to meet him?” Anita asked, an eyebrow raised.

“I-I don’t know! I do want to though, he makes really good food and he sounds interesting! He knows how to dance to!” Allen piped up. He felt better knowing that he had two dots on his forehead. That meant he had something strange on his body to, something that wasn’t normal. Allen felt safer knowing that because it made him feel less strange about his arm. He still was on guard though, after all, it was a stranger. He felt nervous. Now he knew what this L.H. guy looked like. This guy who has also been watching him to (which was a little creepy in itself, but soon lost most of its’ creepiness when Allen figured out the guy wasn’t trying to poison him with food).

“Okay…well from the way it sounds he may be just as afraid of meeting you as you are of meeting him face to face,” Anita mentioned.

“You think so?”

“Yeah, he said he isn’t very good at talking to people.”

Allen hummed to himself, thinking to himself for a moment or two. Then he decided that he would
hang out near his locker to wait for L.H. even if he was nervous. He had to otherwise the curiosity was going to kill him! Besides, he didn’t know that the school even had a dance team! Hell yeah he wanted to learn how to dance!

So that’s what led to Allen nervously back tracking to his locker after lunch after telling Lenalee, Kanda, and Alma that he had to use the bathroom. He hadn’t managed to catch a glimpse of any two-dot braid-haired boy at all today! He was so distracted during class that the teacher had to call his name twice to answer a question that he knew nothing about. Of course, he got laughed at. He just only hoped it would be worth it. He hoped L.H. wouldn’t let him stand here like a freaking idiot all of recess.

Just when Allen felt like too much time had passed and maybe that he was looking like an idiot just standing there, he heard footsteps. He thought it was probably a teacher at first but when he looked up, he came face to face with a boy with serious looking, piercing red eyes, almost like Cross’s. He wore a long-sleeved white shirt with a black vest coat and black pants. He looked very prim and proper and made Allen a little nervous. People like that always made Allen a little nervous. He looked very studious and his braid was as proper looking as his whole outfit. The only thing that wasn’t prim and proper was the small piece of hair that stuck up in the middle of his head and his eyebrows that were forked. They looked strange but they weren’t off setting to Allen. This was the person who loved his voice? The person who kept giving him food and all those encouraging, beautifully written notes? Was Allen disappointed? Oh no. He just felt so in awe that such a handsome looking boy was the one behind it all. Allen didn’t feel he deserved it.

“Allen Walker?” Link asked with a small, awkward quirk of the lips.

Allen nodded, his mouth parted slightly in awe the only thing that came out of his mouth was, “You are very interesting looking for a fifth grader.”

God the guy’s voice sounded just as beautiful as the lips it came from. It sounded like an English accent which only was more comforting to Allen. Allen knew just by looking at him that he was going to turn into a very handsome man. He couldn’t wait to see him dance, that is, if he would let him.

“You are as well, for a second grader. I wasn’t expecting to meet today, but it is a good day. I’ve decided to try my hand at making mitarashi dango,” Link said as he thrust forward the paper plate he held in his hands, “I’m not familiar in making Asian desserts, but I tried my best.”

“T-Thank you,” Allen said, his face blushing and his accent slipping out, as he took the paper plate in his hand, “What’s your name?”

“Link Howard. I prefer Link though,” Link said his head tilting ever so slightly in curiosity, “You have an accent. Are you British?”

“Yea. I try not to talk with my accent because people think it’s weird, but sometimes it slips out. You sound English to,” Allen commented as he tried one of the mitarashi dango. His eyes widened in response.

“I’m actually German. Ahh…it’s bad isn’t it?”

“Are you kidding me!? This is amazing! I’ve only had these four times in my life, and this is by far the best! This is your first time!?” Allen exclaimed. Link stepped back a little bit, a little unnerved by how loud Allen had gotten.

“Sorry. It is really good though Link,” Allen giggled before offering one to Link, “You should try it.”
“I’m glad they came out okay,” Link sighed, looking relieved, although anyone else would’ve said he was quite expressionless. Allen could pick out the microfacial expressions though, “No, those are for you. You should eat them.”

“Nonsense! You made them! You’ve never made them before until now to! Besides, I don’t share food often so here,” Allen grinned as he stepped forward, nearly poking Link’s face with the food item.

Link huffed in defeat before taking the food from Allen and trying a bite, “Hmm I still think the sauce should be sweeter.”

“It’s just fine,” Allen chirped, happily munching away at another one, “So what other things do you make?”

“I can make a lot of things. Pies, cookies, danishes, breads, homemade candy, kuchins, two tiered cakes and even three tiered cakes, the highest I made was four, kolaches, donuts, donut holes,” Link explained, although Allen could detect a small tinge of bragging in his voice.

“Wow,” Allen breathed, “You do all that and you can dance to?”

“Yes.”

“Can I watch you practice one day?” Allen asked.

“I don’t see why you would want to since it’s just practicing the same thing over and over again until one gets it right, but yes you can. However I should warn you, a lot of the members had their eye on you for awhile now and they may try to persuade you to join—”

“That’s fine. I want to join!”

“You really don’t have to if you don’t want to.”

“I want to! I used to do performances in front of people although those were clown antics. I want to learn how to dance,” Allen said with determination.

“If you’re sure…we have practice in the cafeteria after school since the basketball players take the gym after school for their practice,” Link explained his eyebrow quirking up ever so slightly, “You used to do clown antics?”

He thought that was just a rumor.

Allen nodded enthusiastically, “Yeah! I used to travel around and perform to make people laugh. Even though it was a way to make money, I really enjoyed it.”

“So those rumors were true?”

“Rumors?”

“Yeah, the whole school was talking about how you told your class that you traveled around doing circus tricks and how you even showed off some of the things you learned. I’ve heard some other things, but rumors are not very reliable when it comes to information,” Link stated. Allen caught the way his eyes seemed to glow a little bit in interest as he heard Allen talk about his days traveling with Mana. Even though he was wary of telling people his past, even his close friends, and Cross, he figured since Link knew of the rumors (and decided to disregard them as the truth) he deserved to hear a little bit of the truth.
“A lot of people sure believe them though,” Allen said softly.

“Then they are foolish.”

“What other things have you heard?”

Link stared at Allen, gauging whether or not he should say anything. He didn’t want to hurt Allen by telling him what people were saying about him. Just because Link didn’t believe in what they say, it didn’t mean everyone else did as well.

“I don’t care about what they think,” Allen continued, partly lying, “But you have been so nice to me. I’ve never had a stranger my age appreciate anything that I have done enough, so much that they would give me food. I am not good at making things, I am only good at entertaining. You haven’t become disgusted with me after hearing those rumors. At least allow me to repay the favor by answering any questions you may have. If you have any.”

Link blinked in surprise. Allen was a second grader and yet he talked to him like he was an adult. He wrote like a kindergartener, but his language skills were totally different from how he wrote. He was surprising, and shocking. Even Kiredori didn’t speak that way and she’s been through things little girls her age should have never been through. He wondered what made Allen speak the way he did now and even though he did wonder he didn’t consider he was close enough to Allen to ask about those things yet. Allen stared up at Link expectantly and seriously. Even though he was apprehensive about being mostly honest towards Link, he figured it was the only thing he could offer to him at the moment. This beautiful stranger had given tasty treats every single school day, he put time in making those things for him. Even though he was afraid that Link was going to use the information he gave him against him, he was desperate to make it up to him. With the way he was raised, he learned never to take things for granted, not even the little things. You never took things from people without giving something in return, especially when generous people were hard to come by. Yes, he was afraid, but surely this stranger was different. He had to be different. No one normal and decent would continue doing the things that Link was doing after hearing the bad rumors that Allen was already familiar with hearing.

Link nodded softly before saying, “Alright. Is there a specific place you had in mind to go to?”

“Yeah. Everyone should be outside for recess by now, we can stick by the doors and talk since everyone else would be too busy playing to bother us,” Allen stated, he wanted to choose a place where his friends wouldn’t find him either. They already knew about his deformed left arm and knew that he used to travel with a circus clown. They knew that he died. They didn’t know about Cosimo or the ring leader or where he got his eye scar. He just didn’t want them worrying about him and he didn’t want to make Lavi angry that he had decided to talk to Link. If Link found it difficult to talk to people, he didn’t want Lavi to make things worse on him, especially when he was so kind enough to accept Allen’s request to meet him face to face.

“Alright,” Link nodded, following Allen who led the way, “Although if you find yourself uncomfortable talking about anything, you don’t have to say it. I’m aware that I am still a stranger.”

“If it’s over what I think it is, I think I can talk about it. At least a little bit,” Allen responded. It wasn’t like he was going to show Link his hand anyways, although he was a little curious to see how he would react. Then again each of his friends saw it once and some were more uncomfortable looking at it than others. He also didn’t want to show it off in fear that the other kids from other classes would be snooping, trying to get a glance at it. No, he’d wait until another day to show Link. Although he was afraid that once he did Link would hate him for it. Once the two of them reached the doors leading outside to the playground, Allen pushed them open, holding one of the
doors open for Link to pass through. He waited until the door fully closed before proceeding to sit down next to the door, staring up at Link expectantly who seemed a little hesitant sitting on the dirty ground.

Link sighed though, deciding he would humor Allen and sat down in front of him.

“Alright.” Allen stated.

“Alright.” Link repeated.

“I’m guessing one of the rumors has to do with my hand.”

“Yes.”

Allen sighed, “Well it’s true. My left hand is messed up and rather ugly looking. It’s been like that since I was born, I think. It was only recently that I was able to move it. Some days it gets stiff and hard to move. One of my classmates took my glove off during PE and everyone saw it…”

“I’m sorry…” Link stated.

“It’s okay. I figured it was going to happen eventually, I just it could’ve been my choice. Plus, now it’s not just my classmates I have to worry about. Kids from all the other classes are trying to take my gloves off to,” Allen shrugged.

“I’ve noticed that. I’m sorry.”

“You don’t have to be. I’m used to it.”

“Just because you are, it doesn’t make it okay. I’m still sorry.”

“Another strange thing I guess…is the scar on my face. It is real. I don’t know how the star part came about but it was because of a car accident. It’s ugly, I know.”

“I don’t think so.”

Allen opened his mouth to say something, but he closed it again in surprise at Link’s response.

“Thank you but…you don’t have to act so kind. I know it’s weird and ugly-“

“It’s not weird or ugly,” Link stated more firmly. He was familiar with his sisters looking at their facial tattoos, thinking they looked ugly or weird. He was familiar with the bickering of Link telling them they looked absolutely fine and beautiful just the way they were. It was easy for Link to say, considering he didn’t have the markings under his eyes like his siblings did. He didn’t understand why they had to have those strange facial markings, but it angered him to see his siblings worry about their appearance because of it. That was the price they had to pay in order to have food to eat and shelter.

“I like it. It’s unique and I think it’s beautiful,” Link continues, using the voice he used with Tewaku and Kiredori, although Kiredori pretended her tattoos didn’t bother her. She thought it made her look tough, although she had her days.

Allen blushed, grabbing a strand of his hair self-consciously, he opened his mouth to protest but Link held up a finger, effectively shutting Allen down.

“If the next thing your thinking of saying involves putting yourself down I don’t want to hear it. You look just fine the way you are. White hair, scar and all,” Link said sternly, using his ‘motherly
tongue’ as his siblings lovingly put it.

Allen blinked in awkward, surprise, freezing for a few moments before he dropped his hand holding his hair.

“But-“

“Oh! I don’t want to hear it Allen! You cannot win! I have five siblings that I battle with on a daily basis and I always win,” Link stated, matter-of-factly. That was the time Allen knew Link could be quite playful and not so robotic. When it comes to being ‘motherly’ and taking care of people, Link excelled at it and shifted himself to make them feel better. Although, it was saved for people he considered himself close to or in this case, someone who he had been talking to (indirectly) for several weeks.

Allen closed his mouth again before puffing his cheeks out in irritation which Link thought was super adorable. It reminded him of Kiredori when she tried to be all big and threatening. Link raised an authoritative eyebrow at Allen, daring him to try to argue with him. Allen found himself a little unnerved. This kid really didn’t find anything wrong with him? He thought his scar was… beautiful? I mean, his friends accepted him the way he was, but they never called his scar beautiful. Anita always told him he was adorable, beautiful and talented, but she was like a mother to him, she was supposed to say stuff like that! Allen didn’t quite know how to react. Actually, he was determined to prove Link wrong. There was no way this kid could find him adorable. He was ugly! He was a monster! He was just ill-informed!

So, Allen fixed Link with a determined glare. He looked around to make sure the coast was clear of anyone else before taking off his glove, “Fine, if you don’t believe me then look at this!”

Allen huffed, raising his left hand for Link’s approval, “See?! This is ugly! You can’t tell me it isn’t because I’ve been told this ever since I was born-“

Allen was stunned when he felt Link’s hand casually take his own hand into his own. His scrawny, miscolored, scaly hand into his perfect, smooth hand. It was warm and soft. Link scrutinized his hand carefully, turning it every which way without pushing too hard. He didn’t want to hurt Allen’s wrist, after all. Link has seen many things. Many ugly, horrific things on the streets when he was younger, so this did not affect him. Sure, he was a little scared of touching it because it looked like the skin was burned, but if Allen could move his hand the way he did, then it shouldn’t hurt to have someone touch it.

Allen sat there in utter shock as he watched Link, his hand twitching at the contact.

“S-See? It’s ugly…” Allen trailed off, though he sounded unsure of himself.

“No, it’s not. It is a hand. It’s your hand. It is a part of you, who is as beautiful as unique as a star in the sky,” Link stated with a nod though inwardly he wondered just why the hell he fucking said that!? Oh my god!? What!? He blamed it on the fact that he was the one who always comforted his sister’s when they worried of their appearances. He always used the term beautiful and unique to describe them, so it easily slipped out when he also described Allen.

Allen blinked once and then twice before removing his hand from Link’s and shoving the glove back on. He looked over at the kids lining up to come inside before he looked back at Link. His gray eyes looked vulnerable, fearful, and in awe and Link wondered just how often Allen was ever complimented. However, with the way Allen looked, Link didn’t want to leave him alone in that state, so he stood up and offered his hand to Allen.

“We should go before they notice we’re here,” Link suggested. Allen blinked like he was coming
out of a daze before he hesitantly took Link’s hand with his right hand. Link slowly pulled him up before he reversed sides and took Allen’s left hand into his own before leading the way back to the elementary school section of the school.

Allen looked down at his hand in Link’s and looked back up at the older boy, his eyes wide and beginning to fill with tears. That was the day Allen grew close to Link. Each time Allen made a new friend, he had a certain ‘thing’ with them. It was kind of hard to describe. Lavi was his go to friend when he was in need of cuddles, naps, jokes, and adventure. Lenalee was his go to friend/sister when he needed someone calm, collected, but also someone who loved playing dress up and with make-up. She was his advice giver (that wasn’t to say Lavi wasn’t good at giving advice. He was just…well he got carried away a lot). Kanda was his go to friend when he needed someone to be straight with him. Kanda didn’t sugar coat anything. If he needed some brawn, Kanda was the person to go to. Alma was his go to friend when he needed someone bubbly, happy, and all around positive even when things were not positive. Alma was his buddy that always made his head feel normal in their presence.

Link became Allen’s creative outlet. Sure, he nurtured Allen both physically and mentally. He could be straight with Allen (like Kanda), he had his more humorous side (like Alma), he was calm and collected (like Lenalee), and he was surprisingly quite open to being Allen’s ‘chair’ (like Lavi and his excessive need to always have an arm around Allen). Link was not like Lavi though in the way that he wasn’t touchy unless Allen initiated it. Link had his own special ‘feel’ just like all the rest of Allen’s friends. Some days required a Lenalee. Some days required an Alma. All days required some sort of Lavi. Very few days required a Kanda but those were very important days because Kanda became quite good at teaching Allen how to find his ‘center’. All days started to require a Link to.

His days started to require a Link when he finally decided to join the dance team which was the day after he met Link face to face and watched him practice. Link wasn’t necessarily a mother figure to him, after all he had Anita, but Link became someone that Allen was extremely comfortable around. He had no issues wearing short sleeved shirts around him or touching him with his left arm. He had no issues saying whatever was on his mind, and that counted for things that were not age appropriate or ‘gentlemenly’. However, Link didn’t bat much of an eye at him for saying these things. Most times he would let Allen finish before reprimanding him.

For how prim and proper he was, it sure took a lot to faze him. Most of it had to do with physical contact. If Allen’s face got too close to his or if either of them touched the other’s butt on accident (which happened, especially with practice but usually Link was too focused at the task at hand to worry about it). Other than that, Link was a surprisingly calm individual, although very uptight and obsessed with rules Allen later found out. No matter though, Allen quickly became the rule breaker and Link’s constant object of nagging. Instead of walking away from Allen, Link became more attracted to the other boy’s constant antics and clowning around. He absolutely came alive during dance practice. Link thought it had something to do with his need to make everything ‘perfect’ and ‘proper’. In other words, Allen kept Link busy and Link found himself welcoming it, especially when the little white terror managed to string Link along with his rule breaking antics. (These interactions are also for another day).

Once Allen’s other friends figured out that Link was here to stay (along with his equally weird siblings that would never stop pestering Link), they soon got used to him, although with Lavi it took a lot of encouraging. There were many times where Lavi would make rude faces or gestures at Link when he thought Allen wasn’t looking. In fact, there came a time where Lavi and Allen had a pretty bad fight over Link that lasted a few days (which had everyone suffering), but after those few days Lavi finally relaxed his guard around Link. Once he figured out Allen would still be his very best besty best friend in the whole world, and that Allen would always make room for ‘Lavi
and Allen’ time, Lavi completely relaxed. Although he still enjoyed screwing around with ‘Two spots’, a nickname he lovingly calls Link. (This whole entire thing will also be a story for another day).

Chapter End Notes

(Ahhh…that was very long but I hope you enjoyed it. Link came off a little funny I think here and there but over all I enjoyed writing him. I don't really view Link as the overly blushing type like "Oh my god Walker just said the word fuck better fucking blush like tomato!" or "Walker said something dirty better fucking die now. Give me the sweet release of death". I view him as someone whose kind of more 'robotic' or 'puppet-like'. He seems like the type of person that can handle dirty jokes and stuff like that without batting an eye although he will call you out for it because 'that isn't proper'. However, I think you will find him changing into a less robotic like person later on, especially when I get further into the dancing stuff of some of these drabbles.

Sadly, this drabble just became too long so I figured I would leave the whole Lavi vs. Link thing for another drabble of its own. There will also be a separate drabble about Allen joining the dance team and meeting all the members in that. I promise I have no forgotten Krory and Miranda. It’s just that this drabble took longer than I was expecting and turned out in a different way I was expecting. I want them to have their own drabble as well, although I don’t know if I want to include it in this series. I may end up writing a whole new separate thing for other characters within this series for their own ‘special drabbles’, except for Cross and Allen to which this is mostly centered around. I have a lot more little things typed up but I have not decided whether I’m going to post that massive thing on here or break it up into little chunks. Anyways, I’m rambling. Hope you enjoyed it. See you next time.)
Cross Teaches Allen To Swim

Chapter Summary

Just a small piece out of the massive drabble I was doing earlier. Just to show you guys I'm not dead, just busier than normal. Hope you enjoy it!

“Oi, brat. What are you doing just standing there? It’s as hot as Satan’s third nipple outside and you already nearly fainted once today from the heat. You need this as much as I do,” Cross called out from the pond he was swimming in. His red hair gracefully splayed out around him. It kind of made Allen jealous. Allen was standing near the edge of the lake, looking at it warily in his t-shirt and underwear. He wanted to keep his shirt on because he was self-conscious over his body. It’s true that he washed his clothes and himself in lakes before, but he never ventured far out in the ponds to actually swim because he didn’t want to drown. He stayed where the water only rose up to his knees and that was it.

“Don’t tell me you’re afraid of the water. Didn’t Mana teach you how to swim kid?” Cross asked. Allen felt his cheeks flush in embarrassment and shook his head. Cross hummed in response and shrugged.

“Alright, not a problem kid. A lot of kids your age still do not know how to swim either. I’ll teach ya. Get in the water,” Cross said, swimming up close to the edge of the lake so Allen could stay in an area he was more comfortable at. Allen stayed where he was, glancing at the water and then at Cross distrustfully.

“Kid I don’t think that’s going to be deep enough for you to actually swim comfortably,” Cross commented, “Come on, a little farther, at least to your lower waist.”

Allen whimpered.

“Allen you’re not going to learn anything or move forward in life if you’re too afraid to take some risks,” Cross said, holding out his hand, “C’mere I got you. I’m not going to let your head go under okay?”

Allen hesitantly took a few steps towards Cross, taking his hand. He marveled at how his hand swallowed his whole.

“Alright, good. Now I’m going to have you lay down on your stomach in the water,” Cross instructed, getting a fearful look from Allen, “Hey don’t be like that. You’re still able to stand up in this so you can’t drown, especially when I’m right here.”

Allen hesitantly did as he was told, shivering when he felt the cool water run down the hot skin of his back. He never swam in the hot weather before. Why? Well, because adults were running around in the daytime and he didn’t want anyone to throw him in the water or try to drown him. He
tried to do most activities that involved bathing or washing his clothes in the night time.

“Alright don’t freak out. My hand is going to be on your torso, alright? If you freak out then you’re going to make it difficult for me to keep your head above the water,” Cross said, adding the last part quickly when he felt Allen jolt at having his hand touch him. He really didn’t want to destroy the kid’s trust in him now. Hell, the kid barely let him touch him as it was. The only thing he could touch was his hands and that was on accident when he gave him his food or something to drink. I get what you’re thinking, why the fuck would you want to touch the kid? If he doesn’t like to be touched, he doesn’t like to be touched! Look, Cross got that. He did. He hated being touched to because whenever he was touched it was to be slapped across the face from his own father or beat up. When his first girlfriend touched him, it felt euphoric. It was the gentlest thing he had felt in his entire life ever and he realized just how touch starved he was. Touch was one of the most important things that humans needed. Humans were social creatures and a lot of doctors and pediatricians were adamant about skin to skin contact with babies. Touch was healing, especially to kids who went through trauma. Researching how to take care of a traumatized kid was insightful, not only in learning how to get Allen to heal, but also to figure his own self out through his own abuse.

If Cross was a younger man, he’d probably be carrying through what his father would do to him towards Allen, but as he got older and went into the police force, he learned about human psychology a lot more. While his grades in school reflected someone who was stupid, Cross was far from a stupid person and through human interactions with other people his aggressiveness from when he was younger melted away (sort of. He still had quite the temper and there was, still some things he picked up from his father that he couldn’t destroy). But that was enough about Cross, that was another story for another day.

“Alright, so we’re going to deal with kicking first. Kicking is supposed to help push you in the direction you want to go in, but if you don’t do it right, you’re basically stuck where you are. So, you want to point your toes as much as possible and kick your legs up and down. So, try kicking your legs kid,” Cross explained slowly. Allen obeyed the instruction and Cross had him kick his legs for a little bit to watch and make sure he was doing it right.

“Alright. Good. The legs are the most powerful part of your body, but in order to swim properly you need to have your arms moving to. There are many different swimming positions, but most kids learn the doggy paddle first so I’m going to teach you that. So, what you want to do is cup your hands and push down in the water towards you, one arm at a time and cycle that,” Cross explained, earning a confused look from Allen. Okay…so that sounded better in his head.

“Ya know what I’ll just show you. It’s a lot better showing that instructing,” Cross sighed. He would never cut it as a teacher.

So, the two of them spent about thirty minutes with Cross trying to teach Allen how to basically swim the doggy paddle. It took a few tries, but Allen managed to somewhat do a decent doggy paddle, though it was hard to really get anywhere.

“Alright, I’m going to let go. Don’t freak out and just focus on moving your body like that otherwise you’ll go under the water,” Cross warned, deeming Allen as doing the body mechanics well enough where he didn’t need his hand underneath him keeping him afloat. Cross slowly move his hand away from Allen so he wouldn’t spook the kid at not having anything underneath to support him and smirked when the brat was able to keep himself afloat.

“See? Hell, you don’t even need me to keep your ass afloat. You learn fast kid,” Cross commented he swam backwards into the deeper part of the lake. Allen gave him a betrayed look that seemed to
say, ‘hey why are you leaving me?’

“What’s with that look kid? I thought you liked being left alone,” Cross called out, splashing water towards him. He was far enough though where only a few droplets managed to fall on the kid. Allen jolted back and frowned at Cross, a little hurt at being splashed.

“Oh, don’t cry, you’re fine. People do that for fun in the water. If you want revenge, you’re going to have to come to me,” Cross crowed out, smirking when he saw the youngster’s eyes flash with dangerous intent. Cross sat at the bottom of the lake, the water only reaching to his upper chest. He didn’t wander off too far, so the kid had a fair chance of coming to Cross if he wanted to. Allen pouted, thinking about the situation for a few more minutes before deciding he would swim to Cross.

Cross smirked and raised an eyebrow when the brat came up to him, still pouting, before he threw as much force as he had against the water to splash Cross which was to throw both his arms down in the water. He ended up splashing most of it in his face.

“Well that certainly backfired didn’t it?” Cross chuckled, watching Allen sputter and spit out water.

Tim, deciding to help out his little friend, scooped up water in his mouth when Cross was too busy paying attention to Allen’s weak attempt at splashing him. Then Tim flew over with the water in his mouth and proceeded to dump it all on Cross’s head, effectively cutting off Cross’s amusement.

“Really!? Dammit Tim I outta cook you alive for that!”

Allen cowered at Cross’s yelling, but his eyes sparkled in amusement when Tim came to his rescue and got Cross for him.

“Oh, you think that’s funny?” Allen immediately wiped the smile off his face when Cross turned back to him, “Well is this funny?”

Cross proceeded to splash back at Allen, nothing with enough force to scare him or anything but to still get him wet. Allen pouted angrily and proceeded to blow Cross a raspberry. Cross quirked his eyebrow up at the gesture, surprising Allen was showing more defiance before sticking his own tongue out at him. Tim used his tail to splash Cross from behind to which the older man growled and splashed back at the annoying creature. Tim grinned widely at Cross’s reaction before swimming over to Allen to press up against his face.

“I see how it is. Well fine, I’ll just swim over here,” Cross huffed dramatically before swimming further back into the lake until the water reached above his navel, which made Allen distressed because he didn’t want to be this deep in water without the bigger man beside him. In a way Cross was testing just how much trust Allen had put into him over the past week upon ‘waking up’. He was also testing to see if Allen would actually be gutsy enough to come out farther.

“I see how it is. Well fine, I’ll just swim over here,” Cross huffed dramatically before swimming further back into the lake until the water reached above his navel, which made Allen distressed because he didn’t want to be this deep in water without the bigger man beside him. In a way Cross was testing just how much trust Allen had put into him over the past week upon ‘waking up’. He was also testing to see if Allen would actually be gutsy enough to come out farther.

“I’m not coming over there. You come over here,” Cross called out at the child who looked about ready to cry. Allen sniffled, hesitating. Tim, deciding to pressure the little boy even more, began to swim over to Cross as well. This was the deepest he had ever gone in the water before and he wasn’t quite sure if he wanted to try going deeper. He didn’t want to be left up here all alone.

“Come over here. I know you can do it. If you get tired part way through, I’ll come and get ya,” Cross said, holding out his arms expectantly.

That seemed to be what Allen needed to make an attempt to doggy paddle towards Cross. After about a minute or so, Allen ended up getting tired, but he made it to at least a few feet from Cross
before the man decided it was good enough and he reached out to grab him himself before the child could go under. The water was too deep for Allen to stand in by his lonesome which already had Allen nearly hyperventilating, so Cross drew the child close to his body.

“Oi calm down. You’re going to send yourself into a panic attack. I got ya, just hold onto me and you won’t sink,” Cross said. Allen instinctively grabbed onto Cross, the man could feel his fingernails digging into his shoulder, “Oi, relinquish the claws there kid. You’re not going anywhere. Just relax.”

Allen whined, but stopped trying to stab into Cross’s flesh with his fingers. Instead he wrapped himself tightly around Cross like a little monkey as Cross swam backwards further into the lake’s depths. Cross kept going until the water was up to his shoulders which was pretty deep for someone as small as Allen. Not so much for a guy Cross’s size. Allen’s eyes were as huge as saucers, but he seemed to also be quite curious at the new experience. He little hand grasped onto Cross’s hair as he tilted every which way to look at his surroundings. They were really really far from the edge of the lake! He knew Cross was a giant but not this much of one! He wondered if he would ever get as big as Cross when he grew up.

Cross watched the little one carefully, gauging his reaction. The kid trusted him this far to keep him safe in the water, so there was something there, although he wasn’t sure how much that trust carried. Cross cupped some water in his hands (Allen was holding him tight enough where he could use both hands) and slowly rose the water up before pouring it on Allen’s head. Allen immediately cowered when he saw Cross’s arms raise themselves over his head, anticipating getting hit, but was confused when cold water was poured on his head. It was amazing how hot it was outside that day. Even though Allen splashed water in his face earlier, his hair was almost dry after that incident until now, so the water poured on his head was welcome. Cross kept doing the gesture, frowning when Allen continued to lower his head down every time, he raised his arms, even when he knew what was coming. Hell, they even built a momentum and the kid automatically did it when he anticipated the water being poured on his head. He expected it, but he didn’t realize it would be so drilled into the kid’s head to do that every single time an arm was raised.

“Hey wanna know a cool trick?” Cross asked the little boy, who blinked, shaking his head rapidly to shake off any excess water from his head, “You wanna try and float on your back?”

Allen shrugged, feeling a little anxious at what that would feel like. Cross thought of teaching him how to do it last minute so at least when he got tired of swimming, he could switch to floating on his back instead of drowning himself.

“Here, lay back,” Cross said, helping the younger one to lay back, even though he was met with a little resistance when Allen felt the water close around his body and his ears. He felt like he was going to sink and in response he began to jerk his legs and arms around and yelp because he was afraid. Cross quickly grabbed Allen and sat him upright again before he could go under.

“Oh, you’re okay. You’re okay. We’ll try it again when you’re more used to the water okay?” Cross soothed the child whose eyes were wild with fear as he clung back onto Cross. Cross kept moving around in the water, letting Allen have some time to calm down and figure out Cross wasn’t going to force him to try again. At least not today. He was already pushing Allen’s comfort limits and he didn’t want to go too far and have to restart getting the kid to trust him. They kept swimming around like that for another fifteen minutes before Allen’s teeth began to chatter and he made shivering noises. Then Cross slowly made his way back up to the edge of the lake until he was able to stand up and walk through the water with ease. Allen didn’t seem happy about letting Cross go when the older man let him down on the ground so he could grab his shirt and let Allen’s grab his shoes and pants he shucked off when Cross suggested they go swimming. Cross’s body ran a lot
warmer than Allen’s and the child didn’t want to admit it, but he liked being held and against his caretaker’s body. Mana held him quite a bit and he was the only one that ever-held Allen, at least from what he could remember.

“If you ever want to go swimming again let me know. The current usually isn’t as calm as it was today and since you don’t know how to swim, I don’t want you anywhere near this lake without me or another adult that can get you if you start to drown. Not even just Tim either. You got me?” Cross said, his tone turning serious as he narrowed his eyes at Allen. Allen nodded as he finished putting his shoes on.

Cross nodded once in satisfaction before moving forward, “Alright, let’s go. I still have to make dinner ya know.”

Allen scrambled after the older man, his eyes trained on his hand that moved back and forth as he walked. Allen had a yearning to hold onto it like he did with Mana’s that day he decided to walk with him as they left the circus behind. He resisted that urge though and continued to walk with Cross back to Mother’s house.

~

Cross watched Allen out of the corner of his eye. He didn’t want to look directly at the brat because he thought he would run off and wedge himself into some random tiny ass corner in Mother’s house. Mother had a lot of little corners he could fit into and he saw Allen covered in mothballs countless times already from when he ran off to hide when something scared him. Now Cross was slowly watching the little boy sneak around Cross in a huge, unnecessary circle to go outside.

Allen liked being outside more than anything but the last few days he was forced to stay cooped up inside because it was rainy outside, and Cross lectured him about staying inside so he didn’t catch a cold. Based on the kid’s reaction though, it was like Cross had yelled at him because after he was done with his lecture the boy cowered and ran off.

“Oi. If you’re going outside can you at least stay where I can easily find you this time?” Cross asked as the little one reached up to touch the door knob of the front door. The brat’s body tensed up and he turned around, shoulders sagging submissively, almost like he was preparing to be hit. Allen had a habit of staying outside until night time and there were many times where Barba and Cross had to go looking around for the brat to tell him to come inside.

Cross decided to then look over at Allen directly who pushed his body closer to the door, putting as much distance between him and Cross as possible.

“I don’t care if you go outside boy. Just don’t get into trouble and stay where I can find you. Wouldn’t hurt to come in when it’s getting dark outside either. There are wolves out there that might think you’re a little rabbit with that white hair of yours,” Cross explained. Allen touched his hair self-consciously before nodding softly. Cross didn’t know if it was out of agreement with staying around the house or agreement that he might be mistaken for a rabbit. Cross didn’t have time to ask because the kid was already out the door with Timcanpy in tow.

Cross didn’t know why the kid got attached to Timcanpy first. In fact, he was scared of Tim at the first. Who wouldn’t be fearful of a huge golden ball with sharp teeth grinning at you maniacally? Cross didn’t know what Tim did to get the child to become close to him, but Cross was thankful that someone, in this case, something, managed to get close enough. Allen got into trouble a lot, not out of blatant disrespect of course, the kid was just clumsy. He never lived in an actual house before. Having Tim around Allen was a good thing because Tim could make sure to keep the kid
out of danger. At least for the most part.

It was probably about an hour later that Cross heard squeaky wailing coming from outside. Oh, that wasn’t good. What did the kid get into now? Cross put down the book he was reading over that talked about children and mental illness (because let’s be real something wasn’t right with that kid, Cross just wasn’t sure what yet), and made his way to the front door. He opened it to reveal a wailing Allen who was covered in many red bumps.

“Oi brat, where’d you get those~” Cross trailed off but as he looked to his right he saw the problem. There was a hive on the ground and many bees were swarming around it angrily. Thankfully it was far off enough where it seemed like they wouldn’t come to the house, but it was remarkable to see how fast the brat managed to run when the bees came after him. Cross looked back over at the boy who continued to wail pitifully as big tears ran down his face. He then looked at Tim.

“I thought you were gonna keep him out of trouble, what the hell man!?”

Tim seemed to deflate in shame. The truth was he tried to pull the little boy down from the tree before he could anger the bees, but Allen wouldn’t listen and decided he just had to try and steal some honey from the insects. Next thing he knew, the hive fell from the tree, and the bees angrily swarmed up at the little boy who was the cause of it. Allen’s eyes widened as he realized that he was in very big trouble and he proceeded to jump down from the tree, twisting his ankle as a result, before sprinting back to the house as fast as he could. He didn’t get away without quite a few bee stings though.

Cross sighed and returned his attention at the sobbing child, “Well I sure hope you learned your lesson ya lil thief. You never mess with a bee hive, no matter how much you want their honey. I hope to God you’re not allergic to bee stings. C’mere. Let’s get you patched up.”

The man led the way back into the house in search of a first aid kit, the little crying boy limping after him in shame and disappointment.

“Sit at the table. I’ll be right back.”

“What on God’s green Earth happened? Cross he’s your child, you need to be watching him!”

“He got into a bee hive and pissed off a bunch of bees. He’s fine. Pain builds character,” Cross yelled at the old woman as he stalked off into the bathroom.

“Pain builds character my ass! He’s limping Cross!” Mother hollered back at him.

“He’s fine. I got it under control,” Cross huffed back, returning with a small box, and a wet washcloth, “Alright, stop crying and show me where you all got stung at.”

Allen continued to cry but complied and showed Cross all the red bumps he had acquired with his little stupid escapade. He whined when Cross checked each bump for stingers and washed over the areas with the wet washcloth. Once he saw to it his stings were treated, he focused his attention on his ankle. He had Allen move it around for him and gently pressed against the bones in his foot to make sure it wasn’t broken. He was pretty sure it wasn’t since the kid could move it just fine, although it was a little swollen. Cross put a simple wrap on his foot before deeming the kid to be just fine. Judging from how much time had passed, the kid wasn’t suffering from any reactions to the bee stings either which was more than enough to satisfy Cross. He wanted the brat to stay around him though, just in case.

“Alright brat. No going outside for a few hours. You stick around here and stay where I can see
you. You got it? If I have to hunt down your ass down around here there will be trouble,” Cross promised. Allen sniffled and whimpered in response but didn’t make a run for it to go back outside when Cross moved away from him to put the kit back in the bathroom and return to his spot on the couch to continue reading his book. Allen stayed sitting where he was for a few minutes, but soon got bored so he made his way to the living room where Cross was reading his book.

Cross, feeling like someone was staring at him, lowered the book from his face to look at the little one staring up at him curiously.

“What do you want?”

Allen jolted and looked behind him, like he thought Cross was talking to someone else.

“Yeah you. Who else would I be talking to?”

Allen shrugged.

“What do you want?”

Allen shrugged again.

“What do you mean you don’t know? You have to know something.’”

Allen seemed confused at that, to which Cross sighed and continued reading his book. Truth be told, Allen was bored. He was super bored and there was nothing good on the television. He could entertain himself outside, but sadly that was off limits for the next few hours. Which meant there was nothing to do. Or so he thought. Then a little idea popped into his head. He’ll just have to mess with Cross.

He wouldn’t do anything that involved being near him. Oh no. He’d mess with him from a distance…

Allen started with something simple, like sticking his tongue out at Cross. While Cross was unaware, Mother was watching and smiled at the little one showing a little bravery for once. Once he made sure Cross was still unaware. Allen pulled the corners of mouth up and cross his eyes while sticking out his tongue at Cross.

Mother let out a little chuckle, making Cross drop his book. Allen anticipated this though and dropped the act, looking at the wall like nothing happened. Once Cross returned to his book, seeing nothing out of the ordinary, Allen promptly returned to his actions. He pushed the tip of his nose and crossed his eyes at Cross, made a fish face at Cross. Anything his little mind could think of making, he did so to Cross and Mother was laughing along at the child.

“What the hell are you laughing at woman?” Cross asked, looking down at his brat who just went back to standing there.

“Oh nothing. I just thought of something funny,” Mother said, going along with the act just to see what Allen would pull next. Cross shook his head and continued reading. In an instant Allen was back making faces, but this time he threw in gestures like standing on one leg, making the cuckoo gesture while pointing at Cross or mimicking him. Which most was an angry face and pretending he was bitching at something.

However, Mother began laughing so hard that Cross dropped his book too fast this time around and caught his brat sticking his tongue out, crossing his eyes, and wiggling his fingers at him. Cross raised an eyebrow at his brat who slowly dropped the act and stared back up at the man. Oh shit… he was in trouble now.
Cross surprised him though by promptly sticking his tongue out at him and pulling down the lower lid of his eye right back at him. Allen wrinkled his nose in confusion. Well…okay that wasn’t the reaction he was expecting from the older…

But Allen wasn’t backing down from this fight. Oh no. He was born to make stupid faces and other silly antics. He refused to be outmatched by this man.

So, Allen stuck his tongue back out at him, put the tip of his thumb against the tip of his nose and wiggled his fingers at Cross. Cross’s response was to growl at him and make an ugly face at him. Allen pointed at him and put an L on his forehead.

“Really brat. You got some fucking guts making faces at me,” Cross responded, deciding to growl louder at the kid who sort of stepped back in fear. It didn’t last long though. Allen decided that if it was a growling contest he wanted, he was sure going to fucking get it. So, Allen produced a squeaky growl of his own that sounded like a pissy little whine.

“Really? That’s all you got? That’s pathetic,” Cross responded before roaring at Allen, although it was soft, nothing loud enough to outright scare the kid, yet. It depended how far he wanted to take it. Cross was interested how far he would take it though.

Allen made a disgusted look at Cross, looking personally offended that the older man dare roared at him like that. So, Allen took a deep breath and attempted to do the same at Cross which came out like an indignant, pathetic little squeak. That’s what happened when you didn’t use your voice very much, I guess.

“That sounds like a fucking field mouse brat. That’s not scary at all. Do it like you mean it. Like this,” Cross responded before roaring louder at the brat. Not to the intensity that he was capable of. Cross was interested how far he would take it though.

Allen tried again, producing a louder but elongated squeak. Cross was not affected. But he continued going up a level, each time the brat squeaking a bit louder. Mother was having a ball watching the two interact with each other.

“Cross stop teasing him.”

“He started it. I’m just finishing it,” Cross said, producing the loudest roar he was capable of. He sat back afterwards with a satisfied smirk when he saw Allen’s eyes go wide.

“Face it brat. If you can’t produce nothing more than a squeak you have nothing on me.” Cross smirked.

Allen puffed out his cheeks in irritation before he inhaled really really deep, stomping up to Cross and produced the loudest, longest scream that his little body was capable of producing. It helped his ankle was already sprained which helped him scream louder. It was so high-pitched Cross was sure it almost broke every single glass thing in the house. Cross sat back stunned. No smirk on his face as Allen proceeded to sit on the floor, tired out and catching his breath.

“Holy shit that little boy sure has lungs when he wants to use them! I swear to God Cross if you try to outmatch him, I will kick you both outside of this house. Ya almost broke my damn ear drums with your last one,” Mother bitched.

“Well damn. It’s not fucking roar, but I’ll take it,” Cross commented, “You win.”

Allen punched the air from his spot on the floor in victory.
This isn't an update sadly...as I ran out of some ideas...so if ya'll have some ideas you'd like to see to help stir up some inspiration it'd be highly appreciated!
Cross looked over at the clock on the wall and sighed. Eleven at night. He’s late again. He checked his phone for a text. Nothing. Anita already went to bed since she had a shift in the morning, leaving Cross to stay up and wait for his son to come home after ‘hanging out with friends’. The least he could’ve done was send him a text. Let him know he was okay. What was going on. But the brat sent nothing. The worst thing is, said brat was supposed to be grounded but he snuck out. Typical teen behavior.

It wasn’t like Cross didn’t expect this to happen. Cross was a teenager once and he was familiar with staying out past curfew and disobeying one’s parents. Even as he grew older, he was familiar with it because he had to drive said rebellious teens back to their pissed off parents. He witnessed quite a few arguments from afar when the parent’s closed their doors after their child walked through the entrance, leaving Cross to walk back to his police vehicle. Cross expected Allen to do some of these things, but he didn’t think he would do them when he was still so young. It wouldn’t be such a huge deal, if only he’d call or text and let Cross know what was going on! What pissed Cross off and scared him to death was not knowing what his son was getting into. Was he doing
drugs? Did he get wasted and left in a ditch somewhere (Cross would wring his little neck if he did that, he thought he made it clear not to fucking drink!)? Was someone hurting him? Was he just hanging out with friends? Did he get into a car wreck? There was so many things that ran through Cross’s mind that he wished Allen would understand. But of course, Allen was a teenager and whenever Cross yelled at him or tried to make him listen he’d tune him out and glare at the wall saying, ‘you’re just being a kill joy’, ‘you’re being overprotective’ or ‘I’m not a little kid anymore I can take care of myself.’

He wasn’t trying to be the bad guy. He didn’t want to be the kind of dad that his own father was. He only yelled at Allen and scolded him because he cared. He wasn’t trying to keep him from having fun or having friends. He was trying to protect him because teenagers do stupid fucking things sometimes and while Cross wanted Allen to fuck up and learn from his mistakes, he wanted to be there by his side to make sure he won’t get hurt too bad or killed. Cross sighed again, sending Allen another text.

‘Where are you?’

He looked at the previous texts he sent him

‘Oi so I saw you’re not in your room studying like you were supposed to. You know you’re grounded right?’

No reply.

‘Where are you? It’s getting late.’

No reply.

‘At least let me know you are safe.’

Cross was becoming desperate at this point, although he didn’t want to show it.

Then the new text where he asked again ‘Where are you?’

Just as Cross was tempted to get into his car and go searching for Allen a familiar red-head walked downstairs with a yawn. Lavi Bookman. It wasn’t an occasional occurrence to see him here, in fact, he had a room of his own at Cross’s house now. In the past when Bookman had to go on a trip far away ‘for work reasons’ (he never told Cross why, but he figured it was for work reasons since Bookman had a degree in history and made a living doing historical research) he dropped Lavi off for Cross to watch over him because he didn’t want Lavi to miss out on school. Especially since Lavi and Allen were close knit. In the end Lavi seemed to have staked out a permanent residence here which had its perks and it’s downsides. Cross sort of viewed Lavi as a second son at this point though it took a little while for him to warm up to the other brat. Anita had no problem though and was floored to have a second son.

“You’re supposed to be asleep,” Cross frowned.

“Sleep is for the weak. Besides, you’re not the only one worried about him you know,” Lavi yawned as he walked over a showed Cross his phone which was on Facebook and there was a video, “I found him thanks to some idiot uploading a video for everyone and their dog to see.”

That’s one of the perks of Lavi. He was good at getting information and was a godsend when it came to Allen’s recent activities. Lavi could always find out where Allen was and always kept tabs on his friend/little brother. Sure, there was a good chance Lavi knew Allen snuck out tonight and Cross was irritated that Lavi didn’t let him know, but that was another conflict he didn’t have
energy to address. Besides, Lavi was still loyal to Allen and he didn’t want to betray him by outing him every time he snuck out of the house. That’s a downside to Lavi.

Cross held out his hand to take the phone but Lavi withdrew it, “We don’t have time. I’ll play it in the car but we have to go get him.”

Cross felt his stomach sink, “What the hell did he get into now?”

“Well his so-called boyfriend decided it would be funny to spike his drink at one of the parties going on tonight. They videotaped Allen and he’s shit-faced.”

“God dammit. I told him to stay away from that boy! He’s bad news! He’s on fucking meds, he can’t be drinking when he’s on them!” Cross growled, getting up hastily to get his shoes on and coat.

“Yeah? Well tell his boyfriend and his group of neanderthals that,” Lavi said, trailing after him.

“They better hope to God I don’t find their asses because when I get ahold of them, they’re going to piss blood for the next month,” Cross growled out, seething with rage. While he was pissed at Allen for going out to a party when he was grounded and knew he wasn’t supposed to, he was more pissed at the group of guys he was hanging with. Cross slammed open the front entrance, storming to his car with a calm, but serious Lavi behind him. Well, that was a lie, because if one looked close enough they could see Lavi’s hands were shaking in rage. He almost dropped his phone in rage.

As the two got into the car, Lavi began to play the video online. There were already a bunch of comments underneath, some mocking Allen for being ‘such a light weight’ while others were outraged that someone would think it would be funny to show them drugging an unsuspecting person.

Allen wasn’t like this but a couple months ago he fell in love with a guy named Jacob (everyone called him Jake). Allen didn’t start his behaviors until a month ago, but if anyone asked Lavi he would say Allen began to change the moment Jake managed to wrap him around his little finger. Jake was known to be…well a douchebag but there were times no one could really blame him. He was a victim of the bullies at school and honestly with the constant torment one could see why he could be a douchebag sometimes. Jake was a manipulator and always loved to play the guilt tripping card to get what he wanted. The boys in his group were what one would label ‘the druggy kids’, ‘the undesirables’, ‘the weirdos’. That’s not to say that anyone who fits those labels were bad, because Lavi considered himself to be a weirdo and he knew plenty of kids who did drugs only to escape the pain of their homelife. Those particular group of boys were not good people, however and it was shocking that Allen would even be attracted to someone like Jake. It was obvious the guy was bad news! Everyone at school knew, but Allen would always use the excuse of ‘well you guys don’t really know him like I do’.

As Allen began to fall deeper and deeper into his relationship with Jake, he began to act out more and become moodier. He began to withdraw from Lavi and the rest of his friends and he began to show up late for dance practice much to Link’s annoyance (who was his dance partner). Whenever one tried to tell Allen that perhaps his fixation on Jake wasn’t the healthiest, he’d snap and shut them down. After the first couple of times Lavi kept his mouth shut but always kept an eye on Allen from afar. He didn’t want to strain their relationship. That didn’t stop Allen and Cross from butting heads on many occasions and their relationships was quite strained right now to the point where they wouldn’t even talk to each other. Well, Cross would try to talk to Allen and share his opinion, but Allen would give him the cold shoulder, walking away. It was like walking on egg shells around Allen for the entire friend group and household. Sure, Allen had his bad days like
everyone else, but it wasn’t an everyday occurrence.

Lavi didn’t know the extent of what Jake was doing, but from the video alone he knew that whatever he was doing was not a sign of a healthy relationship.

The video was set at a house party being thrown in town, you know the typical house party that happened on the weekend. The whole ‘whatchamacallit’s parent’s aren’t home let’s throw a party!’ kind of stuff. In the video Jake narrates and basically shows him pouring alcohol into Allen’s drink which looked to be soda, apparently Allen trusted him to hold his drink while he went to the bathroom. He decides that Allen needs to ‘lighten up’ and drink like everyone else and tells the video camera that he’s pranking his boyfriend. Later on, his friends’ videotaped Allen absolutely wasted. Truth be told, Lavi never witnessed Allen when he was drunk, but he knew it was never pretty. Cross was heavily against Allen drinking and while Lavi thought it was because Cross used to be a drinker he also realized after watching his video why he was heavily against Allen consuming a drop of alcohol. Allen was wasted, but he was also freaking out. Allen was far from being stupid. Did he let his feelings override his logic? Yes. But he wasn’t stupid. He knew they screwed with his drink somehow and he was freaking out because he knew:

Jake who had his arms around Allen which set a fire deep in Lavi’s stomach: Where are you going? The party is just getting started.

Allen who was slurring his words, but he sounded anxious: I need to go home. I just need to go, I’m sorry.

Jake: Stay, everything’s fine. Do you really want to go home to your old man’s bitching?

One of Jake’s friends whose laughing: Dude he’s freaking out

Allen whose voice is cracking as he’s trying to get away from Jake: Look I just want to go home-

Allen figures out he’s being videotaped, and he looked from the camera over to Jake, fear in his eyes.

Allen: What did you do? Why are you videotaping me?

Jake: It’s nothing Allen, we just put a little alcohol in, nothing big-

Allen whose shaking his head in disbelief: Oh my god! I told you I didn’t want to drink! Oh my god I’m so dead-I’m on meds-My dad is going to freaking kill me!

Jake was trying to comfort Allen, but Allen got up and stumbled away from them in a panic.

Another one of his friends: Wow what a fucking drama queen. Has he always been this uptight?

Jake: He’ll get over it. He’s just not used to it.

And there was some other incoherent chatter in the background before the video finished, leaving Cross and Lavi fuming in the car as they sped down the road towards where Lavi suspected the house party was. It took a few minutes but when they arrived Cross put on his cop car lights, letting everyone know within the house and outside of the house that the police have arrived (or at least someone who works on the force). Cross ignored the people scattering and trying to run away from the house in favor of looking for Allen, although that didn’t stop him calling for back up. Lavi stayed in the car, deciding he didn’t want to have the kids associate him with being ‘the buzz kill who ruined last week’s party’. After fifteen minutes of searching and forceful questioning, Cross found out Allen had already left the house party a long time ago, including his boyfriend and
his friends. Where did he go? They didn’t know.

Until Link Howard texted Lavi, letting him know that Allen was safe and at his house.

“Why the fuck didn’t he text?” Cross sighed out in annoyance, leaning against the car window as Lavi told him the news. He loathed Link’s adoptive father Lucifer (ahem ahem, scuse me Leverrier) but from what he had seen over the years, Link was a decent kid and he trusted him with Allen. Just because he trusted him with Allen though, didn’t mean he wasn’t about ready to jump in the car and go after him and bring his scrawny ass back home.

Cross took one look at the time however and sighed for what felt like the billionth time that night. It was late. Really late.

“Link’s asking what you want him to do,” Lavi mentioned.

“Tell him Allen can stay there for the night. At least he’s fucking safe. I want him back home tomorrow morning though, not afternoon, not evening, in the morning. That boy and I are going to have words whether he wants it or not. I should beat his fucking ass,” Cross growled as he walked over to the other side of the car to get in and drive back home. Other cop cars were now swarming around the house and since Cross was off duty, he didn’t want to stay longer than he had to.

“It’s not his fault…well sneaking out is…but getting drunk isn’t,” Lavi said, trying to defend his brother.

“Doesn’t fucking matter. He shouldn’t be around a couple of fucking idiots like that. Fuck, the least he could do is call or text, but he can’t even be bothered to do fucking that,” Cross continued to growl as he drove off back home, causing Lavi to fall silent.

~

A soft knock at the door took Link away from his studies. It was late and he should be sleeping, but Link was never one for sleep, especially nowadays when so much was on his mind. On top of school he also had the upcoming dance competitions to think about and getting ready for college. Two more years and he would be graduating from high school. There was also the stress of dealing with the trouble maker that was Allen Walker, his dance partner who had been less than committed to learning and practicing their routine before said competitions. Link was tempted to change dance partners, quite tempted, but the two of them were dance partners for years and they had a connection that Link found difficult to achieve with other members. Link couldn’t find it within himself to actually go through with it. He just liked dancing with Allen too much. If only Allen was the same Allen he was two months ago. The committed Allen that loved to dance and loved singing. Whom was happy for the most part and loved breaking into Link’s house just to eat whatever he was making. Whom loved to hang off of Link and distract him from his studies. Now his visits were far and in between, his attention solely focused on the parasite (a term given to him by all members of their friend group) that was Jake.

No matter how many warnings Link gave him, no matter how many times Link chided him for arriving late to dance practice, Allen just couldn’t tear himself away from Jake. Lavi, Lenalee, Alma, even Kanda have tried countless times to try and reach Allen, to tell him that Jake wasn’t the kind of person he thought he was. That Jake had a lot of red flags. Allen shut them out though. Link wouldn’t forget the first time he heard about Allen’s affections because that was also the first time, he openly admitted he was gay. Instead of choosing Lavi, Cross or Anita, he chose to tell Link first. Then he proceeded to gush about the boy he fell in a love with, which rubbed Link the wrong way for reasons he didn’t quite know. However, when he heard Jake’s name pass from his lips his stomach dropped all the way down to the floor in concern. That’s who he liked? He knew
the rumors. He saw the red flags and as much as he wanted to shake Allen back his senses, he didn’t have the heart to destroy the connection they had together all over some boy. 
So, this is what he did. He kept himself open to Allen the way he always had. If Allen needed a safe space to go to, a space where he wouldn’t be judged, a space where he could get advice from a third party if he wanted to, then he had Link’s house. If he was having a bad day and didn’t want Cross, Anita, or Lavi questioning him, he went to Link’s house where fresh made pastries would await him and freshly brewed tea. Whatever he felt he needed. That wasn’t to say Link let Allen have his way, if he felt the need for it, he kept his parents and Lavi in the mix of things. He was fair and logical.

When he opened the door, he wasn’t surprised to find Allen looking up at him with a mixture of fear, tearful, and a hint of embarrassment in his eyes. His face was pale and he looked a bit clammy. He was surprised to find his face flushed and that he smelled of vomit and alcohol. It’s been awhile since Allen visited his house and based on his appearance Link would have to say this was Jake’s handiwork. Allen hunched over visibly as Link took in his form, but instead of questioning him, Link moved aside allowing him in his home. Allen breathed a sigh of relief and walked inside, towards his usual spot in the living room which was being jammed up to the side of his couch. Allen stumbled more than walked Link closed the door and went to the kitchen to make some tea. This was how they interacted. Words helped immensely but they didn’t have to rely solely on words. After being partnered with each other for so long they were able to respond to each other through gestures. They knew each other on a unique wave length.

As Link set the kettle on the stove to boil, he went off to find a towel and some clothes that would fit Allen. It was late at night, too late to walk back home. It wasn’t the first time Allen stayed the night and after the first couple of times Link invested in buying clothes that would fit Allen (although Allen preferred stealing one of Link’s shirts to wear). Once he acquired the needed items, he went back to Allen curled up on the couch, staring at the floor somberly and held them out.

Shower. Allen wordlessly took the items, brushing past Link clumsily as he moved towards his bathroom. Link waited for him and the water to boil in the living room. Usually Allen only took ten minutes but this time around he took twenty minutes. That was expected when Allen was in a particularly bad mood. By the time Allen emerged from the bathroom he looked a little better but still stumbled his way over to Link on the couch. Link already had a cup of tea waiting for him.

Allen wrinkled his nose in disgust. His stomach lurched uncomfortably at the thought of ingesting anything.

“The tea has ginger in it. It should settle your stomach,” Link said, finally breaking the silence, coaxing the warm mug in Allen’s hands, “You should drink something regardless or you’ll get dehydrated and your hang over will be worse.”

Allen nodded and sat down carefully before taking a tentative sip.

“I threw up twice coming here.”

Link hummed and nodded.

“One of the times was in your sister’s rose garden when I got here. I’m sorry.”

“Do you at least feel better?”

“A little.”
“I told Lavi you were here. Sorry. I figured he was worried about you though.”

Allen took a shaky inhale at that.

“Your dad wants you to be home tomorrow morning. I will drop you off if you’d like. Do you want some crackers?”

Allen nodded again taking another sip of his tea and feeling it burn down his throat. Link moved out of the room for a few moments to retrieve some saltine crackers before returning to the couch and handing them to Allen. As Allen began to nibble at them Link proposed his next question.

“Have you seen the video online?”

“Dammit. They posted it?” Allen gasped.

“Yeah. Seems like something you’d want to know.”

“Son of a-“ Allen responded, his voice shaking. He pinched the bridge of his nose, willing himself to calm down before he upset his stomach even more.

“I’m sorry,” Link responded after a few minutes of silence.

The two of them sat in silence for a long time the only sounds breaking the silence where soft crunching noises from Allen or soft sniffling also from Allen. After several minutes Allen finally drained the tea in his cup and Link finally took it from him. When Link returned, he gestured for Allen to follow him. Allen slowly rose up from the couch and followed the blond to Link’s room which was immaculate a fairly simple. A bookshelf or two in the corner, a desk in another and a bed in the middle, along with a walk-in closet that was off the side of his bed.

“I’m going to stay up a little longer, but you should get some sleep,” Link said, giving Allen indirect permission to walk over and lay down on his bed. Allen sighed heavily when he collapsed on Link’s bed nuzzling his face into one of his pillows. Link returned to his desk to finish up studying.

“Link?” Allen called out, his voice muffled and half asleep.

Link hummed to let Allen know he was listening.

“Stay with me tonight….please? Instead of the couch?”

“Alright,” was Link’s reply. A little change to the routine, but a needed change.

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When Allen woke up the next morning, he had a headache, although probably not as bad as he could’ve had. Allen was pretty sure he got most of the stuff out of his system last night after he learned that they messed with his drink, so he figured that was why he felt as good as he did. When he looked at his phone, he could see many unread messages from Jake and Cross, a few from Lavi. Cross was going to skin him alive. The thought of fighting with Cross again made Allen feel sick to his stomach. They’ve been doing that a lot lately. Allen felt sicker when he read through Jake’s texts.

[Wow you made me look like an idiot in front of my friends last night. Did you know your dad showed up and ruined the party? You owe me.]
Allen visibly flinched at the insult in the last one. Jake wasn’t always like this…at least not in the beginning. In the beginning he was charming and an aspiring musician which is what made Allen first fall in love with him. Allen didn’t like to brag, but he also aspired to be a musician. Well at least somewhat. He was already a great singer, that much was well known in his school as well as other schools surrounding the area. He picked up playing piano when he was around ten and he was already a fantastic dancer, although he wouldn’t be anywhere without Link by his side. Least to say, Allen was talented at many things and did pretty good at school, minus English and Art. So of course, he felt a great connection when he learned Jake wanted to be a musician.

He wasn’t a sight to behold by any means, but Allen felt that if Jake stopped drinking so much and stopped using drugs so much, he’d look amazing. Jake was lanky and tall, he had ear piercings and never failed to wear a rock band t-shirt. He had dark brown, short hair that was quite shaggy, but Allen didn’t mind. His favorite part about him was his piercing blue eyes. Allen couldn’t help it, when he heard his guitar playing outside of school one day and saw those blue eyes connect with his, he melted and fell hard. The relationship only solidified when Allen found that Jake didn’t come from a good home life. His mother was an alcoholic and wasn’t around emotionally. The only interaction they seemed to have was fighting with each other. His dad left when he was young, and he found solace through music. Allen knew what it was like to grow up in a shit home life, at least before he met Mana and before he met Cross so of course his heart went out to Jake. Deep down he knew Jake wasn’t a healthy person and their relationship was not healthy, but he had hope. Before Allen was Allen, he was a horrible, angry little boy and he changed to who he was today, so surely Jake could do the same. He just needed understanding and love.

Allen under estimated just how much energy it would take though. He didn’t take into account how stupid being in love could make a person before it was too late. He knew that last night was a red flag, that he should’ve just ended things right then and there with Jake. But he couldn’t. He was afraid to. What if Allen pushed him over the edge? He didn’t want to hurt Jake but at the same time he was becoming extremely stressed with how this relationship was turning out. He was trying to continue with dance, which Jake seemed highly against and unsupportive. He was trying to stay home but Jake wanted him to go out with him to party or hang out at his house. At his house it used to be just cuddling on his bed and talking about their aspirations or life. Now it was filled with him drinking and wanting sex which was far from satisfying.

Allen didn’t mind sex. It was quite normalized for him at a young age, although he was not always comfortable with the idea of it. His first sexual encounter wasn’t the best sexual encounter and he was seven or eight when it happened. However, from what he saw so far in his life, sex was the way to show someone you loved them, so he did it. Allen felt like he was broken somehow when it came to sex. With Jake, sex didn’t feel too good at all, although Allen always lied at acted like he was having his brains fucked out. What can he say, he was good at acting. Maybe sex just didn’t feel good because there was something wrong with him, at least that’s what he thought. He never even orgasmed once with Jake. It wasn’t like he didn’t have sexual urges. He did, but it surrounded around a certain blond that was currently driving him home instead of Jake.

Yeah. So, Allen was confused, and he felt awful because he was having sexual fantasies of another guy instead of the person he was dating. That was only a pebble compared to the massive boulder that was the shit show of Allen’s life right now. Puberty was a fucking shit show and he wasn’t even fully immersed in it yet. Allen looked up at his house, his stomach felt like a ball of lead as dread seeped into his bones. He was screwed. He snuck out of the house when he knew he was grounded because of one too many times staying out late with Jake and his friends. Now he did it again with the added bonus of getting shit-faced, although it wasn’t really his fault.
thought he was drinking soda. He didn’t taste the alcohol in it, but he sure felt it after a couple
drinks.

“Good luck,” Link said, offering a small pitying smile.

“That’s rich coming from you,” Allen said with an eye roll.

“Are you going to be at practice tomorrow night?”

“If my dad doesn’t send me to meet my maker today,” Allen sighed as he got out of Link’s car,
“Thanks for the ride.”

Allen watched as Link pulled away leaving him to face the shit storm that awaited him within the
house. Allen took a deep breath, trying to muster all the energy he had to deal with the explosion
that was sure to be Cross’s rage before he walked up the steps and opened the door.

Cross was waiting for him his eyes narrowed as he scrutinized Allen’s soul. That’s what he felt like
when you were under Cross Marian’s eyes. It creeped Allen out when he stared
at him like that.

“So, mind telling me why you decided it would be a great idea to sneak out of the house last night
to hang out with your boyfriend,” Cross asked, deciding to jump right in. His tone was light, almost
conversational. Allen knew better though, he could feel the rage bubbling up underneath it and he
felt a shiver go down his spine. He wouldn’t understand. If he could see the texts, he got from Jake
he would’ve known why Allen decided to disobey him and sneak out. Jake was guilt tripping him,
telling him that he didn’t love him enough, that he might as well just die, that Allen wouldn’t care
if he was dead in a ditch somewhere, etc. The only way Jake would be satisfied would be if Allen
disobeyed Cross and went to the stupid party with him that Allen didn’t even want to go to in the
first place.

“Nope,” Allen responded coldly, his lips popping on the p sound. He set his jaw and avoided
Cross’s gaze. He didn’t know why he was acting like this. So cold and angry. What he really
wanted was to sink to his knees and cry a fucking river from how tense and stressed out he was.

“Okay then, what about not even telling me where you went or when you would be home?” Cross
said, his tone shifting into anger when Allen began to show attitude.

“I can take care of myself.“

“You are fucking thirteen Allen Walker! You are still a child and we may live a small town but
there are some very fucking sick people that live here. What if you got hurt? What if you got
killed? First you disobeyed me when I told you that you were grounded which is fucking
aggravating, but you can’t even fucking tell me where you are? Is it really that fucking hard to text
me? What’s even worse is that you decided to go out drinking last night-“ Cross yelled, his temper
finally getting the best of him

“That wasn’t my fault!” Allen snapped.

“With the people you fucking hang around it was bound to happen eventually or worse! What if
they gave you too much!? Alcohol can kill Allen, I have seen it happen. People pass out and don’t
wake up. You are on antidepressants which makes it that much dangerous!” Cross continued to
yell.

“Well maybe I want to pass out and not wake up! This is fucking rich coming from someone who
was an alcoholic! I’m not fucking stupid so stop acting like I am,” Allen screamed back at him
before turning on his heel and storming to his room.

“Where the fuck are you going!? We’re not fucking done here! You can’t just keep running away because I say something you know is true!” Cross hollered up at Allen who responded by slamming the door to his room. Cross wasn’t having it though. He was sick and tired of Allen running off to his room when the truth became to hard to handle. Cross stomped upstairs and grabbed the door handle to yank open the door only to find the brat locked it.

“Allen you open up this fucking door now! This conversation is not over!”

“Oh my god just shut the fuck up!” Allen screamed back

Oh, that was definitely not something to say to Cross.

“Boy you will never see the light of day again after that I’ll fucking make sure of it. Consider your ass grounded for a whole month. You only go to school, practice, and home and I will make sure of it because I will personally drive your ass to and from there. You better not even think of sneaking out because the whole damn police department will know that you are grounded, and they will bring your scrawny ass back. You are fucking lucky I don’t whip your fucking ass with a belt for your attitude brat!” Cross yelled at Allen’s door. After the words flew out of his mouth though he felt guilty for it. Dammit, he told himself he wasn’t going to lose his temper this time around and he failed. He stood in front of his door, silently fuming for a few moments before turning on his heel and stalking away. It was useless. The brat just wouldn’t fucking listen to reason.

Allen had his head buried into his pillow, his head pounding with a new ferocity with all the yelling and continued stress. Tears pricked at his eyes, but he was determined to swallow down every sob because he didn’t want Cross to hear it and think he had won the fight. He heard his phone buzz on his bed where he flung it in his rage and thinking it was Jake, was tempted to throw it at the wall in rage. Not now! He couldn’t deal with his problems right now! He couldn’t handle the guilt tripping and the drama that Jake infused and continued to infuse into his life. As he grabbed the device in his hand, his urge to throw it stopped when he realized it was Link who had texted him.

[Hi. Just checking to see whether or not Cross sent you to meet your maker.]

Allen gave a choked laugh at that, wiping one of his wet cheeks as he texted back.

[No. I am still alive. Thanks for checking in. My prison sentence was upped to a month though.]

[Prison sentence? Is that what the kids call it now? What does make actual prisons then?]

[I don’t know and thinking about it makes my head want to explode.]

[That would make quite the mess. So, though Cross did not send you to meet your maker, I take it you are not feeling good?]

[Being screamed at is not something that would make someone feel good.]

[That’s understandable. So, I suppose something to make you feel better is in order?]

[You’re going to make me something?] Allen texted back with a soft smile, his tears slowly ebbing away as he talked with Link.

[Of course. It’s been awhile since you last visited, and I’ve been itching to do some baking and
you’re going to need something to keep you sane during your prison sentence. So, pick your poison.]

[Strawberry shortcake.]

[That’s too easy.]

[Well lucky for you I’ve been craving strawberries for a long time and a month is a long time so make me many of them.]

[How much is many?]

[As many as you want to make. I’m a bottomless pit and I love to eat my feelings.]

[Your wish is my command.]

[Don’t worry I’ll text you to make sure you stop at a decent time. I can’t believe you made pies that one time until 2 a.m.!] Allen texted back with a laugh. He remembered when Link woke up early one morning and had such an urge to bake that he went from the morning to 2 a.m. baking nothing but pies. It took until Allen texted him complaining of his English homework to make Link realize that it was late, and he was literally surrounded by pies.

[That would be highly appreciated. I look forward to it.]

Allen hummed, dropping his phone back on the bed. He took the pillow he had his face in earlier and hugged it to his chest, moving so he was staring up at his ceiling. His very very boring ceiling. The rage he felt earlier simmered down after his talk with Link and his headache dulled as he thought about the strawberry shortcakes waiting for him tomorrow. He was exhausted. He was never good at sleeping but with his new relationship it became a lot harder as he became plagued with nightmares of Jake attempting to kill himself or of Jake becoming violent (which was now becoming a trend whenever he was drinking). It’s been going on for about three weeks now. The nightmares and when he found out Jake could become violent under the influence. It wasn’t like he hit him in the face or anything, but he did grab Allen’s arms quite harshly and shook him by the shoulders. Besides, Allen deserved it. He knew that after Jake had a couple of drinks in him that he had to be careful about what topics he talked about.

That usually transitioned into not talking to him at all and waiting patiently until Jake drank until he passed out. When he drank it felt like Allen was trying to make conversation with a rock. There was no interaction. Jake was more interested in getting into Allen’s pants and if Allen said no or tried to resist Jake would get pissed. The only thing Allen could think of doing was submit to Jake, grit his teeth and bear it and wait for the alcohol to wear off. He did it out of love and that’s how Jake perceived love. Sex and being around the other person. Once the alcohol wore off Jake was easier to handle but it wasn’t exactly sunshine and rainbows either if last night was any indication and he only got worse with his friends around, which was often because he ‘loved to show Allen off’. Over all, in the beginning Allen was happy with the relationship but as time moved on, he began to find flaws within the relationship. There were things that he was being pressured to do that he didn’t want to do but he did it because he loved Jake. Love was dealing with another person’s flaws, right? He thought that with enough effort that he would change. How long would that take though and was Allen going to be able to deal with how long it took? That is, believing that Jake would even change.

Allen was pulled from his thoughts when his phone buzzed again. He glanced over at the lit-up screen of his cell phone. Jake. As he grabbed his phone, he could instantly tell Jake had been drinking.
[You know you are a real fucking bitch sometimes. You just fucking left us back there. You made me look stupid in front of my friends. You better not act like that at next weekend’s party.]

Allen sighed, his good mood tarnished.

[I didn’t mean to. I just felt really sick. Besides, I already told you I didn’t want to drink. That I can’t drink. Also, I’m grounded, remember? Now I’m grounded for a whole month instead of just a week.]

[Wow. Oh my god that was a joke Allen. What did you think we were going to rape you or something? Do you really think that low of me? Do you not love me anymore? Is that why you’re skipping out next weekend?]

[No, I don’t. Joke or not, I’m on medicine that can react badly with alcohol. I could’ve been in serious shit last night. I do love you, I’m just a bit frustrated right now. Plus, my dad is increasing security around the house. I literally can’t go anywhere and even if I wanted to sneak out, I can’t because we’d have the entire town’s police force on my ass.]

[Great. Well, let me know when you decide to get that pole out of your ass, alright?]

Allen groaned in frustration. Did he literally even read a word he fucking texted. Dammit, he should’ve just waited until he was sober, but was he really ever sober at this point!?]

[Fine.] was Allen’s only response before he threw his phone back down on his bed.

“Ughhh this sucks…he’s so difficult sometimes,” Allen groaned as he shoved the pillow over his face.

Then Allen heard a tapping noise from within his closet. Oh shit! That’s right! Timcanpy! He threw him in there last night so he would tail after him to reveal his location to Cross when he snuck out! Allen threw his pillow down and rushed over to the closet, opening the door to let a very angry Timcanpy out.

“Shit. I’m really sorry Tim. I wasn’t planning on keeping you in that lo-GAH! MY EAR!” Allen apologized in a rush. However, that wasn’t enough for Tim who flew over and bit down on Allen’s ear with his sharp teeth, hard enough to draw blood. Okay. He deserved that. Allen thought that that would be all, but Timcanpy was not in the mood for forgiveness and continued to attack Allen.

“T-Tim! Ow! Stop! I’m sorry okay! Dude! Okay okay I screwed up!” Allen yelped moving back to his bed to hide under the covers to shield himself from Tim’s attacks. He could hear Tim angrily growl at him from within the confines of his blankets, basically Tim’s version of cussing him out.

After a few minutes of hiding, Tim calmed down and Allen hesitantly poked his head out to come face to face with his golden friend.

Allen heaved a huge sigh,” I’m sorry Tim. Friends don’t do that to other friends, and it was mean of me to shove you in the closet like that. You have every right to be mad and I owe you one.”

Tim made a soft purring noise, acknowledging Allen’s apology. After a few moments, Tim grinned at Allen, showing that he had forgiven him. The golem made his way over to Allen on his stubby little legs and nuzzled against his head affectionately. Allen hadn’t just worried his parents, Lavi, or his friends. He also worried the little golem who had to stay hidden away from his boyfriend otherwise he would freak out. Allen planned on showing him Timcanpy sooner or later…just not right now when he was so volatile. Allen sighed contently, closing his eyes, deciding he would take a nap with Timcanpy who began to get comfortable right up against Allen’s
So, Allen managed to come to an understanding with Jake that there would be no sneaking out, no misbehaving for the week, that is when he got to school. When Allen went downstairs to grab something to eat Cross noticed his phone and took it away from him with the reason of ‘keeping away bad influences’. At least he had some mercy and let Allen text Jake and Link to let them know he would be phoneless for a while before taking it away. When Monday rolled around Allen tried to make it as clear as possible to Jake that he wouldn’t be doing anything this week. He already knew he was in pretty deep shit with Cross and if he kept pushing, he was going to be a dead man. Jake of course, didn’t take it well, but he took it and that was better than nothing in Allen’s opinion.

Cross made good on his word and drove Allen to school every day, watching him walk into the building to make sure he was at school. He was also there waiting for him after dance practice to pick him up. The rides to and from school were absolutely silent and filled with tension. Cross tried to break the tension but asking Allen about his day, but Allen shut him down, giving him the silent treatment. Typical teenager. Over all, the week was peaceful and needed. Allen was able to focus on his schoolwork and dance a lot more without having Jake looming above his head. That didn’t mean he didn’t miss Jake though or that Jake didn’t try to get him to go to a secluded place with him to have a make-out session or two. Allen stood his ground though. He was determined to be well behaved, to wait until the waters calmed down before he did something even more stupid.

After week one, Cross felt like Allen deserved his phone back for good behavior which was both a godsend and a curse because there was a lot of missed texts. All of them from Jake. None of them good. He was beyond pissed and blaming Allen for letting his phone get taken away. He was even more pissed that Allen didn’t try to steal it back. There was a long list of guilt tripping comments, but after seeing that Allen truly didn’t have access to his phone and would not be responding to him, they tapered off. He should’ve just stayed silent. To play up the act that he still didn’t have his phone. He missed Jake though and ended up texting him to let him know he had his phone back and so the vicious cycle began once again. Jake had his means of power over Allen back.

Week two had its difficulties but with the upcoming competition in three weeks, Allen was too busy to really give a shit about Jake’s constant guilt tripping. It still bothered him and stressed him out, but the dance competition took a greater priority. He was determined to make it up to Link after he let him stay at his house that day. Besides, he owed him for all the times he showed up late to practice. He did care about the competition, he cared about their routine, he cared about his friend, and he wanted to show it. Also, he liked spending time with Link, more so than was probably necessary and boy did Jake know about it. He was always jealous of Allen spending time with Link and have accused him many times before of cheating on him with Link. Of which, many times Allen reassured him that their relationship wasn’t like that. They had a certain closeness but that was a given with the fact that they’re dance partners. Right? But with the recent feelings that have bloomed, Allen wasn’t sure anymore. He attributed it to his lack of sexual satisfaction that he had with Jake.

Week three became more difficult. Link and Allen had decided that they would meet at Link’s house to continue to practice fine tuning their routine which was quite romantic in nature. That definitely didn’t help the confusing feelings Allen was having towards Link, but their dance coach seemed to think that they were better at dancing to romantically charged music. Not like Allen helped things because let’s be real, Allen was as straight as a circle and everyone on the dance team knew it. Plus, Allen could pull off being a woman dancer quite well and he was totally willing to brag about it. He knew his figure would probably not hold that impression for long, but
he was going to milk it for what it’s worth until puberty decided to hit him like a brick wall. Their song was Silhouette by Monster of Men which was an emotionally charged song that just seemed to make all the feelings Allen felt towards Link that much more potent. He knew he could just be interpreting the song wrong, but it was just something about the way it made him feel, the melody, that just made him want to stay by Link longer. It made it harder for him to tear himself away.

Jake was getting antsy and trying harder to pull Allen away from practice. He also happened to watch one of their practice sessions in the gym and was not happy whatsoever about what he saw. He was outraged to see Link’s hands on Allen’s body and approached Allen about it after practice. Allen didn’t have time to discuss things with him though because Cross was waiting for him outside. Most of the rest of their conversation was over text and it was filled with panicked responded from Allen, telling Jake over and over again that he loved him. That Link and him, were just friends. That it was just a dance and it wouldn’t be long before they were onward to the next one. Jake was determined that Allen make it up to him though and Allen promised he would.

Week four. With every passing day Allen became more and more stressed. The dance competition was coming up and Allen promised Jake that he would do something with him before the competition. He was still technically grounded, but he figured that with his good behavior maybe he could beg Cross to let him hang out for a few hours with Jake. They came to a truce over the past three weeks and while they were still on rocky ground, they were talking. It was a start. As week four progressed, Allen was unable to get Cross to approve of him hanging out with Jake before the dance competition. He knew things were rocky with his dad, but things were getting even rockier with Jake. Jake was constantly depressed now and talking about wanting to kill himself. Allen was afraid to be out of town for two days in fear that Jake would decide that that would be the day he did something. He knew that Jake did this to try and manipulate him. He knew there was a good chance he didn’t mean it. Dammit, but what if this was the time that he would actually be serious!? Allen was desperate to do something. Anything to try and stabilize things before he left for the competition. So, he made up a plan with Jake to skip school and meet up at his house. He would leave his house in time to get back at the school for Cross to pick him up the day before they were supposed to leave for the competition. It was simple enough to skip class, especially since Cross let his guard down a little bit due to Allen’s good behavior. It was simple enough to walk to Jake’s house. He just wished he never went to his house that day.

When Allen got to his house, it already smelled heavily of alcohol. No surprise. The room was a mess, the floor littered with empty bottles and beer cans, the sink filled with dirty dishes. Dirty clothes laid all over the place. This was what his house normally looked like. Jake came downstairs, meeting Allen at the door, but based on the way he was walking he was drunk. He also had invited two of his friends over who seemed equally intoxicated.

“Hey whore. You finally decided to show up?” Jake slurred. This was why Allen hated when he was intoxicated. All the insults and the loud obnoxious voice he had when he stumbled towards him.

“I didn’t know you would invite your friends. I thought we would just be hanging out together before my competition,” Allen responded, a little disappointed and fearful with the way they were staring at him. He knew that look. They were staring at him like he was a piece of meat.

“Well, I said you owed me, and you said you would make up these past few weeks to me,” Jake responded, wrapping his arms around Allen in what he assumed was a comforting hug. Allen didn’t feel comforted. Something was off.
“Yeah…” Allen responded, not getting what he meant.

“So. You’re going to do it right now. You’re going to be a good little slut for me and my boys.”

“Uhm…e-excuse me what? What do you mean?” Allen asked, gasping when he felt Jake slam him up against the wall, his face facing the wall.

“I mean what I mean. You’re going to be a good little slut for us and entertain us.”

Allen’s eyes widened in fear as he felt Jake’s hands caress his torso in front of his friends who smiled fiendishly. One of them was pointing the camera of his phone at him.

“I…this wasn’t what I meant by-“

“You said you owed me! You are going to pay your debt to me!” Jake growled in his ear.

“I know but…” Allen trailed off. He didn’t want to do this in front of them! He wasn’t just some object to fill their desires! He didn’t mind Jake taking advantage of him, but he didn’t want to have his friends join in! Allen could only feel his body stiffen in fear as Jake’s hands trailed all over him, playing with his nipples, reaching down Allen’s pants. He felt him sloppily kiss his neck and Allen shivered in disgust. His eyes glanced over to the camera, his eyes wide in fear. He wanted to kick, scream, shove Jake away, but he couldn’t. He just couldn’t.

He remembered all the times Jake would pass out after they made love, leaving Allen alone with his thoughts. He remembered slowly getting up and using Jake’s shower. Finishing what he started and thinking of Link as he did so, then gathering his things and leaving Jake’s house. Usually Allen would just put on a mask and perform until Jake was satiated, but now he was in stage fright. He didn’t know what to do. He couldn’t move his body. The only thing he could do was let Jake touch him.

Jake wasted no time ripping Allen’s shirt off his body and pulling his pants down, leaving him exposed to him and his friends. He wasted no time sticking it in and driving Allen into the wall. Allen tried to keep his eyes shut and just take it, his teeth gritted as he tried to fight against wanting to sob in pain as Jake roughly thrust into him. This was not going to bode well for him tomorrow. When Jake was done, the camera changed hands and it wasn’t Jake behind him but one of his friends. This is where Allen blanked out a lot of his memories. All he could remember was that it hurt. Every single time it hurt. It felt foreign and wrong to have his mouth against his skin. He felt so dirty. The only thing he could manage was to keep their lips from touching his. He was afraid that if they did so Allen would completely lose it and cause a bigger ordeal. He didn’t know how many times they did it. He didn’t know what parts they filmed or if they filmed all of it. He couldn’t remember. It felt like eons before they finally stopped. One of Jake’s friends finished another round and passed out after doing so why he was still inside Allen. Allen felt nothing when he forcefully moved away from him, allowing the other to collapse to the floor. The other friend and Jake were passed out as well.

Everything was foggy. He couldn’t remember if he orgasmed and if so, how many times. All he remembered was getting up and limping to Jake’s kitchen. He looked at the clock. School was over. He had no practice. Cross was waiting from him and knew he skipped school. Allen didn’t care. He looked down and watched the blood and semen drip down his legs. He felt nothing. His body was on auto pilot. He walked to Jake’s room. Grabbed one of his t-shirts. Walked back downstairs. Grabbed his cellphone from his jeans. Then left. He didn’t want his clothes. He wanted them burned. He never wanted to see them again. He walked to Link’s house. He walked up the stairs in the back and stood there for a very long time. Should he knock? Should he leave? What would Link think of him? He would think he was a little whore. Would he send him back home?
He didn’t want to go home. Cross would be furious. He would take Allen to the hospital and he didn’t want to go. He hated hospitals. He would demand lawsuits.

Allen looked up at the sound of the back-door opening, revealing Link whose eyes widened a little at Allen’s condition. Link looked him up and down and Allen’s heart sunk to the floorboards under his feet. Instead of making a comment, Link moved aside, letting Allen in.

Chapter End Notes

Uhh so yeah triggering mess but something that was in my head for awhile. Everyone else's ideas that were lovingly present will be done. Some of them may be hidden in the drabbles but they will be there in a fashion of some sort. Thanks so much for the ideas. If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy, abusive relationship please advise them to seek help. If you are in an unhealthy, abusive relationship, please please please seek help.
Pt. 2 of Triggery stuff but hopefully less triggery than before.

Chapter Summary


Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Link noticed Allen was not around school the day before the competition, he knew something was up. It was only solidified when he got a text from Lavi telling Link that Allen didn’t come out to Cross’s car like he was supposed to. Allen ran off again and judging the fact Jake wasn’t at school either, he ran off with him. They were wondering where he was at. While Cross was tearing through the rest of town to hunt down his unruly son, Link walked home, having a sneaking suspicion to wait there in case Allen showed up. Link was unnerved. Something was wrong. He didn’t know what it was, but something was amiss. Usually he would wait for Allen to knock on his door, but he felt too nervous and began to pace around the house earning some concerned looks from his sisters Tewaku and Kiredori. His other brothers were either at school or at work and Link didn’t have dance practice tonight. He kept pacing around, returning to the back door, hoping that Allen would show up. He just knew something was wrong with Allen. He knew something was going to happen. These past few weeks were the calm before the storm and this was the storm.

Just a few minutes of being home Link saw Allen limp towards the back door, wearing nothing but an oversized shirt that almost went past his knees. His hair was a mess and instead of raising his hand to knock on the door like Link expected, he simply stood and stared at the door. Link pulled open the door to look at Allen better and was shocked to find blood trailing down his legs along side trails of white. However, he was quick to cover the shock when Allen looked up, he seemed surprised that the door opened. His eyes then met Link’s and what looked back at Link was someone very much not Allen. There didn’t seem to be a soul in there. It was hollow.

Link moved aside wordlessly, silent permission for him to come in. Link heard Tewaku inhale sharply as she glanced over at Allen. Link glanced over at Tewaku who stood there, her mouth open in shock. Then, she took action.

“I’ll get the first aid kit,” Tewaku responded. That was probably the least of concerns. They should be calling the police, but it was the only thing she could think of at the moment.

Allen walked in silently and Link closed the door behind him. Then Link took action. He stood in front of Allen waiting for Allen to look up at him.

“Allen. What do you want me to do for you?” Link asked softly and slowly. Link had a billion ideas running through his head. Things that he should do, but he wanted Allen to have a say.

Link thought at first Allen didn’t hear him but after a long time Allen responded, “I-I…I-I don’t know….”

And he didn’t know. And Link didn’t blame him. Alright. Then Link can give him some ideas.
“Do you need me to call the police for you?” Link asked, wanting to ask more questions but was afraid of overwhelming Allen.

Allen slowly shook his head no.

“Do you need to take you to the hospital?”

Allen shook his head no.

“Did Jake do this to you?”

Allen shook his head yes.

“Do you want to do anything about it, like telling the police to run an investigation?”

Allen shook his head no.

“Do you want to take a shower?”

Allen slowly shook his head yes at that. It was a start.

“Did you want me to stay with you in the bathroom?”

Allen shook his head yes at that again. While he managed to walk all this way to get to Link’s house, he didn’t trust his body to stay up much longer. As far as embarrassment or shame went… well Allen was already there. What’s Link looking at his naked body going to do? Link nodded and slowly led the way to the bathroom where he turned on the shower for Allen, closed the door and waited patiently for Allen to undress. Allen slowly did so and with a little help from Link got in the shower. Link waited patiently with a towel for Allen while he showered, absolutely silent. Inside he was raging with an anger he didn’t know he could feel but he would deal with that later. Right now, his focus was on Allen.

When Allen finally turned the water off Link helped him dry off.

“I’m going to let your father know you are here. Okay?” Link asked. He wasn’t asking Allen’s permission this time.

Allen nodded slowly, his limbs felt like they were weighed down by lead. Even if he wanted to fight him, he didn’t have the energy to do so right now.

“I’m also going to get you some clothes. Wait for me. Okay?” Link asked.

Allen nodded again and watched as Link left the bathroom. Link sent a quick text to Lavi to relay that Allen was here before he went to his room to gather up some spare clothes for Allen. When he returned to the bathroom Allen was exactly where he left him. He helped him get dressed and led him back out to the living room where he nudged Allen to sit in his usual spot on the couch. The phone rang and Link left to go answer it. While he answered the phone Kiredori approached Allen with a blanket.

“Here. It’s the softest one we have,” Kiredori responded as she wrapped it around Allen, her tone serious. No one knew exactly what happened and they didn’t ask. They just followed Link’s example and tried to make Allen as comfortable as possible.

“I’m going to brush your hair. Okay?” Tewaku asked, feeling like she had to do something. Each of Link’s siblings became close to Allen over the years, especially when it came to how Link reacted
around Allen. Link seemed a lot happier around Allen and was happy to spoil him rotten by making whatever sweet treat he wanted. Link seemed to relax a lot more when he was around Allen and there were times Allen brought out Link’s inner child. Allen was like another older brother to the two girls, but one that actually freaking knew how to do make-up and was a bad ass at it. He loved to play with Tewaku’s hair and loved to do her make-up. He liked entertaining Kiredori, trying to teach her all the circus tricks he learned from Mana.

Tewaku settled herself behind Allen, brushing through his hair gently. It was easy to brush through his hair and even though she got all the tangles out, she still continued to brush it to offer comfort. Kiredori turned on the T.V. and found a channel that was meaningless but added noise to the atmosphere, making it harder to be immersed into their thoughts. Link soon returned and crouched down in front of Allen whose eyes were half-lidded, looking like he was about to fall asleep.

“That was your dad. I got him to let you stay the night. He’s not too happy with you. I didn’t mention much to him. Just that you seemed to be nervous about tomorrow and wanted to go over some final things before the competition,” Link reported. Allen nodded slowly, feeling relieved that he would have time to try and reconstruct a front of some sort to avoid Cross’s questions. If he saw him like this, he would fucking lose it. He’d probably kill Jake and his friends. He’d probably kill Allen for even hanging out with them. Speaking of Jake. Allen phone buzzed next to him and he slowly turned to look at it. Jake. His breathing stopped. Jake wondering where the hell he was and why he left.

Link was the one to grab Allen’s phone, but he didn’t unlock it to respond back to him.

“I’m going to put this up somewhere for a while. I think the best thing for you right now is to relax and take things one step at a time. To focus on yourself,” Link said, maintaining eye contact with Allen to make sure whether or not he was okay with this. Allen nodded again. He didn’t want to talk to Jake. He had no idea what to do say to him. His mind was just so blank and foggy.

“What is love to you?” Allen asked, his voice barely above a whisper. Link was a little taken aback by the question. Sure, it wasn’t the first time they got into a deep conversation but after something so traumatic Link wasn’t expecting Allen to speak at all. It was clear Allen didn’t know shit about how love was supposed to be, or at least that was how he thought. What happened wasn’t an act of love. What Jake did in the past wasn’t an act of love, but Allen was desperate to believe it was.

“Love is caring for another person’s well being and wanting to do anything and everything you can to take care of that person. Love is also giving that person space. To let them screw up and to be
there for them when things don’t go exactly as planned. Love is respecting someone else’s boundaries. It’s unconditional. There’re no strings attached. Love is communicating and trying to understand where another person is coming from. Love is helping someone to grow and to enhance the better part of themselves. It’s a team effort. There’s a balance of give and take,” Link explained carefully.

Allen went quiet for a while, letting Link’s words soak in. He trusted Link’s information. Link was smart. Even though he lacked in social skills and was too serious sometimes, he knew a lot of things.

“Do you…do you think Jake actually loves me?” Allen asked, his hands trembling on the mug.

Link hummed taking a moment or two to think about his words before saying them.

“I think he does…but his way of loving someone isn’t healthy. It isn’t pure. I may not know the extent of what he did, but what he did to you today was not an act of love. What he did was abusive. Why don’t you take a sip of your water. Let’s focus on you right now. Not Jake.” Link said. As much as he would love to tell Allen to break things off with him, he didn’t feel like he was in a good emotional place to be hearing those words.

“Okay…” Allen responded, taking a sip of the hot water. He shivered as he felt it go down and warm his insides. Link watched him carefully. After seeing he wouldn’t drop the mug, the blond moved to sit by Allen’s side. Allen was disappointed to feel Link’s hands move away from his. They were so warm and gentle, surprisingly soft. They sat in silence for a long time, with Allen finishing off his hot water and beginning to drift off to sleep.

“Allen?” Link asked, watching Allen’s head slowly tilt towards him as he drifted off. Allen’s head immediately snapped up, full alert.

“Sorry to scare you. You’re falling asleep. Do you want to sleep? I can save you some dinner for later-“

“I want you to stay with me,” Allen whispered. He didn’t want to be alone. He was afraid that Jake would somehow find him here.

“Alright. Just let me make something for my siblings first. Then we could go to my room and you can rest. Will you be fine waiting here with Tewaku and Kiredori?”

Allen nodded, though he felt a little anxious at the thought of not having Link near him. It felt like he went back in time to when he was younger and would constantly stay by Cross’s side. He refused to move away from him. Back then Cross was big and Allen was tiny. Cross would be able to beat up anything and anyone that threatened Allen, he would keep away scary people. He felt safe being in his presence and hated to admit how strongly he still relied on having Cross around. Just knowing he was around made Allen feel safe. Allen felt safe in Link’s presence. He may not look it, but he could easily restrain someone in a split second if the situation called for it. He was a good substitute until he was ready to face Cross which would be tomorrow. He said he would go to their competition to watch and support him. Shit. How was he going to hide any of this from everyone?

He could easily cover up the hickeys with make-up, but the limping and pain in his hips? He couldn’t let Link down. He would just grit his teeth and bear it. It was just one performance, then they had a group performance the day after tomorrow. Then he would be done. He could do it.
Allen curled up on the couch, waiting for Link to return. He stared blankly at the show that was on the television. Some boring documentary. He could smell the food Link was cooking and though he adored Link’s cooking, he didn’t have any appetite. Allen managed to stay awake long enough for Link to finish dinner and eat something. He offered Allen food, urging him to try a few bites of his own dinner to see if it would spark Allen’s appetite, but Allen refused. Once Link gave up in trying to get Allen to eat anything and finished his obligations, he gestured for Allen to come up to his room with him. Allen slowly got up, trying to ignore his body resisting, to follow Link. If he showed how much pain, he was in Link was going to worry even more than he usually did. He had to bear it for Link. It was his own stupid mistake for deciding to go to Jake’s house. It was his own stupidity that got him into this mess, and he wasn’t going to drag Link or his other teammates down because of a little pain.

Once they got to Link’s room, Allen took refuge on Link’s bed while Link strode over to his desk to get some studying done. Even though Allen wished for Link to come join him in bed, he was too tired and sore to do anything about it. The scent of bread and sweet spices on the bedsheets and pillows were enough to lull him into a dreamless sleep. Link studied for only a few hours, occasionally checking on Allen who didn’t move once since laying on his bed. He wondered how he could get Allen to rest instead of competing. Allen was stubborn. There was a time where Allen sprained his ankle practicing a solo routine before competition and it was a pretty bad sprain. Instead of listening to their coach, his teammates or his father, he decided to compete anyways. He managed to get through the routine flawlessly, not a single twitch or grimace pain. When he came off stage his ankle was a bruised, swollen mess, not that it wasn’t before, but Allen could hardly walk. As soon as he knew the judges wouldn’t be able to see him, he began to cry and Link had to bite back his remarks of ‘I told you not to go through with it.’, ‘now you just made it worse’, ‘you should be more careful.’

He couldn’t just tell everyone what happened. It was something that was traumatic and personal. It wasn’t his place to say anything and even then, he didn’t know the whole story. He just didn’t want Allen to push himself any harder, especially after something like that. Jake wore him down quite easily over the past few months that they dated, and Link wasn’t sure if Allen wanted to continue that relationship or not. He didn’t know how much more Allen would be able to take and it wasn’t like Allen was an open book either. He didn’t know the extent of damage that Jake did to Allen’s mental health. He stared at Allen for a long time, watching his chest rise and fall peacefully as he slept. He had dark circles under his eyes but was surprisingly still. Usually Allen twitched a lot in his sleep, but that was mostly when he fell asleep on Link’s couch or anywhere else. He seemed to sleep more peacefully when Link was next to him or when Allen was on his bed.

Link sighed and glanced at the time. It was getting late and they had to get up early tomorrow to ride up with the rest of the team to the competition. Link got up, set his alarm and turned off the lights and walked back to his bed. Usually he’d take the couch and let Allen take his bed, but Allen wanted him to stay near him tonight. Though Allen was sleeping peacefully, Link didn’t trust leaving Allen alone, so he set about maneuvering himself to getting on the bed without waking up Allen. He somewhat failed at not waking Allen up. Allen moved when he felt the bed move, whimpering as he forced his still, stiff and achy body to move after three hours.

“Shhh…it’s okay. It’s just me,” Link whispered. Allen, once figuring out it was Link who disturbed his sleep, moved closer to him and shoved his head under his neck to leach off of his warmth.

“Sorry for waking you,” Link apologized, wrapping an arm over Allen who moaned in response, already falling back asleep. He’d figure out what to do in the morning. Right now, it was more important to make sure Allen was safe and supported.
(Aight, so here’s what we’re going to do. I’m no dance expert and I’m not choreographer but I tried to look up and describe the lifts that I would think would work well within the song Silhouettes by Monsters of Men. For some reason it’s a song that just screams Link x Allen to me. It’s my first time writing about dance in any sort of fashion so I’m sorry ahead of time, but I encourage you guys to think about what kind of dance moves you think they would perform.)

“Allen, are you sure you’re okay?” Link asked for the millionth time, watching Allen finish applying eye make-up for their performance. He wore simple clothing, a white shirt with long sleeves that hung a little loose around him and black pants. Link wore a matching outfit. He was running around like crazy helping their other teammates with their make-up for their routines on top of his own. It wasn’t that they couldn’t do it themselves, but Allen had black magic when it came to make-up and preferred him to do it. It wasn’t that Allen minded it but today it felt like Allen was keeping himself busy on purpose. He refused to rest and take a breather. He didn’t bother looking at his phone which kept vibrating with new messages. In the morning Allen was extremely sore and had a hard time walking properly, before Link could even tell him that perhaps they should not do their routine today, Allen shot him a seething glare and demanded pain killers.

Right now, he seemed fine, but Link could see how bad his hands were shaking and how jumpy he was. That could’ve just been because he didn’t take his meds today, but after yesterday Link had his doubts. While Allen seemed to be walking just fine there were moments where Link would catch him grimacing or wrapping a hand around his stomach.

“Yeah. I’m fine,” Allen sighed and rolled his eyes as he turned to look at Link, annoyed, “Will you stop asking me that?”

“Sorry. I’m just making sure. You should probably take a break though. Get in your headspace,” Link mentioned, following Allen as he walked past his stretching his arms above his head. Link had a point. Allen felt so out of it that it would probably take awhile for him to fully immerse himself which is why he refused to look at his phone. Once he saw the first text message from Jake, he knew that if he opened up his phone it was going to be a downward spiral from there. He had to focus and pretend everything was fine. Allen found a secluded space where he began to stretch, Link soon joining him.

They stretched in silence until Allen wanted help to stretch out even more. He would be doing mostly acrobatic stunts that required a lot more flexibility and while he was already quite flexible enough, with recent events, he wanted to make sure he wasn’t going to sprain something.

“You sure you don’t want to make any last-minute changes?’ Link asked. Allen was laying on the ground and having Link push against his leg to help him stretch out and couldn’t mask all of the pain he was feeling.

“No. I’m fine. This morning was worse, but I feel better after moving around a bit,” Allen breathed. If you looked hard enough you could still see the bluish, purple bruises on his neck even with the heavy use of make-up. Allen’s scar still stood out proudly on his face. In the beginning he was nervous about showing off his scar but over the years he found it made him stand out amongst the competition. It looked exotic and interesting and it worked well with his acrobatic tendencies that the coach loved to show off. He still had problems with his left arm though which is why when it came to costumes, they always had to take special care to find something that can hide his arm. Allen who was looking at the wall, looked up at Link, a little uncomfortable by his staring.

“Did I cover them good enough?” Allen asked, in reference to the hickeys.
“Yep. Unless you’re really looking for them, no one would tell any different.”

“Good,” Allen sighed, finally deeming himself stretched out enough. He sat up and Link messed around on his phone to begin their usual ritual before a performance. One of them would set their phones up to play the music of their routine, they’d find a secluded spot and go through their routine step by step. Once it came closer to their performance time, they’d simply sit back stage and share ear buds to listen to the music and internally replay the routine in their heads. Usually they liked to sit in front of each other and just close their eyes and listen to it, their knees basically touching. It was weird, connection type of thing they did. It probably looked strange to other people, but Allen liked it because he felt that when they did that, they were connecting to each other on a deeper level. Synchronizing.

As the music began Allen got into position and they walked through the routine. Allen was to start out alone dancing at the beginning of routine until the male voice came in. Then the two of them would begin dancing, mostly just synchronized movements. After all, you have to save the best for last. After the first chorus then they begin dancing together. At this point in time, since Link was taller than Allen, Link was in charge of doing the lifting.

After the first chorus is where they had a lot of the lifts, most starting out with Allen being picked up and rolling off of Link’s back and landing beside Link. Another lift that they would do is where Link would pick up Allen bridal style and swing Allen around his body before flipping him over and landing him by his side. That was one of Allen’s favorites. It sounded weird but he loved being swung around a lot, so the more lifts the better. Link was fine either way. Allen was very light, and Link liked to watch Allen gracefully bend and contort his body. They also had a back to back flip where the two would Link arms and Allen would flip over Link’s back. Most of Allen’s favorites involved circus tricks like doing a handstand on top of Link, using Link’s shoulders as his platform, which was another lift they were doing for their routine. This was just naming a few. The routine was supposed to end with Allen held in Link’s arms, their foreheads touching. Quite romantic in nature, which was probably what Jake had an eye full off when he went off on Allen after practice that one day.

They were able to go through their routine about two times before they had to move back stage. After going through the routine Allen felt more focused. Jake was the farthest thing away from his mind right now. The only thing he was focused on was the performance and the music coursing through his veins and the feeling of Link beside him as they walked back stage. The two of them found a spot away from their teammates who were also back stage to support them and using Allen’s ear buds, plugged it into Link’s phone and began to run through the routine in their heads. Allen pressed his forehead against Link’s. His teammates were already very familiar with how touchy Allen can get so it wasn’t surprising to see him nearly in Link’s lap or actually in the blonde’s lap every time they interacted. The catch was, that Allen had to initiate contact. If someone else did it, he withdrew most times. Link pressed back, indicating that he was here and that everything was going to be okay. At least, that’s how Allen received it. It was welcome, nonetheless.

He was nervous, but he was focused which he felt was a different kind of nervous. It was a different feeling going into something you had no clue about it. It was another story going into something knowing what you had to do and how to do it. However, there was also a feeling of vulnerability to every performance. Every performance involved bearing your feelings out to people and with all the things that went down, all of his pent up, confused feelings he had towards Link, made him feel more vulnerable. Then, it was time to perform and he felt his vision tunnel. It was something that usually happened when he performed. All other thoughts went out the window and all he focused on was the here and now.

It was always a strange thing first walking out on stage and feeling the heat of the stage lights on
the skin. It was disorientating at first and all you could see before you is a sea of blackness waiting to come over you like a tidal wave. It was riveting. It was terrifying. The stage floor felt nice under Allen’s bare feet as he got into position. He could feel it bubble up. It always did right before he moved. He couldn’t put a name to it. Then the music started, and it exploded and using his body, Allen molded it into art. His body seemed to move on its own. No longer was he in control. The music was and Allen sacrificed his body willingly to it. He allowed his body to spin, swirl, twirl, bend and curve. The audience didn’t matter. All that mattered was the music, all that mattered was Link spinning beside him. When he finally landed his eyes on Link, he eyes connecting with his, a spark ignited and suddenly instead of two people, it was one. They were a well-oiled machine. A slave to the music pounding through speakers.

Allen didn’t feel the pain of yesterday, physical or mental. Every time they touched skin it was electrifying. It was what he felt every performance, but this time felt more desperate. It was sort of like the onion metaphor. How when you got to know someone the layers were pulled back one by one. With every performance and every practice, every interaction the layers were pulled back and here Allen felt like they were all pulled back. Every single one. It felt like how someone would feel laying bare naked in front of a lover, under their eyes, for the first time. He wondered if Link could feel it too. He could only guess.

Link was a fairly calm kid, but his gaze was intense, even more so on stage. When they first performed it scared the shit out of Allen and it almost jarred him out of focus with the shock of it. After awhile he fell in love with it because this was the most human, the rawest Link ever acted. It was only about four and a half minutes, but it felt shorter to Allen and he hated it. He never wanted it to end. He felt so light, and weightless on his feet and with every lift. By the time he knew it, he was securely in Link’s arms that rocked him gently back and forth, his slick forehead pressed against his and his fingers in Link’s damp hair. As Allen opened his eyes to look at Link’s reddish brows staring back at him, he felt something inside of him break, but before he could unravel Allen closed his eyes again. God, it was so tempting. So very tempting to press his lips against Link’s. That’s when he realized that this was it. This was the moment he fell completely and utterly in love with Link Howard and there was nothing he could do about it. All the times leading up to this was just slowly bringing him down until it all came crashing down at once.

Then the song was over, and Link carried him backstage. Allen didn’t even hear the sound of the crowd clapping above his heart beat. All he could do was bury his face in the crook of Link’s neck and wait until the floodgates inevitably opened. Something broke inside of him. He wasn’t sure what, but he felt like he was bundle of feelings right now and exposed. Link didn’t push him away though, he sat down and held Allen against him, until the buzz of adrenaline and euphoria wore off. What he saw in Allen’s gray eyes as he looked him, his forehead against his was a look he didn’t see Allen make before. He knew Allen was capable of many things, many unique, beautiful things but when he looked at Allen he came to a realization. A realization that he had a deep connection with Allen and he loved Allen. It was like everything became aligned so perfectly in that moment and all the weird confusing feelings he had ever since he first laid his eyes on Allen were now in perfect clarity. It was love. He was certain in the beginning he loved Allen, but it was as one would to another friend. Later on, that love morphed into one of partnership and it took until that moment to confirm it.

He saw such a vulnerability and rawness emanating from within those eyes that demanded to be burned into his memory, that it made Link teary eyed just thinking about it. He didn’t know human emotion could be expressed like that. It was so powerful. No words could ever properly describe it.

“Are you alright?” Link finally asked, breaking the long silence.

“I…don’t know….that was really something out there,” Allen mumbled against Link’s neck.
“It really was,” Link agreed.

“I should probably look at my phone. I’ve been neglecting it all day,” Allen said, clearing his throat awkwardly as he slowly pulled away from Link much to the reluctance of both of them.

“Alright,” Link responded softly, scrutinizing Allen as he walked away in search of his phone. He felt quite cold and off without Allen there. Allen quickly located his phone, inhaling deeply at how many missed messages there were. 224 text messages and 40 missed calls almost all were from Jake. A couple were from Cross and a couple were from Lavi. A few were from Anita who wished him luck on the competition and asked if he was alright.

Allen made a bee line for one of the entrances, it was raining outside and he slowly went through the mass amounts of texts. Most were the typical, where are you? Are you ignoring me? Insults and anger for ignoring him. Threats of hurting himself or killing himself if Allen didn’t pick up. There were a select few that were a bit different:

[Hey, my boys and I are going to a party today. I want you to come with so text me.]
He should’ve known he was at a competition! Allen has said it many freaking times!

[Hey let’s go! Text me!]

[You know you really are a fucking bitch for ignoring me. After everything I have done for you! Without me no one would love you with that ugly scar on your face and that scaly, gross ass arm of yours! If I died in a ditch you wouldn’t even care. Would you? It’s your dad isn’t it? I can’t believe you’d trust your dad over me? Or is it that dancing blond fairy you like so much? Are you fucking other guys you little slut!? I said you belonged to me! I swear, if I find out you’ve been sleeping with him, I’m going to fucking kill him and I’m going to kill you. I’ll kill your entire family! I know where you live!]

Allen almost dropped his phone in disbelief. Really? Death threats? This is how low he’s sunk? What the fuck kind of shit did he ever do for Allen? All he gave him was pain. He treated him like he was some sort of sex slave for him and his friends. All he ever did was get him into trouble. Allen set his jaw, his stomach burning in rage. He could feel more of himself breaking.

[Hi. You know after the two hundredth text most people would get the hint that someone doesn’t want to talk to you.]

[It’s about damn time! I hope your happy. Now my friends think I’m an idiot. You never support me in anything I want to do!]

[Good because you are an idiot. I already told you I’m at a competition.]

[Really? Who gives a shit about some dumb dancing competition? It’s gay anyway.]

[That’s rich coming from you who is also…well…lemme see…uhm gay!?!]

Allen could feel the anger build up inside of him and he was afraid he was about ready to break his phone in a moment. Then Jake decided to call him, and his ears turned red in anger. He picked up.

“Allen, where the fuck are you?” Jake spat.

“At the competition, like I said,” Allen said, pursing his lips as he tried to fight down the anger building to the surface.
“Oh, so your competition is more important than me now isn’t it?” Jake asked. Well color Allen surprised Jake sounded sober for once in fucking life.

“Yes. It is. I worked very hard to prepare for it,” Allen responded through gritted teeth.

“Wow looks like someone is on their period.”

Allen felt something within him snap and his whole face burned in rage.

“You know what’s funny Jake? After what you and your fucking friends did to me yesterday it’s almost like I did get my period last night. Can you even fucking remember what happened yesterday? Or was I just another whore to you?” Allen spat, his voice shaking and becoming higher as he slipped further in his anger.

“Really? It’s not that big of a deal-“

“Not that big of a deal! I was bleeding! I told you no and you kept pushing me into it. Every single time I have said no to something you just fucking do it! You and your friends raped me! That’s fucking rape! You scarred me! Do you not understand!? Fuck every time we had sex might as well be scarring because you were bloody drunk every damn time! You thought you were hot shit but I didn’t even orgasm once! Your friends are even worse! Everyone was right about you, but I didn’t listen to them because I thought that they were being ignorant! They were so fucking right!” Allen screamed

“You’re really blowing this out of proportion-“

“We’re done,” Allen gritted out venomously.

“What? You can’t dump me. I’ll let the whole school know how much of a slut you are. I’ll kill your entire family-“

“You and what army you fucking wanker!? Go ahead and do it I don’t give a fuck. Who’s going to believe you!? Don’t you call me! Text me! Look at me! Or speak to me ever again! I don’t give a fuck what you do anymore! Leave me out of it! You don’t control me anymore,” Allen screamed, his throat burned. Then he ended the call and dropped his cell phone to the ground. Allen let loose a choked sob and then he felt the dam finally break. He collapsed onto his knees and began to hysterically sob and crumple in on himself. He felt like a little kid again. He felt like he was going to die.

“Allen!?” came a shout that Allen could barely hear over his loud sobbing. Then he felt strong arms around him, and he was pulled up off the ground. He was carried back inside and to the nearest bathroom where he was set on the counter. Through blurry eyes he noted that it was Link who pulled him back inside and was currently wetting some paper towels, him arm around Allen’s waist as Allen cried into his neck. His cell phone was beside him, water droplets on the screen because of the rain but thankfully unharmed.

“It’s okay, just let it all go… I’m right here,” Link soothed, his motherly instincts kicking into high gear. He never saw Allen totally break down like this, but he knew it was going to happened eventually. He tried the best he could to wash off the make-up that was running down Allen’s face, all while trying to text Cross. He knew Allen probably wouldn’t like it, but he was having a mass breakdown right now and he didn’t think Cross should be kept in the dark any longer. He knew he got a lot of questioning looks and a shout from Road when he sped on by with a hysterically Allen in his arms, but his main concern was Allen at this point.
“I’m going to text your dad and let him know about this. I know things have not been the best between you two but he’s your father and he needs to know,” Link said, rocking Allen a little bit as he only cried harder, “I know, I’m sorry. I wasn’t able to keep you out of sight from Road and she’s probably going to say something anyways. I’m sorry. I’m very sorry this happened to you. You’re going to get through it though, I know you will, and I will be there right beside you, okay?”

It only took a minute for Cross to come tearing through to the bathroom his eyes filled with alarm as he took in Allen who was a hysterical mess. When he got Link’s text (Yes, he gave him his number because he trusted the kid and he was able to keep tabs on Allen. Practically his whole friend group knew his number whether it be because of Allen or because if they happened to need a cop and Tiedoll wasn’t around, they could call Cross. Tiedoll did the same with Allen and had his number in his phone in case he needed someone, and Cross couldn’t get there.). Thoughts began to go through his head. Was he sick? Injured? Anxious? Did someone hurt him and if so and where were they? This brat has been hiding shit from Cross for way too long and he was sick of it. He was not going to deflect Cross’s questions any longer.

“What the fuck happened? You will tell me everything,” Cross demanded, his red eyes narrowed. Link stepped aside, actually fearful as the man strode over and stood in front of Allen who couldn’t even form a coherent statement.

“Oh, let’s try you twinkie. What the fuck happened?” Cross asked, looking over at Link, his eyes boring into Link. Link almost protested at the nickname but found he was unable to do with Cross looking at him with such intensity.

“Uhh… I don’t know the extent of it but last night when Allen got to my house he had blood trickling down his legs and only wore a big shirt—“

“And why the fuck didn’t you tell me that when you texted me the first time!?” Cross yelled, wincing when it only made Allen cry harder.

“It was something Allen should tell you, not me! I asked him if he wanted to do anything about it and he said no,” Link said in his defense.

“I’m his father! I should know about that regardless kid-Gah whatever! It doesn’t matter now!” Cross responded in irritation before his focus shifted to Allen.

“Who the fuck raped him?” Cross asked. He wasn’t about to sugar coat or beat around the bush with this shit. Rape was rape. This act had a fucking name to it and though it tasted vile using it, he believed in facing shit head on.

“Jake.”

“I’m going to kill that bastard. Dumbass kid should’ve been locked away a fucking long time ago,” Cross spat, glancing over at Allen’s phone which was buzzing. Said asshat was trying to call Allen. Big fucking mistake.

Cross grabbed Allen’s phone and picked it up.

“Allen you son of a bitch I’m going to fucking kill you and your family! You will not break up with me!”

“Wow you must have big fucking balls threatening a cop and his family. I was a dumb fucking teen back in my day but not that fucking dumb,” Cross smirked, he relished in the small gasp he got on the other end.
“Tell you what junior, you think about showing up to my house and I’ll put a bullet through your skull and make it look like an accident. I’m not afraid of going to prison when it involves my son. Better yet, you threaten my son, touch my son, text my son, call my son, or so much as look at my son, I will kick your ass so hard that you’ll have to unbutton your collar to take a shit. You think your hot shit? Well you picked the wrong fucking son to mess with. That goes for his friends to. I’m sending my friends to you and they can deal with you until I get there. The party is just getting started princess and if you think I’m scary you haven’t seen Tiedoll, “Cross growled, his eyes narrowed and deadly. Link knew Cross was a scary man, but in that very moment he thought he saw Satan himself talking on the cell phone. With a malicious smile Cross hung up the phone, leaving the kid speechless.

He dropped the smile when he returned his attention to Allen. In an instant the Satan incarnate himself dropped off the planet and Cross, the father of Allen returned. Link was never so scared or amazed in his entire life and he made a mental note to never make Allen cry.

“Alright little bird you're okay, I'll handle it,” Cross soothed, using a nickname he came up with when Allen was younger. He wrapped his arms around Allen, rubbing his back as Allen rested his head on his shoulder. It was like Allen was eight all over again. Link got a text from Road saying they were giving out medals soon and wondered where him and Allen were at. As Link looked at Allen though, he could see Allen was in no shape to walk back out in front of a bunch of people, so he decided he’d go back alone and give him time with his father. Plus, Cross was a little angry with him and he’d rather not push his luck. Cross stayed back, gently rocking Allen and holding him as he continued his breakdown.

It took several moments for Allen to calm down but when he did his head was throbbing, and his nose was stuffed up. He was absolutely bone tired and his face probably looked like trash, he thought to himself. Cross decided not to push Allen into telling him anything about what happened yesterday, but he decided that Allen should go back to the hotel room and rest. Link quickly met back up with them, holding one gold medal out to Allen.

“First place. Perfect score,” Link reported with a small smile, “How are you feeling?”

Allen took the cold metal circle in his hand. Perfect score? Really? He knew it was good but not that good. Surely there were parts where Allen was a little clumsy at.

“Good job. You two earned it. You had Anita crying in the audience and I think Lavi was damn near close,” Cross said, putting a hand on Allen’s shoulder, full of pride.

“Lavi’s here!?” Allen exclaimed, his voice hoarse. He hated the sound of it.

“Yeah, but he left to go see if he could get some girl’s number, “Cross sighed. Typical Lavi. Unbeknownst to them though, Lavi was doing more than that. He was looking at the posts Jake made after being broken up with and none of them were very positive or happy. They were putting Allen in a bad light and with the help of Lavi, Kanda, Lenalee, and Alma they were throwing some shade back at Jake.

As the two went back to their hotel room the whole town knew about Jake getting arrested after Cross called Tiedoll who immediately took action. Lavi was having his own fun though hacking into Jake’s profile and digging up any other dirt he could find on him and his friends. Allen ate a whole bunch of ice cream per Anita’s recommendation to ‘getting over a break up’ and after having his fill of ice cream, promptly went to bed curled up next to Link. He was not even close to being healed, far from it, but Link promised himself and Allen that he’d be there with him every step of the way as well as his friends who began to show Jake’s friends what happened when you messed with one of their own back home.
Bonus:

Link was surprised when he felt a hand on his shoulder, stopping him from leaving the hotel just yet. After the group performance and awards they were free to go home. The group performance was not exactly perfect, but they managed to get second place and the rest of their teammates did excellent on their own routines. Over all, improvements had to be made before the next competition, but this year looked promising. He looked up and was surprised to find Cross looming over him.

“Let’s talk.”

Oh shit, was Link’s first thought, but Cross held no anger in his eyes. So, Link hesitantly followed him and wondered if he should text Allen to let him know that if he doesn’t show up five minutes later, his father probably sent him to meet his own maker.

“I’m not good at this shit but uhhh…thanks for taking care of Allen when I couldn’t. Don’t get me wrong I’m still pissed that you didn’t tell me…but it’s nice that you kept Allen’s feelings in mind. So, thanks,” Cross responded leaning against the wall and watching people walk by, checking into their rooms or leaving.

“Your welcome, but he’s my friend. It’s what friends do.”

“I kind of doubt that, which leads me into my second thing. I trust you and I know you know that I trust you, but that doesn’t mean I completely trust you dating my son. I mean, I trust you a lot more than most guys, but I still will not hesitate if you break Allen’s heart, got it? I have a bullet with your name written on it. I will hunt you down and I know where you live if you make him cry like that fucker did. Got it?” Cross responded.

“U-U-Uhhmmmm excuse me!? I mean I would never—but I don’t think it’s like that."

“Bull shit you two suck at hiding it. I knew Allen was gay only a few months knowing him. After that performance I wouldn’t be surprised if the whole world knew about it by now,” Cross cut him off,” Good talk. See you later twinkie.”

And with that Cross was gone and Link was left red-faced and confused as to whether he should be terrified that Cross would be watching him closer now or happy that he wasn’t pissed at him anymore.

Chapter End Notes

(Hope you liked it. I will get onto the other prompts hopefully later on this week, though it may be slow going since I have tons of essays coming up! I tried to do as much research as I could about the dancing stuff but I didn’t find much. I think I like the way I described the performance better than just narrating the whole entire choreography, plus I think it’s better that you guys think of it in your own way. Also just because pieshipping is endgame does not mean I am not open to writing fluffier shit for the other ships. Also Cross has nicknames for all of Allen’s friends because he’s too lazy to remember their names, other than Lenalee otherwise Komui will kill him.)
Allen gets Appendicitis

Chapter Summary

Emetophobics be warned. Also people who have had triggery surgical experiences be wary but I swear to you things turn out just fine. I just know my bro had a bad experience when he had appendicitis so anything about hospitals triggers him.

Chapter Notes

(Hiya all! Special thanks to an anonymous comment for this suggestion. This hits a bit close to home since my twin had appendicitis when I was younger. It wasn’t necessarily a successful procedure since he had complications afterwards which I won’t put in this drabble. I can’t imagine how traumatizing and painful it was for him. Just being by his side and not having him in my class for a whole week was somewhat traumatizing and lonely for me to. Either way, it’s a pretty common procedure, 1 in 20 people get it and I think it’s a great prompt to explore how Cross would react if Allen had a medical emergency. Anyways, enough of me talking, let’s get started. I think I’m going to make Allen 9 in this one.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was Saturday. A weekend day where the sun was shining, birds were chirping their freaking heads off because spring had just begun. Those with seasonal depression were rejoicing at seeing sunlight once again while everyone else groaned that Daylight Savings Time has come to a close and must now function without an extra hour of sleep. Cross felt that on a spiritual level but was more excited for the upcoming spring rains. Cross loved the rain. He hated thunderstorms because Allen freaked out during thunderstorms, but he liked rain. Rain was something that Allen was fine with and Cross enjoyed the smell of petrichor and how clean the world smelled after a shower. Cross planned to take Allen to the park to run off some energy and enjoy the nice weather. The kid has been cooped up in the house for too long with the mass amounts of snow they have endured over the winter. What Cross didn’t plan was speeding Allen over to the emergency room for an unplanned surgery. Nope.

It started with Allen not wanting to leave his bed. Timcanpy fluttered nearby and refused to leave Allen’s side. Okay…maybe the brat didn’t sleep good last night. Not the first time it happened. Cross wasn’t too concerned until it was after noon and he still refused to move from his curled position on the bed even after Cross tried to tempt Allen with food. Allen refused which was practically unheard of when it came to Allen. Something was definitely wrong.

“Come on kid, you have to get up otherwise you won’t sleep tonight,” Cross coaxed for the umpteenth time, uncovering Allen who had his arms wrapped around his stomach. Allen whined in response and curled up more. Cross noted with concern that Allen’s cheek looked flushed. Shit. Was the kid sick? It wasn’t the first time Cross dealt with him being sick, but whenever he was, he was sicker than a dog and out of commission for a good couple of days or more. He put the back of his hand up against Allen’s head. Yep that could be the start of a fever, but the sun was directly
shining on his body so maybe he was just excessively warm instead of feverish. Tim kept trying to press his cool, metallic body up against the boy’s face as a feeble attempt to help Allen’s feverish head. Cross slowly helped Allen sit up but Allen emitted a sharp whine and pushed away from Cross harshly to lay back down where he curled up in face contorted in pain. Timcanpy fluttered on top of Allen’s cheek and patted his cheek with his stubby little paw as an act of comfort.

Okay. Okay, that concerned Cross. While he would’ve written that reaction off as a crabby, sick kid it was the sound Allen made that made Cross turn gravely serious. That whine was like the sound of someone accidentally stepping on an animal’s paw. It was pain.

“Alright, what’s going on? Talk to me kid. Stomach ache? Feel like you’re gonna puke? You got a fever,” Cross asked, forcing the child to turn over much to Allen’s reluctance.

“Yeah. Not really,” Allen responded to each question bluntly. He just wanted to be left alone. It felt like someone was stabbing him over and over again on the right, bottom side of his stomach. He just wanted to be left alone. It hurt more to sit up and Cross’s constant prodding wasn’t welcomed. He was hoping he just had the flu and it would go away if he laid as still as possible and slept all day. As the day went on though the pain was getting worse. If this was the flu, then this was the worst case of it he had so far.

“Where does your stomach hurt?” Cross asked, beginning to gently palpate Allen’s abdomen, starting high up and working his way down.

“Near my belly button,” Allen whimpered, recoiling when Cross rubbed around the bottom of Allen’s abdomen.

“Maybe you’re just hungry or need to shit or something. You eat enough for 10 people. It’s not good on your system to shove that much food down your throat at one time,” Cross scolded lightly, although Allen’s stomach didn’t feel hard like he was full of shit. Maybe he was hungry then? Even with the amount of food he eats on a regularly basis, when Allen was hungry, he was hungry. He acted like he was literally starving if he was hungry which Cross thought was a product of living in starvation for however long in the early parts of his life.

“Alright. Try to go to the bathroom. I’ll make you some breakfast and we’ll see if that helps anything,” Cross said rubbing Allen’s back comfortingly as he slowly helped him up again. This time Allen grimaced but willingly sat up and shuffled off to the bathroom while Cross went back to the kitchen to make Allen something. Several minutes later Cross found Allen curled up on the couch.

“Anything?” Cross asked as he gave Allen a plate of waffles.

“No,” Allen sighed. Timcanpy puffed himself out for Allen to use as a sort of pillow to curl his body around.

“Alright well, see if this helps anything,” Cross said as he ruffled up Allen’s hair as the child took a tentative bite.

Allen managed to finish his food which made Cross’s concern mostly dissipate but Allen seemed lethargic and unwilling to do much of anything other than watch television. The red flush still was on his cheeks and his stomach pain had not gone away after eating like Cross thought it would. Maybe he had a little touch of the flu? Either way, it seemed like they weren’t going anywhere today.

Hours passed by until it was around seven at night when Anita got off. Allen didn’t move from the
couch and seemed to curl in on himself more and more. His fever stayed constant and when dinner rolled around, he was not eager at all to eat. Okay, not a problem, maybe it’s something he had to sleep off. Little did Cross know, Allen was a ticking time bomb. While Cross and Anita were having dinner at the table Allen shuffled off to the bathroom and proceeded to hurl everything he had in his stomach.

Anita was the first to drop her silverware and rush off to the bathroom at the sounds of retching to comfort Allen. That was when things started to get worse. Every five minutes Allen was vomiting like clockwork and the two of them stayed there to comfort him, rubbing his back, running their hands through his hair. His eyes were dark, but for the most part he stayed quiet which most parents would write off probably as ‘oh they’re not in excruciating pain’ but Cross knew better. Allen was shaking, sweating, his nose was flaring when he breathed, tears were leaking through his eyes and he could barely move. It wasn’t like how he was when he injured his eye, but people had a tendency to have different faces to different types of pain. Allen learned how to deal with pain at the young age. If Cosimo beat him up he found that crying would only make him beat him more. He learned to quietly deal with pain as much as he could and while he was in extreme pain, he didn’t hit the point of screaming.

Cross wasn’t sure how many times Allen threw up but a full hour later Cross was calling Komui and asking for input. Komui told Cross to rush him to the hospital. He didn’t question Komui’s judgement, just by looking at Allen he knew something was very wrong, but he figured he’d get a second opinion. So, the three of them (plus Tim but he was hidden in Cross’s coat pocket after shrinking) piled in Cross’s car, much to Allen’s displeasure especially when he found out they were going to the hospital. Allen hated hospitals and would always fight Cross when it came to vaccinations or a regular check-up which due to his small size and low weight was often. It didn’t matter whether or not he got shots. He fought and struggled against Cross. This time around Allen was so sick that all he could do was begin to cry as they loaded up in the car. Allen stayed on Anita’s lap, which was a safety concern (Cross knew that better than anyone) but right now he didn’t give a shit. His boy was in pain and he would break as many fucking laws to make him feel better again.

It took five minutes to get to the hospital and when they pulled into the parking lot, they had to wait for Allen to finish puking his guts out again before the three of them went through the ER part of the hospital. Lucky for them the ER was running slow and they wasted no time in getting Allen settled in a small room with four white walls, a hospital bed and a couple uncomfortable looking chairs. They immediately set an IV up for him to keep him hydrated and give him drugs intravenously since he couldn’t hold anything down.

“I don’t want it,” Allen cried, trying to move his hand away from the nurse who was trying to get the needle in his hand. His cries were so weak and tired that Cross’s heart clenched a little bit at the sound.

“Allen, buddy you need to have it so they can give you medicine to make you feel better. It’s only going to hurt a little bit,” Cross said, trying to hold down Allen’s hand for the nurse while petting his feverish head. Anita took to rubbing Allen’s back and kissing his face. There wasn’t a whole lot of fight in Allen, just crying. He was too tired and in too much pain to really fight back against what they were doing with him. Cross wished that was all the poking and prodding they were going to do, but that was not the case. They took blood. They poked and prodded his stomach earning a nice little yell when they pressed down around his navel on his right side. That’s when they ordered a CT scan on his stomach and low and behold Allen had appendicitis and needed to have surgery A.S.A.P, which in their terms was in about an hour.

Shit. How was Cross going to explain this to Allen? The kid was already scared shitless about
hospitals and now they were going to force him to sleep and cut him open. Fuck. It didn’t help that they asked if they wanted a nun to say a prayer before he went to surgery, which Cross ‘noped’ out vehemently because he was almost positive it would freak Allen out. It also freaked Cross out because he hated thinking about the surgery going wrong. It was a pretty common surgery, but still, things could happen, and it made Cross nervous. So, he was faced with how he was going to explain this to Allen and how he was going to hide his own nervousness from his son.

Allen was a bit calmer now that they gave him some painkillers and something to prevent him from vomiting. He was still not thrilled at all about being here or having people poke and prod at him nor did the stabbing pain completely go away. He also didn’t know what the doctor meant by surgery or anesthesia. He just wanted this nightmare to be over so he could go back to school, talk to his friends, go to dance practice, you know, get back into the normal routine. Tim crawled around on Allen now that they were left alone for a little bit. Tim obsessively patted the boy’s face and nuzzled him and even attempted to brush hair out of Allen’s face. He made soft purring sounds as he did so. Anita drove back to the house to get changes of clothes for both of them, anticipating a long time being spent in the hospital.

“When can we go home?” Allen croaked out tiredly. It was late and he just wanted to get out of here. He hated the smell. The pitiful smiles of the doctors and nurses before they did stuff to him. He didn’t care that they only meant well and were doing their jobs. He hated them and didn’t trust them.

“Well, it’s probably not going to be for a couple days,” Cross admitted which made Allen scrunch his nose up in disgust.

“Whyyyy?” Allen whined.

“Well, they need to fix you up and take your appendix out and then they have to make sure you recover from surgery okay before you can go home,” Cross explained.

“I don’t want it,” Allen groaned beginning to cry again.

“You need it Allen. If they don’t get it out of you it’s only going to hurt more and more until it bursts and then you’re going to get sicker. You’ll have to stay longer to. All they’re gonna do is give you something to make you sleep and then they’ll just pluck it right out of you. Easy,” Cross explained, rubbing Allen’s head.

“They’re going to cut me open!? I don’t want to sleep! What if I wake up during it!?” Allen squeaked his eyes blowing up wide in fear.

“You won’t wake up. They’re trained enough to make sure you won’t wake up during it,” Cross explained, wincing a little at Allen’s reaction. There was really no simple way to explain this in a way that wouldn’t be threatening. “Allen I know it doesn’t sound pleasant and it’s not going to be, but you have to do it. It’s going to hurt a little coming out of it but it’s going to be fine. Trust me. Anita and I are not going to go anywhere. They’ll let me stay with you until you fall asleep and we’ll be there when you wake up again, okay?”

Cross felt his heart clench when Allen emitted a tiny, fragile, defeated wail before continuing to cry.

“Aww come on, don’t start crying. I know you’re tough enough to handle it. You’re a tough little boy,” Cross cooed, pressing a kiss to his forehead. In the past he didn’t show too much affection
but over the year he had Allen it became easier to express it. Besides, the brat was in the second most pain he’s ever been in, the first being when he first got him after the car accident. Cross was willing to show a much softer side to him to help him cope.

Soon Anita returned and before they knew it, it was time for them to wheel Allen to surgery. Timcanpy had to practically be ripped away from Allen and held away from him. The little golem was very reluctant to leave his human companion in his vulnerable state and Anita had to keep him cupped in her hands to make sure he didn’t escape and make himself known to the doctor’s.

“You’re going to be just fine baby. We’ll see you in a little bit, okay? I love you,” Anita cooed, peppering Allen’s face in kisses who was a sickly pale in both fear and being sick. They decided Cross would be the one to sit with Allen until he was put under because Anita wasn’t sure she’d be able to keep her composure. There were many things she could handle. She was a tough lady, but when it came to her little boy being in pain all she wanted to do was curl herself around him and protect him and take all the hurt away. Cross didn’t even know if he’d keep his own composure. It annoyed him a little bit how easy Allen manipulated his emotions. Maybe it was because he was adorable and seeing something adorable in pain was enough to make anyone lose their ‘man card’. Who knows.

As they wheeled Allen down, Cross stayed by him and held his hand. The tinier hand gripping his with a vice like grip and Cross was a little afraid for the safety of his fingers. The kid was petrified. They quickly had Allen set up and put a mask on his face which almost had Allen attempting to jump out of bed and make a break for it but Cross stopped him and loomed over him, so he didn’t have to see all the cold, scariness of the room. Then they pumped through the anesthesia.

“You’re okay Allen. You’re okay. Don’t look over there and look at me, okay? Good boy. You just close those little eyes of yours and before you know it it’ll be over, okay?” Cross whispered, keeping both hands-on Allen’s scared little face to keep him focused on him. His eyes were beginning to close but Cross knew he was trying to fight against the drug even if it was futile. His eyes looked like a scared animal and carried the fear of this possibly being the last time he’d take a breath in this world. Cross knew it wouldn’t be so, but still, it really fucking hurt seeing that in the kid’s face and he wondered if he made that look a lot when he was younger. It hurt more to think about that, to see a baby Allen look like that.

“Just close your eyes buddy. It’s okay. It’s just a little nap. Good boy. I love you boy, I’ll see you soon, okay?” Cross soothed Allen to sleep. Even with him fighting it, he fell asleep quite quickly. Then Cross had to be ripped away from his son and that was pretty fucking hard. It was scary and eye opening at how powerful his fatherly instincts had become over someone who was not even blood related to him. It took every ounce of his willpower not to run back in and try to protect Allen from the doctors. (fuck me I’m crying…UGHHHH!)

In the waiting room Cross was a passing mess. He drank the shit waiting room coffee like it was his fucking job. He knew it was going to be fine. He knew it. But as a parent, you still worry. You still think about the what ifs. Anita clung to him and rubbed his back which was beyond tense and Timcanpy flew around anxiously. He stopped to nuzzle Cross’s hands that still carried Allen’s scent and kept looking around for Allen. Cross couldn’t stop looking at the clock, willing it to go faster and he wondered if it was normal for it to take this long. Finally, after an hour of pacing around, the doctor showed up and said the surgery was a success and they could come back. Allen was still sleeping but after dealing with Allen for a year now he knew that if he woke up the hospital room by himself, he was going to freak. That was something he wanted to avoid.

So, Anita and Cross walked into Allen’s hospital room to find him all curled up, but they still had to wake him up to make sure he actually came out of it okay. They found out quickly Allen was
hilarious on anesthesia after he woke up enough. In the beginning he was crabby.

“Allen, wakey wakey eggs and bakey,” Anita cooed, earning an irritated growl from Allen. Timcanpy rushed to Allen’s side and bumped into his face effectively waking him up. Allen glared down at Tim, his face scrunched up adorably as he tried to focus on what was in front of him. Timcanpy gave him a toothy grin and wagged his tail like a dog when he saw Allen waking up. Then Allen looked at Cross and looked totally displeased at seeing him.

“Well the hell is that look for?” Cross asked.

“We’re not at Hogwarts,” Allen muttered his voice hoarse, his British accent thick in his drugged-up state.

“Where’d you get that from?” Anita laughed.

“Golden snitch,” Allen said, referring to Tim who looked absolutely confused.

“Honey that’s Timcanpy-“

“Shh! He doesn’t need to know that,” Allen slurred picking at the IV in his hand.

“Allen buddy don’t do that. That needs to be in there,” Cross said, resisting the urge to snicker. Allen glared at him.

“I aint gonna listen to you. You let them steal my kidneys and bros don’t let people steal their bros kidneys. That’s what Lavi tol’ me.” Allen slurred, glaring at Cross distrustfully.

“They didn’t steal your kidney Allen. They took your appendix.”

“Oh…” Allen pouted before beginning to cry.

“Oh no! What’s wrong sweetie. Does you hurt?” Anita asked in concern.

“They didn’t take my kidney,” Allen sniffled

“Allen that’s a good thing. You need your kidney.”

“But I don’t want em.” Allen cried

“Why?”

“Because I don’t know how to ride a broom,” Allen continued to cry, completely derailing the conversation. Cross was trying so hard not to die of laughter.

“Buddy it’s Okay if you don’t know how to ride a broom. We don’t know how to ride them either. You need your kidneys though, they keep you healthy,” Cross explained although he had no idea how kidneys had any relation to brooms.

Timcanpy nuzzled Allen’s face and in an instant Allen’s crying halted, especially when his I.V. machine made a noise. He glared at it in disgust.

“Rude Sharon I’m having a moment!” Allen spoke to it like it personally offended him. He was confused when Cross and Anita busted out laughing. He looked down at Tim, confused as to why they were laughing. This wasn’t funny at all. At least not to him.

“Allen, do you know where you are?” Cross choked out.
“The worse freaking hospital in the world. I wanna go home.” Allen complained, shutting his eyes in disgust.

The machine, now dubbed Sharon for the rest of their stay beeped again.

“Shut up! This is why you’re single!”

Soon enough the anesthesia wore off and Allen was better able to comprehend his surroundings. With the wearing off the drug came the pain of being cut open but luckily a nurse was right there with a dose of pain medicine to help Allen sleep for the rest of the night. Cross took over the recliner in the corner while Anita decided to sleep with Allen in bed who complained of being cold and was crying earlier when the pain hit him.

The three of them stayed in the hospital for another day which was already rough on Allen. He couldn’t eat normal food yet. All he could have was liquids. It wasn’t like he was starving, surprisingly he didn’t have any appetite since his stomach hurt, but not being able to eat food combined with pain was enough to put him in a bad mood. Cross and Anita took turns to eat and took turns comforting Allen when the pain medicine wore off and he was beginning to feel pain again. Going to the bathroom was one of the worst things Allen hated about the experience. First of all, he couldn’t even barely walk by himself because of the pain. Then they expected him to attempt to have a bowel movement to make sure things were working down there which was utterly fucking painful. (Experience based on what my bro said as well as many others). So yeah, recovery sucked ass but Allen was willing to do whatever he had to do to leave this place. He swore to god he was never going to go through this again.

Second day after surgery was a lot better. Allen was allowed to go home but was still put on a strict diet which he still didn’t mind since his appetite didn’t return yet. He wasn’t allowed to go to dance practice for three weeks and was to rest at home for most of the school week. He was a lot more comfortable at home although the annoying pain didn’t recede until about day four. He didn’t know what pain felt worse. Having his appendix taken out or still having the appendix in. Cross and Anita alternated their work schedules so one of them could be at home. By the time the week ended Allen was pretty much his normal self. He had to still limit on how much he ate (which annoyed him because he was always hungry as it is) but the pain was nearly almost gone. Plus, it was fun how hesitant Kanda was when he got back to school. He acted like one little touch was going to hurt him. Meanwhile Lavi was all over Allen, constantly asking how he felt. If he was feeling pain, etc. Lenalee too, although she was more frequent than Lavi. She dutifully gave Allen any homework he missed. Link affectionately made Allen pastries to help him feel better and constantly assured him that everything was fine, that he should take as long as he need to to recover fully.

Chapter End Notes

(Ayyyyee hope you enjoyed! I have not had my appendix taken out personally but I tried to do as much research as I could of other people’s experiences. I also tried to remember what I could from my brother’s experience without asking him because it was rather traumatic for him. See you next time!)
Allen Meets Kanda

Chapter Summary

Allen Meets Kanda! Tiedoll criticizes Cross's parenting skills. Cross is not pleased.

Chapter Notes

(Hiya! This is to go with the suggestion of seeing Tiedoll and having him watch the interactions between Cross and Allen. Also, I have not did an ‘Allen is introduced to Kanda’ at all yet. I also decided to include Kanda’s siblings! So, we’re mashing multiple scenarios together! Before we begin, I have thought about do a Youtube AU of sorts. I don’t know if I want to separate it from this or keep it within the drabbles…I think it may depend on how many chapters I get dealing with it. Anyways. What do you guys think? Should I go for it? How many characters should I do with Youtube accounts? What kind of antics will they get into? Lemme know!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Alright kid. Let’s go.” Cross responded turning off the television that Allen was watching. Allen was still in his ‘quiet stage’ but he was being more expressive, so he wasn’t afraid to look up and glare at Cross. Cross deadpanned back at the little child who was thinking whether or not it would be a good idea to bite his guardian. He’s done it once before. Only once. It was enough to bleed. Allen felt proud. Cross was a little worried because he didn’t know how caught up on shots Allen was. It started out as a challenge where Allen was irritated at Cross and he boldly told the man that he will bite him. Cross called bull shit and Allen fucking bit him and…well we’re going off track here.

Cross flicked Allen’s forehead, ending their staring match. Allen squeaked and touched his forehead, looking very insulted.

“Where are we going?” Allen asked, his voice soft. The kid still didn’t like to talk all that much so his voice wasn’t as strong as it could be.

“To hell,” Cross responded. Allen gave him a look that said, ‘aren’t we already there?’.

“We’re going over to see one of my friends. He wants to meet you and make sure I’m not messing you up or whatever,” Cross growled in irritation. Look, it wasn’t like Cross hated Tiedoll. That wasn’t the case at all. He trusted Tiedoll and Tiedoll knew what he was talking about. Sure, the guy was all sensitive and weird, especially when it came to his kids. The guy was like a reincarnate of Bob Ross. Cross just didn’t take a liking to Tiedoll butting into his business. When he heard Cross had acquired a child, the man was on him in an instant and badgering him if he was sure he could handle raising a child. He continually asked if he remembered to feed the kid or if he thought about enrolling him in school, if Cross only sat him in front of the television all day, if Cross baby proofed the house, etc. One of Tiedoll’s continuous pesterings was him asking Cross if he’d bring Allen over so he could meet him and meet his children. Cross kept pushing it off because he was
afraid Allen would get overwhelmed.

Allen already met Bookman and Lavi and Cross was pleased that it went great. He wasn’t sure if the kid was going to have a total meltdown or not. That was one child though. Tiedoll had three living with him. He had Daisya who was just beginning middle school. Daisya liked soccer and while he tried to be the best older brother he could be, he could get rough sometimes which made Cross nervous to put Allen in that situation. Alma who was around Allen’s age and was rather bubbly, but was also quite reactive. It’s like the kid didn’t have a set limit to the emotions he expressed. If he was angry, he was explosive. If he was happy, he was overly happy. If he was sad, he cried a fucking river. Cross was afraid Alma was going to emotionally suffocate Allen. Then there was Kanda who was the angriest kid Cross ever met. He wasn’t explosive like Alma, but he was quite asocial. Kanda changed the phrase from a lot of bark and no bite to: it can bark and it will bite.

Cross wasn’t sure how Allen was going to handle interacting with three kids and judging from how Allen was trying to sneak off, today may not go as well as it had with Lavi. Cross bent down and scooped the little boy off the ground before he could silently crawl off and hide. Allen whined loudly at being picked up and whipped his head around to glare at Cross. Cross smirked and tried to suck up to the whiny little boy by trying to kiss his cheek (plus he wanted to see Allen’s reaction). Allen huffed and immediately put his hand on Cross’s lips and pushed his head away forcefully. Cross laughed, wondering how Allen would react to Tiedoll’s affectionate nature.

“Yep, you’d definitely hate living with Tiedoll for even one day,” Cross laughed to himself as they walked to his car. That was to lighten the mood Cross was in. He was worried that Tiedoll was going to see him as an unfit parent and was trying to use this whole ‘play date’ thing to see whether or not Allen should stay in Cross’s care or not. Actually, no. He knew this was Tiedoll’s plan. That wasn’t to paint Tiedoll out as an evil guy. He was nice and he always put his kid’s needs before his own. They were still good friends despite Tiedoll’s constant bitching over Cross…well being Cross. It was hard to deny that even with their good friendship that Cross didn’t feel a bit threatened or peevish at his friend keeping his nose into his own business.

Tiedoll didn’t know Allen like he knew Allen. That’s what Cross liked to think. When Tiedoll interacted with his kids, he was full of unconditional love and affection. Cross…well he wasn’t like that. He was getting better, but he wasn’t like that. Tiedoll didn’t believe in spankings or hitting kids. Cross believed in it, quite a bit. Although after doing his own research, he pulled back quite a lot from those old beliefs. Tiedoll’s language was polite and kind. Cross’s speech was…well…you know…not…that. He tried okay!? Tiedoll wasn’t an alcoholic (at least from what Cross knew) and Cross was a recovering alcoholic. You got the point. Tiedoll had his way of interacting with his kids, but that didn’t mean it would work for Allen.

If Allen had a problem with Cross and how he did things, he didn’t say a word. There was no doubt Allen was touched starved, but that didn’t mean Allen was open to people touching him. Cross didn’t have it down to a science, but he knew not to push it. If Allen didn’t want to be touched or comforted if he was upset, then Cross stopped. He let Allen initiate it for the most part.

Allen hung limp in Cross’s arms. He wasn’t fighting Cross, but he definitely wasn’t happy about having to be social with another one of Cross’s friends. Cross set Allen into the car, leaving him to put on his seat belt before moving over to the driver’s side and getting in. The drive over to Tiedoll’s was not long at all and when they pulled into his driveway Cross turned off the car and turned over to face Allen.

“Alright kid. Just warning you, Tiedoll has three kids…well four…one of them is an adult and moved out. Tiedoll is a really good guy though and I think you’ll like him,” Cross
mentioned, watching Allen’s eyes widen. Three kids!? Three!? He just barely was able to handle one and he got lucky! Now he has to try to be a normal kid around three!? Was Cross trying to kill him.

“Aw come on kid. Don’t look at me like that. Look, if you get overwhelmed just come over to me, okay? I know it’s a huge jump from one kid to three. I think you can handle it, and I want you to try it, but I swear I’m not going to shove you into this full force like I did with introducing you to Lavi,” Cross promised. He understood how shitty it was dealing with multiple people, especially when you were not a person people to begin with. Women were different for Cross, but he understood how exhausting it was to deal with tons of people. I mean that was part of the perks of drinking for Cross. Alcohol made it easier to socialize for him. Allen looked at him unconvinced and refused to move. Cross internally screamed before he grabbed Allen and decided to forcefully remove him from the car. Allen squeaked indignantly and growled a little under his breath before proceeding to try and nuzzle against Cross to try and disappear (that or become fused with Cross. He really didn’t know).

“Well someone is being extra cuddly today,” Cross responded sarcastically as he walked up to Tiedoll’s front door and rang the doorbell. In a moment the door opened to reveal a kid with spikey dark hair and purple teardrop-like markings down his eyes. Daisya Barry. The kid sniffed and looked at Cross’s little bundle of ‘not so much joy, more like dread’.

“What is that? A cat?” the kid blurted out.

“Hello Sharkboy. No, it’s not a cat though sometimes I question it,” Cross responded bluntly. He knew the kid’s names, but he never bothered to call them by their names. He called Daisya Sharkboy because his favorite food was shark. Alma Karma’s nickname was Smiles which was actually a designer drug that produced psychedelic and stimulant effects. Cross thought it fit him nicely, don’t tell Tiedoll the truth though or he’d freak. Kanda’s nickname was ankle biter and specifically that because Kanda bit him when he first met him.

“That’s enough Daisya. Oh, hello Cross. Oh. I see why you said Allen was shy,” Tiedoll said, coming up behind his second oldest son and putting a hand on his shoulder. Daisya rolled his eyes and ran off to go play/tell his brothers there was ‘fresh meat’. Allen shivered in fear within Cross’s grip and Cross put one hand on Allen’s head to calm him. Allen hoped to whatever god was up there that Cross would turn around and go home but instead Cross moved inside Tiedoll’s home and Allen’s stomach dropped. He hated this. He hated this. He hated this. Wasn’t Lavi enough? Why did he have to make more friends!? He didn’t like the sound of that kid’s voice. He sounded like the type to make fun of Allen.

“Yeah…so Tiedoll, this is Allen…Allen this is Tiedoll,” Cross introduced awkwardly. He attempted to turn Allen around a little bit to actually face Tiedoll but the brat was keen at trying to suffocate himself in his shirt.

“Nice to meet you Allen. I promise I don’t bite,” Tiedoll chuckled as he led the way further into his house until they hit the living room area. Tiedoll gestured Cross to one of the chairs where Cross gratefully sat down. Just as he sat down Smiles nearly vaulted himself into Cross’s lap at the sight of his new victim, I mean potential friend. That’s what Cross feared. Allen tensed up so bad and instantaneously Cross thought he may have hurt himself.

“Hi! What’s your name!?” Alma bellowed, definitely still having a hard time learning boundaries it seemed.

Cross felt Allen’s heart speed up against him like it was a tiny bird’s and he instinctively tried to hide himself underneath Cross’s armpit.
“Alma inside voices. Remember what we talked about with personal space? His name is Allen,” Tiedoll said, gently reminding Alma whose head tilted in confusion and sympathy when he saw his new friend trying to become one with Cross and the chair.

“Oh…yeah….Sorry Allen,” Alma apologized. Cross forced Allen to turn himself on his lap so he looked face to face at Alma who had the widest grin on his face and was swinging his legs from his perch oh so happily. Allen did not share in his enthusiasm at all and looked up at Cross his face conveying the message ‘Please, take me home I don’t know what to do with this child’. Allen didn’t know what to make of this child and he hoped the rest of Tiedoll’s kids were not like him. Allen slowly looked back at Alma who grinned happily, not at all fazed by Allen’s behavior.

“Wanna come play with me?” Alma asked with the constant grin. Fear flashed across Allen’s eyes, but Alma quickly came to the rescue, “We can just go in the next room. Okay?”

Allen still held fear in his eyes, but he seemed to calm down at the idea of being just in the next room. Besides, Cross wanted him to try and interact with this kid. If things went bad, he could always run back to Cross…or at least that’s what he told him. Allen looked back up at Cross. Cross gave him a look that said, ‘go knock yourself out.’ Basically, giving Allen the okay to do what he thought was best although it seemed like Cross was pushing him a little bit to try and interact with Alma.

Allen reluctantly nodded, fear stabbed him at the happy little sound Alma made and Allen wondered if he had made a grave mistake. He slid off of Cross’s lap, jolting in fear when Alma grabbed his hand and led him away. He looked back at Cross with a fearful expression but Cross gave him a thumbs up instead.

In an instant Tiedoll started grilling when the kids left the room, “I thought you said he was interacting with kids his own age.”

“He is. He’s been hitting it off well with Bookman’s kid,” Cross said truthfully.

“Have you thought about enrolling him in school? He needs to learn how to deal with being around kids his own age to deal with being in school.”

“Yes and he is! Look!” Cross said defensively pointing at the door the two kids went through.

“Yes, but the longer you wait the harder it’s going to be for him to catch up. Haven’t you taken him to the park or anything,” Tiedoll reminded.

“I know that. I’ve taken him to the park plenty of times. I mean. It was in the late evening when no one is around really, but still. The kid is getting fresh air.”

Tiedoll didn’t look too pleased at that. Cross frowned, his eyes narrowing in irritation. He knew Tiedoll meant well but damnit, just because he had three kids didn’t mean he was a fucking expert!

“He looks really skinny.”

“I’ve been feeding him. The kid eats like a horse but doesn’t gain weight.” Cross said, feeling irritated that his friend would think he was starving the kid.

“Have you taken him to the doctor?”

“No…”

“Cross you really should. You don’t know what you’re possibly dealing with here-“
“The kid is fine Tiedoll! Sure, he had a couple of problems here and there but he’s fine!”

“He doesn’t know how to write or his alphabet.”

“He’s getting there. He just gets overwhelmed easily. Everything is new to him,” Cross said, coming to Allen’s defense.

“He has bags under his eyes,” Tiedoll mentioned.

“He’s fine Tiedoll. God, what the fuck are you, my dad? My mom? Why don’t you just come right out and say it. You don’t think I have what it takes to take care of Allen,” Cross said, finally snapping.

“Well, you’re not one that seems to like kids. Please, don’t curse in my household.”

“Yeah, everyone else’s kids, but Allen is mine. Look, he may not be progressing to your standards and I may not do things the way you do, but he’s perfectly fucking fine. He has a roof over his head. He’s being fed. He has someone there for him at all times.”

“You leave him at home when you’re at work Cross,” Tiedoll said, ever so calmly which only pissed Cross off more.

“Timcanpy watches him! He’s capable and there is plenty of food in the house for the kid to snack on until I get home!”

“That isn’t healthy for any kid-“

“I’m not trusting him with Komui or any of these daycare centers here. The kid is capable of taking care of himself. He’s not stupid! He knows my number and knows how to dial it. He knows what he’s not supposed to get into.”

“Cross he’s eight years old.”

“A smart eight-year-old.”

“I just don’t think you know what you’re getting yourself into-“

“And I suppose the guy who has four kids knows everything there is to know about kids, huh?” Cross shot back.

“That isn’t true-“

“Then stop acting like it. You don’t know Allen, like I know Allen. I am not going to push him into doing something he is not ready to do. You shouldn’t assume that I’m treating the kid like shit just because I’ve never been around a kid before,” Cross growled, his head whipping up when he heard Alma scream.

~ Earlier when Allen was led away

“Okay Allen, my name is Alma Karma. I love mayo. Just straight up mayo and I put it on almost everything! I also love make-up and I love Kanda Yuu. But just call him Kanda or he’ll rip your face off. He hates it when Lavi calls him Yuu. He only let’s me call him Yuu. He’s my adoptive brother but before that we were the bestest of friends. I’m going to marry him one day. He’s a little moody but he can be sweet,” Alma said as he dragged Allen behind him into the next room where there was a lot of toys. His grip was a little tight and his blabbering reminded him of Lavi in a way.
In this room there were easels to paint on, plenty of legos, toy cars, it basically looked like a toy store. The walls were all decked out in colorful sunshines and rainbows that kind of hurt his eyes. It was decorated like sort of a daycare would. It was quite loud and a little overwhelming. The room was decorated in childish drawings as well.

“Dad likes to paint and draw a lot. He painted these walls and everywhere you go the walls are depicted in landscapes and stuff. Kind of cool, huh?” Alma asked, looking at Allen who could only stare bug eyed at everything.

“You can sit down here. I’m gonna go get Yuu. We’re gonna have a tea party okay?” Alma asked.

Tea party? Allen nodded slowly, but he wasn’t sure if Alma saw it because he was already booking it to who knows where. Allen was not too thrilled about this at all and he surely did not want to meet this Kanda person. Sadly, he made his bed, now he had to sleep in it. Allen sat on the floor quietly, looking around at his surroundings uncomfortably. In a few moments Alma was bounding back down the hall and towards Allen happily, followed by a child who looked like he should be older than he was. The kid looked like how teens looked almost on a daily basis, pissed off at the world. He kind of scared Allen, but at the same time he exuded some kind of aura that just made Allen hate him on the spot.

The kid, who he presumed was Kanda looked Allen up and down and ‘tched’ in annoyance. Allen felt his eyes narrow automatically at Kanda. Oh, we will not be getting along at all. Alma dragged a play table over before excitedly grabbing some teacups and coasters. Kanda huffed and sat across from Allen.

“What your name?” Kanda said bluntly. Tiedoll has been urging him to be more ‘social’, so he was going to try and be more ‘social’ although he had his limits.

“Allen,” Allen responded.

Alma gasped over dramatically, as he was setting things up, “OH MY GOODNESS YOUR VOICE IS SO QUIET! SO CUUUTEE!”

Allen toppled over backwards in surprise and fear at Alma’s outburst.

“He’s always like this,” Kanda responds, not at all concerned about Allen’s reaction or Alma’s. He was used to Alma and he didn’t care too much about this new kid. He was probably just here for Tiedoll to observe him to make sure Cross wasn’t abusing him or something, “You’re not cool for that weird face tattoo you know.”

Uhm…okay. Right to the point. Wow.

“Awwwhhh, don’t worry about that. Yuu’s just jealous he doesn’t have any facial markings, even though I always offer to give him some. Sometimes he lets me. Not always though.”

“It’s not a tattoo…it’s a scar.”

“So, you’re cursed,” Kanda responded bluntly. Allen clenched his jaw at that. Okay, that was one of his trigger words. He hated being called cursed, a demon, and a runt to name a few.

“Oh wow. Did it hurt? How’d you get it?” Alma asked.

“I guess and I’m not cursed. I can’t remember anything about it,” Allen said, wanting to steer the subject elsewhere he pointedly looked at Kanda who ‘tched’ again.
“You have a star on your face and a messed up hand. You are cursed, moyashi,” Kanda responded again bluntly.

“I’m not cursed and I’m not a moyashi,” Allen said, his eyes narrowing as he looked at Kanda. His cheeks began to burn in anger.

“Yes, you are. You’re a runt. So, you are a moyashi,” Kanda explained.

“I am not! You’re almost as short as me Bakanda!” Allen squeaked. Alma looked back and forth between them in surprise. He didn’t know if he should intervene or not. This was a totally different side of Allen he was witnessing, and it was interesting.

Kanda’s eyes narrowed at the nickname, “As least I’m not a cursed little demon that’s also a runt, moyashi.”

Three trigger words in a row. Oh, this kid was just pushing his buttons on purpose wasn’t he.

“Wow, I was hoping we’d just have pretend tea, but it looks like we actually have tea right here,” Alma responded, backing up as Kanda stood up over the table. Allen copied his movements.

“At least I don’t look like a girl,” Allen bit back with a fiendish little smirk. OH, FUCKING SNAP, Alma thought, screaming when Kanda flipped the table and rushed Allen. Allen was prepared though and grabbed Kanda’s fist as he sent it flying towards his face. Allen took one hand and gripped Kanda’s shirt, his face bright red and beyond pissed. Kanda grabbed Allen’s shirt and reeled his fist back, ready to punch his lights out.

“You’ll pay for that Moyashi!”

“I aint scared of ya Bakanda!” Allen responded, his British accent coming out full force now that he was angry. Cross and Tiedoll stumbled in on the boys when Kanda having his hands around Allen’s throat and Allen’s hands attempting to gouge out Kanda’s eyes. Alma was staring mouth agape at the scene before him.

“Holy shit,” Daisya called from the hallway, just walking in on the scene,” You two haven’t even met for three minutes and you’re already at each other’s throats. New record Kanda!”

“Not now Daisya,” Tiedoll called out as he grabbed Kanda while Cross grabbed Allen and pulled them apart.

“What the fuck is going on? Why the hell were you trying to gouge out his eyes kid?” Cross asked, his eyes widening in surprise. Never did he imagine he’d see Allen snap and actually go after another kid before. An adult? Sure, he saw it happen before, but a kid? Wow. Color him surprised. Allen was shaking, his face dark red in anger and on the brink of tears. Tiedoll, already used to Kanda’s fits of anger calmly led Kanda to another room, while Cross carried Allen to the bathroom. If Allen was a different kind of person, Cross would probably smack Allen around for getting into a fight. It wasn’t usual for Allen to lose his cool though, so he must’ve had a good reason. Violence would not help in this matter.

“Alright, simmer down. I can practically see steam coming out of your ears kid,” Cross said sitting Allen down on the counter and finding some washcloths to dunk in cold water. Allen was already crying at this point, feeling bad for going off and ruining things. He was supposed to be social and make friends. This was not how you made friends. But god, this Kanda kid just rubbed him the wrong way, he couldn’t help it. He wasn’t even crying over the fact of being hurt. He was used to it. He just felt bad because he let Cross down and he let Mana down.
“Calm down. It’s just a little spat, alright? He’s a hard kid to get along with. I know. He’s working on shit to,” Cross said, wrapping a cold washcloth around Allen’s neck and pressing another to his forehead.

“He called me short, and a demon, and cursed,” Allen blubbered to the point Cross couldn’t make out words. Cross rolled his eyes and patted the crying child on the head. He moved his hand down to tilt Allen’s head up to assess the damage. Damn the kid bruised easily, there were already little finger prints on his neck where Kanda tried to strangle him.

“You’re fine. You’re okay. You got him back and you didn’t let him push you around. You were only defending yourself. It’s not the end of the world,” Cross tried to soothe, picking Allen up and rocking him a bit like he did whenever Allen freaked out. Cross deadpanned when he saw snot dribbling out of Allen’s nose. In the beginning Cross was quite disgusted at how gross of a crier Allen could be but parenthood tested your disgust level and desensitized you to things like this. That wasn’t to say Cross was fond of snotty noses, he still hated it, but he could manage it.

“Oh my god your nose is a freaking river, c’mere. Allen hold still! Damnit it’s not my fault your face is a mess,” Cross mumbled to himself as he tried to wipe off the child’s face who was trying to pull away. Cross managed it either way despite Allen’s whining. Cross was thankful he only had to deal with one crabby kid. Unbeknownst to Cross, Tiedoll was watching his interactions with Allen after talking with Kanda that it isn’t nice to hurt new friends and reminded him to do his breathing exercises when he’s angry.

“He called me a runt,” Allen whined, he was finished with crying but not finished sulking.

Cross blinked and looked at Allen before factually blurting out, “But you are a runt.”

Allen whined indignantly at that and tried to smack Cross upside the head. Oof this kid was going to need a nap when they got home.

“Hey! Don’t hit me, I’ll paddle your scrawny little ass. Besides so what if you’re a runt? It’s an advantage. You can hide in better places and you can run faster. Plus, you’ll grow up one day,” Cross shrugged, giving Allen a flick to the forehead in warning.

“He called me a demon.” The little boy continued to sulk.

“You’re not a demon, although sometimes I feel like children are possessed by them time to time with the shit they do. You don’t burn when I spray you with holy water.”

“That’s just plain water!”

“No, it’s not.”

“Yu-huh!”

“Nu-uh!”

“Well he called me cursed.”

“Then that makes two of us. Now you look at me,” Cross said, forcing Allen to look at him,” Having a deformity doesn’t make you a demon or cursed. Nobody is perfect. Your eye, your hair, and your arm doesn’t define what you are. They are you, yes. But they don’t define you. An illness doesn’t define you. It is part of you, but it doesn’t define who you are. Your actions and your character define you. Now stop sulking and stop making me have to sound like a god damn motivational speaker. Alright?”
“Okay…”

“Alright then! You are going to apologize to that little twerp and then we’re going to put some distance between you two and maybe you guys can watch a movie or something.”

“Why should I apologize!? He started it!”

Cross deadpanned at Allen, “You tried to gouge out his eyeballs and while I am proud of you for sticking up for yourself; the parent guidebook dictates that I have to make you apologize to him. So, you’re going to do it.”

Allen glared at Cross.

“If you don’t apologize, I will buy a huge shirt and I will put you two in it for an entire day,” Cross threatened.

“No! His hair will eat me alive!”

“Stop being over dramatic.”

“I’m not! It has a mind of its own. I saw it!”

Cross rolled his eyes as they exited the bathroom in search of Tiedoll who overheard Cross’s suggestion and was currently letting his children pick (fight to the death) over what movie to watch. Cross let Allen down near Kanda. Allen hesitated so Cross nudged him forward. Kanda deadpanned at Allen.

“My kid has something to say to you,” Cross responded, grabbing Allen’s head.

“I’m sorry you have a bad personality-“

Cross squeezed Allen’s head hard enough to make the kid gasp. Wrong answer kid.

“Gahh! I’m sorry for gouging out your eyes and calling you stupid,” Allen yelped, even though it was true.

Kanda had to resist smirking at seeing Allen in pain.

“Kanda, you have to apologize to,” Tiedoll responded, though he didn’t seem pleased that Cross was inflicting pain on Allen to make him apologize. Cross didn’t give a fuck.

Kanda frowned in annoyance.

“Tch. I’m sorry I tried to strangle you.”

“And…?” Tiedoll pressed.

“And calling you names. That wasn’t nice,” Kanda growled out.

Cross nodded in satisfaction. I mean it was obvious these two boys were going to have a hard time getting along, but Cross thought it would be good to teach Allen some tolerance. Allen sent a glare at Cross as the man removed his hand from his head, not at all amused by Kanda’s insincere apology. You have to take what you can get with this kid, sorry, Cross thought to himself towards Allen.

So, the kids settled down for a movie. Daisya was placed next to Allen while Alma sat next to
Daisya and Kanda next to Alma so Allen and Kanda would stay separated as much as they could. When it rolled around to taking a break during the movie Allen was left by his lonesome for a bit. This movie was kind of boring because it was one of the many things Allen didn’t get that apparently boys his age liked. It dealt with robots turning into cars. Allen just couldn’t see the appeal in it, but Daisya and Alma seemed to like it. As Allen felt his eyes grow heavy in boredom, a small hand thrust itself into his face to show a fuck ton of oatmeal raisin cookies.

Allen looked up to see Kanda glaring at him. The fuck did this kid want? He knew they weren’t supposed to be near each other for the rest of the day, right?

“You’re a human vacuum, right? That’s what Lavi told me. Well here. Eat this. Dad made a bunch of them and we don’t like them,” Kanda blurted out, shoving the mountain of cookies at Allen. Then he thrust a can of soda in his face.

“This is to wash the shit down. I don’t care if you don’t like it,” Kanda responded. Allen took the offering in surprise, watching Kanda stalk away back to his spot as if it didn’t happen. Was this a peace offering of sorts?

Yeah. It was. Somewhat. But Kanda wouldn’t admit it. It was true that Tiedoll made a crap ton of oatmeal raisin cookies and no one liked them in the household but him. Kanda didn’t like too many things as it was, but Alma and Daisya couldn’t stomach them either. He heard from Lavi that this Allen kid was like a bottomless pit, so he figured he would take it to his advantage, but also give Allen a little peace offering. It wasn’t like Kanda hated Allen’s guts. He hated him. He did. He hated almost everyone but Alma. What made Allen a little different was that he didn’t call him Yuu. Even after he knew Alma told Allen his real name, Allen still didn’t call him Yuu. Even after he knew Alma told Allen his real name, Allen still didn’t call him Yuu. Even when he was angry. So, Kanda still hated Allen, but he hated Allen a little less because of that. Plus, he did feel bad about those bruises on Allen’s neck…so….maybe this would make him feel better?

Allen stared at the mountain of cookies in his lap before tentatively taking one, inspecting it closely. What the fuck? Did he think they were poisoned? Oh yeah, didn’t Usagi mention the way he acted when he tried to give him food? Was this kid really poisoned before? Kanda’s eyes narrowed into little slits as he watched the kid finally take a tentative bite. Then he smiled a little bit, apparently happy with the taste. Kanda felt warm and fuzzy inside, usually saved for when he interacted with his family, although mostly Alma. Ugh, it’s because I feel sorry for what I did to him, Kanda thought, trying to reason with himself. There’s no way I could even remotely like this stupid moyashi.

It didn’t take long for Daisya and Alma to return. When they did, they expressed endless gratitude to Allen for eating all the cookies they hated so they didn’t have to. Then they unpaused the movie and Allen was back to being bored and confused after consuming the mountain of cookies and soda Kanda gave him.

Cross was just thankful the kids were not tearing each other to shreds like he wanted to do to a certain friend of his, although he seemed calmer this time around. Less pushy. Even so, he was still a little bit irritated that Tiedoll basically assumed and said that he was unfit to parent Allen. Or at least that’s how Cross took it. Sure, he never had kids of his own, which is surprising considering how many women he’s slept with. He was not…the best person around kids in the past, but he was trying. He did some research and if he didn’t grab Allen when he did the kid would’ve probably died or have stayed in an orphanage for the rest of his life! There were some blips and mistakes. Allen got into his liquor candy. Cross yelled at Allen a couple of times when he got drunk. He might’ve hit him once to. He also was not the most…receptive guardian in the whole world. But he was trying. He was trying to get better and if he had anything to say about it, he’s made good
Besides, if he did things Tiedoll’s way, he didn’t know if Allen would be receptive to it. He didn’t exactly try to shower Allen with love and affection because Cross was not the type to do so. Plus, he felt like he would be suffocating the kid and overwhelming him if he did that, so he usually did it when Allen came up to him asking for it, or if Allen was upset. The world was already an overwhelming place for the kid. He lost the one person he met who loved him and now he’s thrust into an unknown world filled with stability and routine and he wasn’t used to it. He wasn’t used to living like a normal kid and there were many times Cross found him sitting there staring off into space because he wasn’t sure what he should be doing.

Tiedoll took a long sip from his coffee mug,” I didn’t say that I was assuming you were a bad parent-“

Cross rolled his eyes. Here we go again.

“I just think that you should make sure you are stable and everything before you try to take care of a child. Especially a child whose been through quite a lot of things,”

Tiedoll continued. He wasn’t fully convinced Cross had what it took to be a good parent to Allen, even if they interacted well so far together. Things could change. Life had ups and downs.

“I am completely stable.”

“You just recently are trying to recover from alcoholism.”

“So?”

“So, you’re dealing with a child who has a lot of problems, which is stressful. What if it triggers you back into drinking?”

“I won’t,” Cross responded, remembering when he saw Allen a drunken, psychotic mess when he got into his liquor candies. That was enough to tell him he needed to stop. That was the point Cross gathered up all the alcohol he had in the house and threw it out without looking back. Sure, he had cravings. Every addict had them, but after looking at Allen like that, it was enough to make him want to quit the stuff. Cigarettes? Well that was another thing entirely. If Tiedoll saw what he did, he’d understand.

“You don’t know that.”

“I do know that,” Cross deadpanned with a warning glare, “I don’t care what you say or what you do. I will not let you take Allen away from me-“

“I didn’t mean it like that Cross just until-“

“I don’t care what you meant. I’m fucking leaving, this was a bad idea,” Cross sighed, getting up and walking towards the living room to retrieve his little imp. This was a stupid idea. Allen got hurt because Cross pushed too hard. He should’ve made sure he was acquainted and comfortable with being around one kid instead of shoving him in this sort of situation. Especially with a kid like Kanda who had so many problems himself that he had to deal with. When Cross walked to the living room however, he was surprised to find sleeping kids in front of the television, but no Kanda and no Allen. Shit.

Well, while Tiedoll and Cross were talking, out of boredom and sleepiness, Allen went to find Cross to use him as a pillow until he decided they could go home. However, just as he was about to enter the room the adults were in, he overheard Tiedoll and Cross talking about
him and how Tiedoll was planning to take Allen away from Cross. Or at least, that’s how Allen’s brain connected the dots. He didn’t want to be taken away from Cross. Sure, there were times where Cross was a downright asshole sometimes, there were times where he did stupid things, but Allen liked him. He felt protected by him. He was big and powerful, and he had a deformity like Allen on his face, so Allen didn’t feel alone. Even though he wouldn’t show anyone, Allen saw it once. It was horrific like his arm. He liked his guitar playing. He liked to sing with him and he liked that Cross understood when he wanted his attention and when he didn’t. It took a while, but Cross began to understand him and Allen began to understand him back. He didn’t want to be taken away, not after losing Mana. He couldn’t lose someone again.

Allen felt his bottom lip tremble, but he fought the urge to cry. Well fine! If Tiedoll wanted to take him away from Cross that bad, he’d have to catch him first. Allen was going to go home and hide under his bed until Tiedoll forgot all about him! So, Allen got his shoes on and quietly slipped out the door to do just that, but he didn’t know he was being followed by Kanda. Kanda learned about people through observation…at least he tried to because he wasn’t very good at talking to them face to face. So yeah, he noticed when Allen got up during the movie and walked away. Besides, this was Kanda’s territory and he didn’t trust the new kid yet, so he followed him. He heard the conversation as well and watched the white-haired child’s face pinch up in an expression that looked so much like Alma trying not to cry.

As Kanda thought about what the adults were talking about, he could see why Allen would be upset…well maybe. He thought Cross was a distasteful man. Always did. That’s why he bit him the first time he met Cross. Though, Cross had to care about Allen an awful lot to go through the trouble of keeping him. Then there was the idea of Allen living with them and Kanda downright hated it. He hated moyashi. He was annoying and fought back when Kanda tried to beat him up instead of cowering like everyone else. Still though…the moyashi didn’t call him Yuu like the stupid usagi did and he ate all those damned cookies without complaint. He also fought back much to Kanda’s surprise. He would follow the moyashi and make sure he stayed out of trouble, but he would also help Allen stay with Cross.

So, Kanda slipped out after Allen, leaving the two adults to bicker and later discover they were missing.

And so, this is where Cross was staring down at Tiedoll’s eldest son who swore he didn’t know where they went and that he fell asleep. Tiedoll, being the calm one in the situation checked around the house alongside Cross. They checked outside, they checked every room. No Allen and no Kanda. Definitely not a good combo to go missing. Then Cross was struck with a sickening realization. Did Allen overhear them talking and run off? Fuck! This was all Tiedoll’s fault.

“You know this is your fucking fault!” Cross cursed at his friend, now enemy as worry began to settle heavily in Cross’s guts.

“What do you mean Cross?”

“Allen must’ve heard us talking and decided to run off!”

“It could just be a prank.”

“Together? The two of them? Be real Tiedoll they were trying to kill each other earlier!”

“Maybe they made up?” Tiedoll suggested.

Cross deadpanned at Tiedoll, ignoring Alma who began to cry and worry about Kanda.
“Yeah, sure, whatever,” Cross growled, before storming out the front door, “I’m going to go look for my son.”

Tiedoll sighed, feeling guilty. Perhaps Cross was right. There was a good chance Allen overheard them talking and got upset. That didn’t explain why Kanda would go missing to...

“Alright. Daisya, you stay here with Alma. We’re going to go looking for them. I’m sure they’re fine. Kanda is very resourceful and I’m sure he’s with Allen right now,” Tiedoll told his eldest son, who pretended that he wasn’t worried, but he was. I mean Kanda was small. He could fight and probably take down an adult… but he was small and made Daisya worry sometimes.

~

Allen sniffled loudly as he stomped away from Tiedoll’s house, rubbing his eyes in annoyance as his tear threatened to blind him. He wasn’t sure where he had to go to get home, but he’d find it. The town wasn’t that big was it? He’d find it eventually. So, he picked a direction to go, not knowing that he was going the exact opposite way of home.

Allen continued to cry, only a bit louder because he felt so alone. He knew this was going to be a huge mistake. He should’ve kept his mouth shut instead of poking Kanda until he snapped. He should’ve just stayed on Cross’s lap. He should’ve pretended to be sick, so they didn’t have to go today. He failed Cross. He was a bad kid. A cursed kid. Maybe it was his fault that man thought Cross was a bad father. Maybe he wasn’t acting the way he was supposed to like every other normal boy. He was trying! He really was trying! He was trying to not wet the bed! He was trying to not have nightmares almost every night! He was trying to figure out the appeal in playing with toys! He was trying to learn his alphabet and write to! He was trying. He was trying so hard, but this was all so new and scary. He didn’t understand it. It was so hard to talk to other kids and relate to them. Nobody else used to live in a traveling circus. Nobody else had a father that was a clown that taught them all sorts of neat tricks. Nobody else had a stupid red, scaly, ugly arm or a stupid scar over their eye. Nobody else had white hair. He was a freak no matter where he went, and everyone was going to abandon him one way or another. He was just delaying the inevitable right?

“Are you fucking stupid moyashi! Watch where you’re going! Do you want to die!”

Allen felt someone pull harshly at the back of his neck away from the crosswalk just in time before Allen was road kill by an oncoming car. Allen wasn’t paying attention. He could’ve almost died. Allen looked over at his savior and was surprised to see it was Kanda. Had it been any other time, he would’ve looked at him in disgust, but all Allen could do was burst into tears.

Ugh gross, Kanda thought as he watched snot dribble out of Allen’s nose.

“Tch. Shut up Moyashi. Keep walking or I’ll leave you here to die.”

“B-B-But I don’t know where to go!” Allen cried.

“What do you mean you don’t know where to go!? Don’t you know where your house is!? I mean that’s where you are going? Yes? Or are you just walking around aimlessly! Damn you really are stupid Moyashi!” Kanda scolded, growling when it only caused Allen to cry harder.

“Ugh! Stop crying! Crying doesn’t solve anything, stupid Moyashi!” Kanda barked before forcefully hugging Allen. As much as he hated the idea, it always worked on Alma so surely it would work on Allen. Allen stiffened up in Kanda’s tight hug, quieting down in his surprise at the quite ferocious hug.

“I don’t like the idea either. I hate you. I hate you less than baka usagi Lavi, but I still hate you and
it would drive me insane to have you in the same household as me. If my dad does anything, I will make it so he’d have to send you back to Cross,” Kanda growled. Well that was…the most viciously and nicest thing Kanda said all day…or week…or month….or year….or ever.

Allen sniffled, “Really?”

“Yeah. So, stop your stupid crying.”

“B-But I don’t know where to go now…and I don’t want to go back because they’ll take me away.”

“Then we’ll just keep walking around and maybe one of the houses will look familiar to you,” Kanda said with an eye roll. This kid was going to get himself killed if he didn’t stick by him.

“O-Okay…”

So, Allen composed himself and the two children set off to walk around the town. What a weird sight they made. A white-haired child with a scar over his eye and the other glaring at anyone who gave them weird looks as they passed by. Of course, there was always one, near senile, old lady that had to walk by and say.

“Awwwhhhh are you two on a date? You shouldn’t stay out much later, it’s getting dark you know,”

Kanda looked like he was on the verge of killing everyone within the vicinity. He much preferred the ones who gave them weird looks as they passed by. Allen was confused. Dating? Them? Why?

“W-Why did she think we were-?”

“Shut it or I’ll kill you,” Kanda growled. Allen soon put two and two together. It was because of Kanda’s long hair. They thought he looked like a girl. Allen would’ve laughed, but the threat of being killed by Kanda and the idea of dating such an awful person made him want to vomit.

It wasn’t long before they were at the edge of the town’s outer limits.

“So, none of these houses were familiar to you?”

“No…” Allen responded with a sad pout. He looked like he was going to cry again. They were lost and it was his fault!

“Don’t you dare start crying again or I will twist your arm so far behind your back-“

“But we’re lost and it’s because of me,” Allen whined.

“We’re not lost stupid Moyashi! I know the way back to my house!”

“It doesn’t matter!” Allen yelped, stamping his foot in frustration.” At least you have a home to go back to. You’re not gonna have to restart and go through everything again! I already lost Mana and now I’m going to lose Cross. Everyone ends up leaving me in the end because I’m cursed and I can’t be like a normal kid!”

Kanda frowned at Allen beginning to throw a fit, but his eyes widened when Allen called himself cursed. Oh…oh so Kanda hit something really deep when he went off and called him cursed and stuff huh? I mean he should’ve known…with his appearance and stuff…it would’ve been obvious
but…it was in the heat of the moment. I mean sure. Allen called him Bakanda. But he didn’t call him Yuu. Kanda knew what it was like to be called things you hated. He felt his chest feel hollow in guilt.

“Shut up! You’re not cursed, alright! You’re a moyashi and you’re not supposed to be normal and that is fine! Normal people suck,” Kanda huffed.

“You said I was! And so does everyone else!”

“Well what I said wasn’t true and it was mean…and I’m sorry. So, there. You didn’t call me Yuu, which I really hate so I shouldn’t be calling you things you really hate,” Kanda responded in an awkward, definitely not worded very well but sincere apology. He really sucked at this.

Thankfully Allen understood what Kanda was trying to do and calmed down a little bit, “I’m sorry for calling you a girl. Thanks for following me out here…Cross says I don’t have a good sense of direction but…I didn’t know what else to do.”

“Tch…whatever,” Kanda responded, his form of saying ‘yeah I forgive you and no problem’, “I’m not apologizing for calling you Moyashi though.”

Allen pouted at that, “But I’m not a moyashi!”

“Yes, you are!”

“What does it even mean!?”

“It means beansprout stupid!”

“Well fine! I wasn’t planning on apologizing for calling you Bakanda because you are one and if you call me moyashi then I get to call you Bakanda!” Allen huffed, at least happy he remembered that the word baka meant stupid in the Japanese language.

“I wasn’t the one who nearly got ran over, if anyone is stupid it’s you!”

“I was upset!”

“Only stupid people get upset!”

“Well if that’s true then you must be pretty stupid because you’re yelling at me right now.”

“If you heard me yell, you’d know it stupid moyashi!”

“Ugh you’re impossible!”

“Good!”

The two glared at each other for several minutes, each of them thinking of what they should do next. Then a set of headlights threatened to blind them as a car turned and headed towards them. Kanda growled and covered his eyes in annoyance, while Allen yelped and hid behind Kanda and his hair.

“Kanda! Allen! Are you alright! God you had us worried sick!” Tiedoll’s voice called out. Kanda growled again in annoyance as Tiedoll rushed over, crying and being overly affectionate for Kanda’s taste. Allen backed away warily when Tiedoll threatened to suffocate Kanda alive by pure affection but was surprised when he was also scooped up.
“Jesus Christ you little imp, don’t you ever do that again. You got it? This may be a small town but there are some seriously creepy people here. Did anyone touch you? Are you hurt anywhere?” Cross asked, firing question after question. He couldn’t help it. It was true though, Cross worked on the force and he knew that even though this town was small, there were some questionable people around this area. Allen could’ve easily have been snatched up. He could’ve gotten hurt if any of the teenagers got ahold of him, especially with his appearance. Allen groaned a little as Cross inspected every inch of his body forcefully to check for injuries, but he had to admit he loved the attention. He wasn’t used to it and it was kind of scary, but it felt nice that he cared.

Then Cross looked him in the eyes, those eyes that pierced into Allen’s soul. It was those eyes that made Allen feel squeamish because he knew he couldn’t hide anything from them. Even if he didn’t say anything, those eyes could read into him with such ease that Allen understood why the police force kept Cross on, even if Cross was an alcoholic and did quite a number of questionably moral things.

“Are you ok?” Cross asked, but Allen knew it had nothing to do with physical injury. Cross was asking Allen how he felt, what was going through his head, etc. Allen shrugged before laying his head on Cross’s shoulder. He didn’t want to talk about it, not in front of the person who planned on taking him away from Cross in the first place. Whether Cross knew this or not, the man carried Allen off away from Tiedoll and his fawning over Kanda who was yelling at Tiedoll to let him go.

“You heard us talking. Didn’t you.” Cross said more than questioned.

Allen nodded his head on Cross’s shoulder.

“You know I’m never gonna let that happen. I made a promise to you, right? It was when you were freaking out about getting back into the car that day in the store parking lot. I said I was going to try my hardest to keep you alive and safe and if you can’t handle something I will be there. Or I’d make sure Tim was there until I could get there. You’re not gonna go anywhere,” Cross said, his voice filled with determination.

“But I’m not like everyone else…I’m not good at reading and writing or talking to other kids…other kids don’t wet the bed or have nightmares,” Allen said, feeling guilty that he wasn’t doing what was expected of him.

“That’s fine, you don’t have to be like everyone else. We’re going at your pace. I don’t care what Tiedoll says. You’re doing just fine. You’re not giving up and as long as you don’t give up on yourself you’ll be just fine. You’ll still make progress no matter how slow or fast it goes. Some shit just takes time. Okay?” Cross said with finality.

“Okay…”

“Good. We’re gonna go home.”

Oh thank god, Allen thought to himself as he heaved a huge sigh of relief. Cross chuckled a little bit in response.

Unbeknownst to Cross, Tiedoll was once again watching their interaction, although Cross had a somewhat feeling that he was being watched. Kanda was also watching the interaction with some interest. He never saw Cross act like that before…it was strange. He also learned a bit more about Allen as well. That didn’t mean that he was going to stop yelling at him for being stupid or stop calling him moyashi…but he realized that this stupid moyashi also has a lot of baggage like Kanda. Kanda found a small connection, something that he has problems doing with other people. Maybe Allen wouldn’t hurt to have as a somewhat friend…acquaintance, or however you wanted to call
“What do you think Kanda?” Tiedoll asked, his wise eyes looking down at Kanda.

“Tch…Moyashi is fine,” Kanda responded, his version of saying ‘Allen is fine with Cross, so stop worrying about it.’”

“Yes…I suppose he is…” Tiedoll nodded. He thought he knew what Cross was all about, but it turned out, even Cross could be quite surprising. Maybe he was being a little unjust towards Cross assuming he couldn’t parent. It was obvious there was something there. Sure, his interactions were not always…the greatest…but all parents made mistakes, even ones like Tiedoll that was a parent to four kids all from different backgrounds, all who had different stories. Allen was a good fit for Cross. They could learn a lot from each other. So, Tiedoll decided he would step back and let Cross be, but that wouldn’t stop him from interjecting words of advice from time to time.

Chapter End Notes

(Heh heh. Hiii… hoped you enjoyed it. I’m not quite certain if I wrote Kanda, Alma, or Tiedoll really well ^^” Sorry. I was kind of sad I didn’t get the chance to write about Daisya too much either. Actually, an idea came across to me that perhaps I should do a separate drabble series with Kanda, Alma, Daisya, Tiedoll, and Marie. I’m not sure how well I’d do…or what I’d really write about yet…but if you guys are interested maybe feed me some ideas. No guarantees, it might be awhile before I get the creative juices flowing…but I think it would be fun to explore everyone in this little drabble series I introduced. I would also like to explore their thinking more, especially Kanda’s. I didn’t feel like I did him too much justice here, but the drabbles are very Cross and Allen focused…and I don’t have that writer to character connection all that much yet to Kanda. Maybe one day…I mean it’s there…it just need to flourish a bit more…and he’s such a complex character to. Takes time. Also, holy shit I forgot Miranda’s and Krory’s date gahhh!!! I’m so sorry shit!!! So many things to catch up with and so many ideas! Anyways, see you next time! Hope I did this suggestion justice!)
In Which Allen Gets Taken Away

Chapter Summary

Basically what the title says. Allen's birth parents want him back and Allen leaves Cross and his friends behind. But what was going to wait for him when he meets his birth parents face to face?

Chapter Notes

(I wanted to write some angst. This is also a random idea that flitted by a whole lot. Consider this drabble not so much in line with the rest of the drabbles. Most of them seem to follow a story line, but I think I’m going to consider this one sort of what constitutes an actual drabble. I wanted to sort of play around with the idea of Allen’s birth parents wanting him back [although not for reasons that a parent should want their biological child back] and play around with that idea. I’m not a total legal expert but it’s not like Allen is ‘officially adopted’ with papers signed and everything. I mean they don’t exactly know his real name that his parents gave him so…I thought it would be interesting to play around with those things. Also play around with what kind of people Allen’s real parents were…that is…if they are his real parents. Oooo~. Consider Allen age 10 in this. Anyways yeah this is going to be triggery as fuck, sorry ahead of time, here’s a list. Triggers: intense sadness, depression, anxiety, child abuse, being drugged, violence, verbal abuse, anorexia. You have been warned.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When it comes to living life there were always ups and downs. This is especially true when you are a parent and you have a kid that has lived a not so normal life during his first eight years of life. Was there ever such a thing as a ‘normal life’ to begin with though? The point is life has its ups and downs, but this was a very specific down that Cross never prepared for. This was something that completely spun the world Allen and he created over the two years upside down. Cross wasn’t prepared for this because he didn’t think he’d have to. As far as he knew about Allen, he was completely abandoned by his birth parents and his name was actually Red, but that was just a nickname. Allen didn’t have a true name until Mana gave it to him…well accidentally gave it to him and Allen accepted into being called Allen. Allen didn’t have a birth certificate signifying his actual birthday, but with Mana’s help Allen chose Christmas Day. Not for the intention of trying to score more presents, but because it was the day Mana ‘rebirthed’ him as Allen. Basically saying, Allen’s birth parents gave him up, completely abandoned him somewhere so Cross believed that was it. He could have Allen, and nothing was going to stand in the way of that. Until one summer day…

Allen was at the pool with his friends and Anita was at work. Cross was home alone on his day off to do whatever he wanted, which was basically to laze around in his boxers and watch T.V. until Allen returned home for dinner. Cross was just about to doze off on the couch when he heard a knock at the door. Damnit. What the fuck could anyone want on such a nice fucking day? Why did they have to ruin Cross’s nap before his kid came screaming back into the house? Cross growled in
annoyance and slowly sat up, yawning lazily, before standing up and walking to the door. Cross scratched at his stomach, not at all bothered by the fact he was not exactly presentable. They could kiss his ass. It was fucking hot out, and the air conditioner could only do so much, hence why he sent Allen off to go swimming (also because he kept whining about wanting ice cream and that it was hot. Cross offered to douse him with the hose outside free of charge, but Allen thought it would be a better idea to burn a bigger hole in Cross’s wallet and go swimming for a small fee. Whatever. He loved the kid anyways.). When Cross opened the door, his eyes widened in surprise.

It was a cop.

The fuck? Last time he checked he didn’t do anything illegal…unless Allen did…shit don’t tell me-

“Marian Cross?” the cop asked. He sure didn’t look like any of his coworkers here in town. Was he from the next town over?

“Cross is fine,” Cross responded a little irritated at the use of his first name, “What do you want?”

The cop blinked a little, as if shocked by Cross’s bluntness. Yeah, nothing new.

“Well, I’ve come to inform you that Allen Walker’s birth parents are wanting custody of their son whom apparently was kidnapped as a baby. He does live here yes?” the cop informed.

Whoa. Wait. Hold the fuck up. What? Custody?

“Uhm…excuse me?” Cross asked, his eyebrows pinched together in confusion.

“His birth parents found that they’re son was still alive and well and want to bring him home,” the cop repeated again with different words.

Yeah, I know what you said, Cross thought to himself. But it didn’t make sense. Custody? Now? Allen was abandoned! At least Cross was sure…but after ten years now they want him back? That can’t be possible! Cross took care of him for two years! Allen was his kid! They can’t just take him back, right? They had a relationship, an attachment!

“Okay…so?” Cross said, looking at this cop like he had two heads.

“Well, they are his birth parents and they have the right to reclaim their son, as he never had been officially adopted.”

Oh, fuck this can’t be happening. Cross didn’t officially do jack shit because Allen never had official documents…at least that’s what Cross believed. It’s not like he tried but as a man in his position you could only do so much with such limited information to begin with.

“Okay…” Cross said, uttering the only thing he could think of. He was in too much of a state of shock right now.

“Okay. Well I am here to inform you that he is to be ready within a week. We’ll have someone come over to pick him up,” the man said dutifully before he continued to pour more salt into the wound, “Have a wonderful day.”

Cross nodded numbly and closed the door. Have a wonderful day? Did he seriously just tell him that? How could he after hearing that? How was he going to tell Allen? How was he going to tell Anita? Oh god…Anita would be so heart broken. Jesus Christ…
Cross stumbled over to the nearest chair and sat down. He looked at the clock. Two hours…two hours until Allen got home. There was no way he would be able to recompose himself in that amount of time. The kid would know something was up. He couldn’t break the news to the brat alone…

So, even though it would pain him to hear the choked gasp and the many sobs afterwards…Cross called Anita to tell her.

~

Anita immediately came home when Cross called her up and told her the news. Cross was about to tell her to stay at work for a bit, to calm down and recollect herself in fear that she would get herself into a car accident, but she hung up before he could. As he heard the front door open, Cross only had enough time to stand up and turn before Anita was in his arms, heart wrenching sobs tearing themselves from her throat.

“There has to be some way…Cross do you even know where they live? Allen won’t be able to handle being in a new environment. Being torn away from his friends. They don’t know anything about him, they never had the opportunity to. Cross there has to be a way we can keep him,” Anita said, her eyes desperate.

“I know…but there’s nothing we can do. As his birth parents they have full right to claim him. There’s no paperwork that says he is ours and I don’t think he’s old enough for them to let him choose himself if that was even an option,” Cross said, trying to stay strong but damnit this was killing him. It was killing him to see Anita this way. Anita. Who couldn’t have kids. Who lived motherhood through Allen and now she was losing her child. He was scared to death to. What was going to become of Allen? Would they allow them visitation rights? Are they going to treat him right? Were they going to understand him and understand his needs? Would he be able to make new friends? Was he going to be able to function?

How was he going to tell the kid that he was going to be uprooted all over again in a week and be expected to go to a place with new parents whom he could never remember meeting? He was expected to totally reconstruct his life all over again and there was nothing Cross could do about it. He was completely powerless, and he hated it.

~

There was no easy way to say it and there was no way to put it off. When Allen came home Cross and Anita were on the couch and Anita, bless her. She was such a strong woman but not strong enough for this. One look at Allen and Anita ran off, tears streaming down her face. Allen looked onward in shock and confusion. Mom never did that before. What made her so upset? Cross watched Anita run off before looking over at Allen and Allen felt his heart sink into the floorboards. He looked like he aged ten years. Something was wrong. All the happiness felt earlier being with his friends drained itself out of him. What on earth happened while he was gone? Did someone die?

“Why is mom crying?” Allen asked, walking over to Cross hesitantly, and for a moment Cross was seeing Allen age eight approaching him for the first time with those big, sad, confused, fearful eyes. Cross had to look away for a moment to recompose himself. This was something he had to do. He had no choice. He could wallow in his sadness later when the world was shrouded in night. When Allen had gone to bed.

“Well…a man stopped by earlier. He told me about your birth parents. Your birth parents want to reclaim you. They want you to come home. I’m sorry kid, I can’t say it in a better way,” Cross
sighed, watching Allen slowly crumble before him.

“W-Well you told him no…right?” Allen squeaked.

“Allen, that’s not how this works-“

“Well sure it does! I don’t even know them! I don’t want to live with them! They abandoned me!”

“They said you were kidnapped-“

“I don’t care what they said! I’m perfectly happy here!”

“I’m sure you are but they are your birth parents, they have full legal right to reclaim you if they want to-“ Cross continued to try to interject. Usually when they bickered Cross was always ready to bite back, he was always full of vigor. Full of piss and vinegar as the saying goes. The man that sat before Allen though was nothing like that. This man looked defeated. Powerless. Not Cross. Allen wanted to slap him.

“No, they don’t! It’s my life! I have the right to choose!” Allen shrieked, feeling unbalanced now that he was no longer in control of his life.

“Someone is going to be here in a week to pick you up,” Cross sighed in defeat, his eyes looking at Allen apologetically, “You’re only a kid Allen. They’re not going to let you choose.”

“That’s not fair! I took care of myself without their help! I should be able to choose! You said you were going to do everything in your power to protect me and keep me alive! You promised me that! You lied!” Allen screamed and stomped his foot on the ground. He wasn’t being fair bringing that up. He knew that. But he hated this. Why was Cross looking like that? Why wasn’t he calling that man up and demanding that he leave them alone? That he was perfectly happy here? Cross was a powerful man. Hellfire surrounded him when he was in a rage. He could cripple a man by a look alone! He was a loving man that made questionable food that sometimes tasted great and other times awful. He would hold Allen in his arms after a nightmare or during a thunderstorm. So why couldn’t Cross do this? It wasn’t natural to see someone like Cross lose. Cross was supposed to win.

Allen gritted his teeth in anger. How dare Cross look like this! He wasn’t supposed to look like this! He was his father, he was supposed to be the most powerful person on the planet…well on Allen’s planet. He opened his mouth, ready to unleash another onslaught of his anger, but the words got caught up in his throat and dissipated when he saw a tear run down Cross’s cheek. Crying. Cross was crying. Actually crying.

Allen’s vision turned red and as anger burst inside of him so quickly, he didn’t realize what he was doing. He could only see snippets of him trying to punch Cross in the face, to rip his glasses off, to pull his hair, to rip the shirt he put on before he got home into shreds. Instead of Cross fighting back, punishing him, yelling at him. He tried to defend himself as best as he could and allowed Allen to throw his fit of rage. Allen didn’t like this. He hated this. Fight back, fight back already, do something, Allen screamed at him in his head. Or he thought. But his throat was hurting him so maybe he was screaming it at him. He couldn’t remember.

Then being held tightly by Cross and rocked as the anger faded away and left cracks in their wake, slowly pulling apart and shattering Allen Walker. He couldn’t hear what was being said to him, his head was vibrating, no his whole body was vibrating. Tears rolled down his cheeks like a never-ending torrent. Allen was afraid that they would never stop. Maybe this is what being a volcano felt like. Maybe this is what an earthquake felt like. He wasn’t sure when. He couldn’t even
remember but he must’ve fallen asleep because that was the last thing he remembered.

~

It wasn’t easy to watch Allen have a complete meltdown. One of the worst ones Cross ever witnessed. It was also not every day that Allen would go so far to attack him either. He knew Cross would whoop his ass until he couldn’t sit for a whole month or more. Cross knew that to, but it was what he saw in Allen’s eyes that prevented him from doing that and allowed Allen to hit him. He grabbed Allen’s hands if he got too close, like breaking his glasses or hurting himself, but he managed to get in quite a few good hits before he finally collapsed against Cross to cry and scream the rest of his heartache out. All Cross could do was hold him and rock him until he fell asleep. It was an hour and a half until he finally quieted into slumber. Leaving Cross to continue in his own heartache until he to fell asleep.

~ (Not gonna lie I teared up at this part. If my roommate wasn’t in the room I would be crying.)

The week went by fast as much as Allen hated it. He wanted it to go slower. Hell, he even forced himself to stay up as late as he possibly could to extend the days. He wanted this to all be a dream, but when he woke up, he would realize it wasn’t a dream. So, he stuck around Cross and Anita as much as he could. When he wasn’t around them, he was around his friends. Lavi took it the worse. His reaction wasn’t like Allen’s. There were no tears. Just a blank, tortured look that made Allen’s heart hurt so much he thought it was going to pop in his chest. Lavi wouldn’t stop asking to come over. He wouldn’t keep his hands off of Allen. On their last day together, it was so hard to leave Lavi’s grasp. He looked like a kicked puppy. Cross found out from Bookman later that Lavi sat by the door after Allen left and wouldn’t move for the entire night.

Alma burst into tears and was inconsolable for the most part. Kanda stopped calling Allen moyashi and stopped his insults altogether. That was the only week in which Kanda and Allen didn’t have a single fight. Lenalee was also upset, but not as much as Alma. Link…his dance partner…his provider of all things sweet and delicious was surprisingly calm. His reddish-brown eyes held a lot of pain though and baked anything Allen desired. Absolutely anything and put in the most intense concentration to make it as wonderful as possible. Allen was a lot touchier with Link and hung off of him literally everywhere around his house. They did one of their old dance routines together and then he wrote down addresses on a piece of paper and gave it to Allen, in case he wanted to try to write any of the friend group. He even wrote down Lavi’s who forgot in his heartache. Then Allen had to go and pretend his heart wasn’t ripping itself to shreds. He was going to miss the smell of Lavi’s books, of Link’s cooking, of Lenalee’s which smelled different every time Allen walked in because of Komui, of Kanda’s yelling, of Alma’s suffocating enthusiasm. He was gonna miss the dance team and Road constantly trying to kiss him and talking about getting married to him. She was annoying and had cooties, but Allen would still miss her and her weird brothers. Especially the one that played poker with him one time and got angry because Allen won (and cheated but that’s besides the point). Tyki…right? His name was Tyki. He wanted to see him again. Maybe one day he’ll have the chance. This sucked. This really really sucked.

When he was with Anita and Cross, Allen basically only left them alone when they were in the bathroom. Even then he bathed with Cross. Anita was a different story because of obvious reasons. He would not leave their sides and Cross refused to leave his. Work be damned. Then it was that day and Allen was scared to death. Cross was scared to death. Anita was scared to death. Then the car pulled up and after loading up the car (which didn’t take much doing as Allen insisted he didn’t want to bring much of his stuff with him. He just didn’t like the idea of bringing all of his things with him, it felt like he would never return, and he wanted to return. He would. He’d figure out a way if Cross couldn’t.), Cross pulled Allen into a hug.
“Allen, listen to me. I will do whatever I can to get you back. Understand? I’m sending Timcanpy with you. Make sure you keep him hidden and hidden well. He’s in your backpack. Behave. Remember what Mana said. Keep walking. I love you.”

“We love you,” Anita said, nodding, trying to keep the tears at bay.

“We love you,” Cross agreed with a nod. Then the lady with the kind smile led him into the car and closed to door. Allen buckled up his seat belt, ignoring the feeling like he was being suffocated. The lady got into the driver’s side. Closed the door. Turned on the car. Then began to drive away and Allen felt a desperation to open the car door and tumble out alongside the feeling of hollowness. He turned around, watching Cross’s house disappear in the distance. Anita and Cross standing outside, they were wearing masks of calm. Then the car turned the corner and they were gone. Allen was alone again.

When they were sure the car was out of sight, they dropped their masks. Anita collapsed on the ground and began to sob. Cross stood there and stared numbly ahead, trying to will the car to come back. Allen’s eyes looked exactly like the first time he laid eyes on Cross. Scared. Sad. Confused. Yearning. Cross didn’t break eye contact with those eyes from the point Allen was in the car to when the car turned away.

With each hour that passed, Allen grew more anxious. Where were they going? How far was he going to go from his friends and family? He tried to desperately to remember every turn they took, trying to make a mental map so that the moment he had a chance, he could come running back home. He could walk. He walked longed distances before. He could do it. They could live happily again. He could change his name, cover up his scar. Whatever it took. What a childish dream.

Five hours. That’s when the car stopped in front of a blue, Victorian house. Fancy. A lot fancier than Cross’s. Allen preferred Cross’s crummy house. This house was such an eye sore. Allen swallowed the lump in his throat as the lady walked around and opened his door. She then led him towards the house. Allen wanted to run and hide in the car. Then the door opened to reveal a middle-aged, sleek woman with red, windswept hair that looked like Allen’s when he was younger, but less messy. Then there was a fat guy, but not the greasy overweight stereotype everyone thinks of. This man had white hair on the sides of his head and was bald on top. He had a mustache and he looked dapper and clean. He looked grumpy though and he could stand to lose a few pounds. Allen hated him on the spot. Something just seemed off about him. He reminded him of the fat rich men he would see in the audience during his time in the circus.

Allen resisted the urge to recoil from the man, feeling no connection. No way was that his father. This woman, he could believe could be a mother, but even then, he refused to give her that title. The only thing that could remotely connect Allen to the man was their eyes. Allen could feel Red make a slow emergence out of instinct. Then Allen looked down and there was a boy who seemed a bit older than Allen. He had blonde curly hair and look as grumpy at the man. He looked like a snob and glared at Allen. His eyes were not Allen’s either. They weren’t related, were they?

“Red, it’s so good to have you home,” the woman said, as if all of this was totally normal. Like Allen was just away on some trip for awhile and came back home. Allen tasted something bitter in the back of his throat. Red. That name again. That name he despised.

“A-Allen. Please call me Allen,” Allen stuttered, trying to be as polite as possible like Mana taught him even though he wanted to scream at this woman that his name was Allen! Allen! It made him feel weird and disorientated to be called Red.

“Oh. Allen? Alright then,” the woman said, although her face looked like a mask. A front. Somehow, he felt like she didn’t actually care about his name and was only going along with him
just to please the lady. Maybe that was just Allen being hypersensitive though. He wasn’t giving these people a fair chance. Maybe they were nice.

Once the lady in the car brought his things in. She left. The door closed and Allen was alone with these strangers. He wouldn’t let go of his backpack. Timcanpy was there. Timcanpy was familiar. He wasn’t alone when he had Timcanpy. The blonde boy huffed and turned around to go back up the grand staircase.

“Don’t mind Kevin, he’s just not used to having another child in the house,” the woman said with a soft smile, “How about I show you around?”

Allen nodded and hesitantly followed the woman, his eyes flitting up at the grumpy fat man who didn’t seem pleased at all. Allen felt like he would be the type of person who would be hard to please. The woman gave the man a stern look before leaving the entranceway to continue through the house. Allen stayed mostly silent as the woman showed him around and then finally to his room which was a lot bigger than the one at Cross’s house. There was a big bed, a dresser set, a full body mirror and a window. Allen didn’t know what to do with all the extra space. Just by looking around the house though Allen was fairly certain this family was wealthy. Not like mansion, backyard pool, and private golf course rich, but rich. It made him nervous. They had a grand piano though which sort of curbed the nerves a bit. He still missed the one at Cross’s house which he begged and pleaded for on his first birthday with the man. That was the only thing he wanted. No toys. No electronics. Just a piano and it was gorgeous! He was a bit sad that he didn’t give it a proper farewell, but he was too busy being near his parents and friends and overlooked it.

“Alright. That’s the grand tour,” the woman said as they returned to the entranceway.

“Thank you,” Allen responded politely. The woman nodded in satisfaction. The air was very awkward around the two of them and they stood there for a few moments each trying to figure out what to say.

“So Allen…is that the name Cross gave you?” the woman asked. Her tone sounded polite, but Allen thought he could detect a hint of disgust.

“No. Mana did…he took care of me before Cross,” Allen explained, feeling a strange urge to keep Mana as private as possible. These were basically strangers though and he didn’t think they would be pleased to know their long-lost son traveled with a clown for a few years. He already stood out with his hair, scar, and arm.

“I see…”

“How did you find out about me…? That I was alive?” Allen asked, finally asking the question that’s been on his mind the entire week leading up to this.

“We watched one of your school choir state performances and saw your hand,” the woman said. Oh yeah, Allen decided to go into choir and compete. Well okay, Marie did a lot of begging and Allen couldn’t say no to him especially since he said he’d teach Allen to play the piano for free if he did. Marie genuinely thought Allen should share his voice with the world, that he shouldn’t waste such talent, so it wasn’t like he was just using Allen to make the school look good. Usually Allen hid his hand well, but he remembered a specific performance day where he didn’t feel too good and didn’t put as much effort in hiding it. He still pulled through though and was one of the top students in the competition. Shit. So that’s how they found him.

“You have an amazing voice.”
“Thank you,” Allen responded out of politeness.

Another few minutes of silence rolled by. Allen shifted uncomfortably.

“Well…it’s nice to have you back. I was so worried when you were taken from us, I had no idea where you’ve gone,” she said reaching out to touch Allen’s head, finally breaking the silence, “Anyways, feel free to settle in your room. I’ll let you know when dinner is ready.”

“Okay. Thank you,” Allen said, instinctively ducking his head away from her touch. She seemed a little…insulted? Sad? Allen couldn’t tell. She nodded once and disappeared. Allen was about to make his way to the stairs before the man called out to him.

“Red, before you go upstairs, let’s have a talk.”

Allen stiffened. He called him Red. He already told them to call him Allen. The child gritted his teeth but slowly turned away to face the man, resisting the urge to glare at him.

“Sure,” he said as he followed the man who began to walk to a fancy office. It had a gleaming wooden desk, two chairs in front of it, with a plush swivel chair behind it. Bookshelves lined the walls, filled with big books with names Allen couldn’t figure out. He gestured for Allen to sit in one of the plush chairs, which he did, carefully. The man closed the door behind him and walked over behind the desk to sit in the chair.

“Alright kid, I’m not sure exactly how Cross raised you but we have standards. In this town we have a reputation to uphold, “The man said snobbishly. Allen resisted the urge to wrinkle his nose at him. He could already tell this man and him were not going to get along at all. Okay, so they knew about Cross and judging from their reactions towards him it wasn’t good things. Allen bit back his retorts about how Cross wasn’t as bad as they thought he was and that they should be grateful that the man took care of him and treated him like a son when they thought he was dead or worse. He didn’t want to start a conflict though, so he sat and listened as politely as I could.

“There will be no rough housing. There will be no weird color hair dyes, so we will be dying your hair-“

“We already tried that. It doesn’t work,” Allen interjected, earning a glare from the man.

“There will be no interrupting.”

Allen looked down in fake shame. Fine, they could waste their time and money dying his hair. He didn’t care. Looks like they had plenty as it was.

“No facial tattoos. When we have guests over you will treat them with respect and only speak when spoken to. You are expected to be quiet. You are expected to excel in your studies. Do not talk back to me or your mother-“

Yada yada yada, Allen thought to himself as he ignored the rest of the man’s ramblings. The man already got on his bad side by refusing to acknowledge his name. He just couldn’t believe he expected Allen to be some rebellious kid because Cross raised him for two years. It made Allen angry. Very angry. Also, facial tattoo? Are you serious!? This wasn’t a tattoo, it was a scar! Someone gave this to him!

Even with the anger, Allen stayed polite, simply nodding to show he understood. This man was huge. Bigger than Allen. It would be better to stay on his good side until he could figure out a plan to get out of here.
“Alright Red. You are free to go,” the man said.

“Please call me Allen,” the child said as politely as he could even though he wanted to scream it at him. Was it really that hard to call him Allen!?

The man didn’t like that and narrowed his eyes at him, “I will not. You are under my household; therefore, your name is going to be your birth name. Red Whittaker.”

Red? Whittaker? What!?! Allen had to use every ounce of will power not to cringe at that name. His name was actually Red? Who named their kid Red? Especially pairing it with Whittaker. Gross.

“B-But the person who first took care of me died…I’d like to keep the name he gave me to honor him~“

“I told you not to talk back,” Mr. Whittaker said, his tone was darker, warning and demanded obedience. Allen’s words died on his lips even though his stomach burned in anger. How dare this man deny him the right to keep his own name! They may have named him at birth but the name he has accepted as his own, has used for a good portion of his life and had come to love was Allen Walker. It fit him and it gave him belonging.

“A-Am I allowed to call him? C-Cross I mean?” Allen asked, feeling desperate and a little hopeful.

“No, you will not! You don’t need such a rebellious, immoral man like Cross Marian any longer in your life. He’s done enough damage.”

“I understand, sir,” Allen choked out and looked down at the ground to avoid the man’s gaze. He felt his heart sink to the floor as he slowly got up and walked off to his room, closing the door softly behind him. He felt his heart sink to the floor as he slowly got up and walked off to his room, closing the door softly behind him. He sighed tiredly before walking over to his bed, hugging his backpack he had laid there towards his chest. What was he going to do? He already hated it here. Maybe he could just run off. But they knew what he looked like now and he didn’t have the supplies he needed at this moment to properly disguise himself. He was stuck here until he could create a decent disguise or until Cross figured out how to get him out.

Allen unzipped his bag, allowing Timcanpy to pop up and stretch out. As he saw the little golem zip out of the bag and around the room to check out their new surroundings, Allen smiled softly. At least he had Timcanpy. Cross kept his promise. He couldn’t be here with Allen right now, but he made sure to send Tim with him as a substitute. Cross also made sure to the best of his ability to convey Allen’s needs but based on his first impression of Mr. and Mrs. Whittaker so far, he doubted they took enough care to listen to all Cross had said. Once Tim was satisfied, he flew over to Allen and nudged his face affectionately, as if to tell him it wasn’t all bad.

“You’re right. I have you after all Tim,” Allen said with a soft smile as he held the golem in his hands. Tim grinned in response.

The day progressed onward with nothing new. Allen found it hard to eat at dinner with his new family, especially since Kevin kept glaring at him. Mr. Whittaker ignored him, leaving the table with his food to eat in his office so he could focus on work. Mrs. Whittaker seemed content, but Allen felt she was faking it. It was just all so awkward. Allen didn’t know how on earth to go about all this. How could he connect to his so called ‘birth family’ when this was the first time, he ever met them and was developmentally old enough to remember and interact with them? Allen thought about this until he was getting ready for bed. Then his thoughts shifted to everyone else back at home. He wondered what they were doing? Did they forget about him? Were they thinking about him right now just like he was thinking of them? Sleep didn’t come easy to Allen that night. It usually didn’t, but this time it was worse.
The house was unnatural quiet, and it unnerved Cross. Anita was sleeping in their room. After Cross found the strength to move again, he lifted his broken lover up and carried her back into the house. He laid her in bed and carded his hand through her hair until she fell asleep. Then Cross left the room to wander around the house aimlessly. He didn’t know what to do anymore. The house was so quiet, Cross could hear a pin drop. There were no sounds of little feet running around. There was no chasing around a certain child to try and wrestle him into bed (or at least that was a game when Allen was younger). There was no whining about having to go to bed or the smell of food as Allen consumed his umpteenth snack of the day. The T.V. was off instead of playing cartoons or animal planet. There was no piano playing nor the sound of someone singing in the shower. The house was lifeless. There were days when Allen slept over at one of his friend’s house that Cross would enjoy such peace and quiet, but this was a different kind of quiet. It carried a finality to it that bothered Cross.

Cross wondered where they took Allen. How he was feeling. Did he like it there? Were they treating him well? It pissed him off that the social workers didn’t give him a number allowing him to call Allen, but the kid knew the house phone and his cell phone…maybe they’d let him call him? Cross felt purposelessness. Hell, he’d even take Allen screaming from a nightmare, throwing a fit, Allen blowing a raspberry at him or the sound of something crashing to the floor and breaking to end the deafening silence of the house. Cross walked over to Allen’s room, it felt a little better to see there were still items within the room. Cross wasn’t sure if he could bear it to see the room look so empty. As Cross walked into the room, pain lit up at the bottom of his foot as he stepped on a lego.

“Damnit kid, even when you’re not here you still manage to piss with me,” Cross cursed as he limped towards Allen’s bed and sat down. He couldn’t help but chuckle a bit at the thought though when the pain faded away. Cross sighed and laid down on the small bed, remembering all the times he’d cram his huge body onto this sucker with Allen curled up beside him, too afraid to fall asleep alone. He’d always end up passing out next to the brat and then wake up with Allen’s foot pressed against his face as he somehow migrated to sleeping upside down on the bed. That, or he’d wake up and complain of back pain. Either way, if Allen needed him to do it, Cross did it. Plus, it was funny to wake up Allen by tickling his feet as revenge for putting them next to Cross’s face.

God this sucked. Cross wished he could just erase everything in his mind and fall asleep, but instead he was haunted by memories of Allen being a little shit, of comforting Allen, of screwing around with him, or of simply just having the little one curled up on him messing around with his hair or whatever. He felt like such a failure. He should have done more. If he had done more Allen would still be here and he wouldn’t have had to see that petrified look Allen had as the car pulled away. That look nearly sent Cross to his knees right there alongside Anita, but he was determined to stay strong for Allen. If he broke down, Allen would be a mess. Just thinking about that look tore Cross’s heart to shreds and before he knew it, he was curled up on the bed with tears streaming down his face. Damnit, he should’ve done better. He could’ve done better. He was the only thing Allen had when Mana died. He helped Allen rebuild himself and rebuild a new life for himself only to have it all taken away out from under him. He had a mother. He had a father. He had friends. Hell might as well count Lavi as a brother. He was surrounded by love and he had what he needed to function and to continue to heal up the scars of his past. Everything was dashed away just like that and Cross let it happen. The only thing he could think of to do was give Tim to Allen as a last-ditch effort. Tim could comfort him. Tim could protect him. Maybe not like Cross could, but he could still be there for him. If something was wrong Tim could get help for Allen. Tim could record things. He was the weirdest, amazing, yet best thing Cross ever created before.

Cross wasn’t sure how long he stayed curled up like that but when he opened his eyes it was
morning. He slept on Allen’s bed for the rest of yesterday and during the night.

~

The past few days living with the Whittakers (Allen refused to call them mother or father, so he dubbed them as Sir or Mam and thought of them as Mr. and Mrs. Whittaker.) were somewhat uneventful. They attempted to dye Allen’s hair the same reddish color Mrs. Whittaker had and so far, their results were splendid. They really thought they outdone themselves, but Allen knew better. In just a few days’ time, the white would return, and the dye would wash away like it was just dirt caked onto his hair. Then they set to work on figuring out how to hide Allen’s eye. They were going to try, and have it removed but found that after touching it (much to Allen’s displeasure, though he tried to behave and stay still) it was a scar, not a tattoo (he tried to tell them). So, they did the next best thing and instructed him to cover it up every morning with tons of face make-up that made Allen’s face feel gross.

Allen stayed withdrawn from the family as much as possible and spent most of his time in his room playing with Tim secretly, taking naps, reading books, stretching and contorting his body to stay fit (Link would hate it if he let himself go). So yeah, mostly uneventful.

When they found the white was returning to Allen’s hair, he resisted the urge to laugh at how red Mr. Whittaker’s face turned. Of course, the entertainment of the man’s displeasure didn’t last long as they decided to re-dye his hair again and keep it in longer. Allen hated the smell of it. It burned his nose and gave him a headache. Plus, it burned sometimes. At least Cross stopped after the first try.

Of course, a few days later, it happened all over again. Thankfully, they’ve seemed to have given up on fixing Allen’s hair, much to his relief. Soon, it was all white again and Allen was strangely happy about it. Even though his white hair made him stand out, it made him feel like himself which was sorely needed as he had his name torn from him. That didn’t stop him from writing it down meticulously as a way to rebel against either of them calling him Red. It become sort of like an obsession.

So, over all things were uneventful. It’s when a week passed that things got to be a bit more…well let’s say eye opening to Allen. A week later they invited a man over to visit Allen and they had the two of them go into the room containing the piano. Low and behold Allen found that this man was a singing teacher (who also could play piano, but not as well as Marie in Allen’s opinion), a well-known one in fact and had heard Allen sing a couple times before. He wasn’t sure what the catch was with him, but he loved to sing and singing made him feel a bit more like himself, so he wasn’t totally against it. The first time he came over was just to test Allen on his range. Allen was a little hesitant with it all at first, I mean he was also a complete stranger, but all it took was some piano playing and Allen was hooked. What can he say? Music was his kryptonite. That’s how Cross figured out he could sing after all.

Then the man left and talked to Mr. and Mrs. Whittaker. He seemed very ecstatic. Then he left. Allen was left to do what he wanted and only came down for food. That was another problem that was quickly arising. Allen was used to being able to eat his fill. With this family he tried to hold himself back, although there were times where his self-control wavered, and he ate more than ‘was necessary’. The first couple of times were fine so he let himself relax a bit more, one times too many.

“Stop eating like you’re starving to death. What are you a pig? You can’t be eating like that when we have guests over,” Mr. Whittaker scolded. Allen felt his cheeks flush in embarrassment, and he could hear Kevin snicker quietly from his place at the table. Mrs. Whittaker, who seemed more
relaxed and easily controlled by her husband, didn’t come to Allen’s aid and simply continued to
eat like she didn’t hear anything.

So, Allen went back to basically starving himself. It wasn’t that he wasn’t eating. He was. He just
was not eating enough to keep up with his rapid metabolism and it was beginning to take its toll.
Sleep became harder because of hunger pangs. He was even feeling a bit nauseous from not eating
like his body was demanding him to. He was beginning to lose energy and become skinnier as his
body tried to use up other resources to keep up with energy demands.

The man kept coming back as well, interested in helping Allen to hone in on his singing talent.
However, these sessions were beginning to get longer and more rigorous and Allen noted that they
were practicing certain songs more than once. It was later that he found out (by the singing teacher
who accidentally let it slip out), against his consent, Mr. and Mrs. Whittaker signed him up for
some singing competitions that involved cash prizes. Oh. So, the man kept coming back, every
day, and Allen felt himself grow more and more weary due to hunger and lack of sleep. He began
to hate the song choices and began to hate getting up to sing. He did it though because he was
afraid of what his ‘parents’ would do if he didn’t.

Two weeks passed. Allen was losing weight. He began to become more and more self-conscious of
how much he ate, especially when the Whittaker’s began to entertain these guests he was hearing
about. It didn’t help that even with his efforts to cut down on his eating, Mr. Whittaker still stared
at him in disapproval. Allen also found some of their guests were quite creepy. One in particular
whom Allen found out was his uncle. His uncle took a particular liking to him, but not in the whole
‘family connectedness way’. Allen felt creepy vibes emanating from him and the guy seemed a bit
too handsy for Allen’s liking. He always wanted Allen to sit on his lap and though Allen refused at
first, Mr. Whittaker scolded him for being rude, and to avoid his glare Allen began to accept the
requests. On those days Allen showered longer and took more time to scrub his entire body clean.
There was a time he tried to follow Allen upstairs, so whenever he was over, Allen forced himself
(much to his displeasure) to stay downstairs until he left.

It wasn’t uncommon for Allen to have nightmares in the first place, but due to the physical strains
his body was taking, he was experiencing them more often. There were times he’d shoot up in bed
in a cold sweat, silent. Those were times where he wouldn’t get into trouble. However, there were
times where he relived Mana’s death, which always made him scream and cry out into the night,
especially during a thunderstorm. That got him into trouble. The first time Mr. Whittaker stormed
into his room, looking around for an intruder. After seeing none, he stalked away, yelling at Allen
to be quiet and that people were sleeping. However, as the nightmares became more common there
was more yelling which Allen could only curl up against and apologize through his tears as Tim
hid away.

Singing practice was getting more brutal and Allen was having a hard time staying awake and
keeping his energy going throughout the song. Mrs. Whittaker noticed this and made him a little
concoction to ‘wake him up’. It sort of tasted like a soda but weirder and a little bit nastier. Either
way it really got Allen pumped up, but not in the usual sugar highs he experienced. This pumped
up feeling took away the fun of being in a sugar high, it was like someone turned the dial up too
high and Allen felt like he was going insane. He tried to hide it though and tried to keep doing what
they expected him to keep doing. However, this magical juice also had some symptoms with it that
Allen didn’t like and became a bit hard to hide.

It made Allen not hungry, which was already a problem because he was beginning to lose weight.
It made him feel nauseous sometimes and there were a couple times Allen had to stop and run off
to vomit. If he wasn’t nauseous, it made his stomach hurt, made him need to pee more or gave him
a headache. It also made Allen more panicky. He was quite familiar with panic attacks and when
he knew he was about to have one. Usually his go to was to go to Cross and have him coach him through it. If he was at school he’d go to the bathroom and call him. His go to method was of course, gone, so Allen relied on his own willpower and imagining Cross coaching him through it in his head. It made it even more difficult for him to sleep at night which only restarted the vicious cycle.

After almost a week on the ‘magic juice’, as Mrs. Whittaker called it, Allen began to fight back. He couldn’t take the symptoms anymore. That’s when he got to see her bad side. She would grab Allen and fight with him, forcing him to drink the nasty stuff. Least to say, with his energy levels the way they were, Allen didn’t fight back much. Later on, he’d find that he began to crave the stuff she was giving him and accept the symptoms along with it to get his fix.

Days began to pass in a blur and before Allen knew it, he’d been here for a month. The new school year was to start in another month or so and Allen wasn’t sure if he was going to be able to handle it. He also had his first singing competition coming up in just a few days as well. Allen was now used to the daily routine of things. He’d wake up, take that magical concoction, proceed to practice with his singing teacher for five hours, eat (or at least try to), go upstairs and lay on his bed (sometimes nap if he was able to), try to eat again, go back to his room and sleep before doing it all over again. There were times where he would be yelled at or nitpicked during the day, Allen would try to change his behavior to avoid being yelled at, but somehow there would be something else for him to get yelled at. There were events that happened to which Allen could not pinpoint a single day to…things just seemed so blurry.

A couple of events that stood out to Allen were these…

The first one involved Allen having repetitive nightmares for five days in a row. The first two nights Mr. Whittaker would come in. Yell at him to shut up. Go back to his room and sleep. Same old same old. The third night Mr. Whittaker had a belt in his hand and proceeded to hit Allen with it repetitively for god knows how long, Allen couldn’t remember. All he remembered was curling up and trying to take it as quietly as possible. The fourth night was like the third night. The fifth night was torture.

“I’ve just about had enough of you Red,” Mr. Whittaker growled as he grabbed Allen’s arm roughly and dragged him downstairs and to the basement. He flipped on a couple of light switches as he went, “If you can’t be quiet then I’ll just put you in a place where we don’t have to hear you!”

“I’m s-sorry I’m sorry I’m sorry,” Allen choked out breathlessly, seeking forgiveness. He didn’t mean to be this way. He couldn’t help it.

“Sit!” the man yelled and roughly threw Allen onto a steel bench, “You’re going to stay here for tonight! If you move a muscle, I will make you pay. I will give you something to cry about Red!”

Allen nodded numbly, flinching as the man pointed his fat finger at Allen. Then the man left the basement, flicking off the lights as he went. Allen heard him stomp up the stairs and flinched when he heard the door slam, leaving him in the cold basement for the night. Allen sniffled, his bottom lip trembling before he broke. He was scared of being too loud though so he tried to choke back as many sobs as he could. Timcanpy, who zoomed after Mr. Whittaker and managed to be stealthy enough to get into the basement, pressed up against Allen’s face. Tim tried to wipe away his tears and managed to do so, although messily. There came a point in time where Allen really had to go to the bathroom, but he was scared to leave the basement, so he sat on the bench and crossed his legs, willing himself to try to hold it. He wondered if it was almost morning yet. He couldn’t tell. The basement didn’t have any windows.
Allen held it for what felt like eternity, until the pain was just too great. With a choked sob he let go and it was after he relieved himself that he wondered how much trouble he was going to be in when Mr. Whittaker returned. This event stood out more than the others not because of how disgusting and useless he felt, but because he felt like an animal. If being stripped away of your name, being called Red was not enough, if being used for your talents for someone’s else’s profit was not enough, then this was enough for Allen to feel like an animal. He had no control over his life. It’s been a long while since Allen felt this way…

Allen slept in his soiled clothing as much as he could before Mr. Whittaker returned, flicking on the lights and blinding him. A rude awakening. Allen barely opened his eyes before his head reeled painfully to the side as his cheek exploded in pain.

“What are you? A fucking baby!? Only babies soil themselves! Only babies wet the bed (sadly a habit that was returning after he thought he conquered it so long ago)! Get the hell up! Go clean yourself before your singing coach gets here! I better not hear another word out of you!” Mr. Whittaker yelled.

Allen squeaked out a quick ‘yes sir’ before doing just that. Timcanpy hid himself under Allen’s shirt as he made his way into the bathroom to shower. Allen practiced with his coach and proceeded to sleep the rest of the day and night.

His first competition day quickly approached of which Allen could not remember much of. He took that ‘magic juice’ they drove to the competition in silence with Allen staring out the window. Wow it’s been awhile since he’s been outside and saw people hasn’t it, was a thought he remembered having. Then they were there and other contestants who sung and went by in a blur. Allen wished he was able to pay attention to them, but he was too busy calming his racing heart. Then it was his turn and even though the only thing he could remember was getting on stage, he apparently did good because there was a lot of applause. Allen didn’t care about that too much though. He took off the stage as soon as he could to run to the bathroom to heave out his guts which was just another part of his routine it seemed like.

Allen took home first prize. The Whittaker’s seemed thrilled and even had a feast to celebrate. Allen couldn’t enjoy it though because his stomach was upset. There were some perks though, Mr. Whittaker was in a good mood, so he left Allen alone. There wasn’t any scolding which was nice for once. That’s all Allen could remember…well then there was the part where he trudged upstairs, collapsed on his bed and fell into a deep sleep.

~

It’s been a month. A long, arduous month without Allen. Anita and Cross spent the first week without him sitting around the house, lost and bored. They didn’t know what to do with themselves. The second week Anita tried to coax Cross out of the house who only wanted to sulk. They went out for coffee, went to the park, went to see a movie, anything to keep busy though it was one-sided. Anita seemed desperate to stay busy. Cross just wanted to stay home and in bed. The third week Anita dragged Cross over to Tiedoll’s house and tried to get him to socialize with his friends. That didn’t work out well at all. The kids seemed to have taken it rather hard it seems. They still played together but it didn’t have quite the same energy. Lavi’s usual energy was completely gone and it was clear that just by looking at him, the kid hasn’t slept very well at all. His best friend was gone, and he was missing him sorely.

Link didn’t look much better but instead of being down and out Link was desperately trying to find something to do. There was so much freaking food in his house he was practically giving it away to anyone who would take it. It still wasn’t enough though. Everyone said his goods were fantastic,
tasty, amazing, all the usual stuff, but that wasn’t what Link was looking for. Allen was always all over his food of course, but he had more creative comments. He gave Link ideas and advice on what to use next time. Plus, Link was missing having Allen wrapped around him like a koala bear talking his ear off about music or whatever is on T.V.

There was something positive in all this though, Lavi and Link have taken a certain bond with each other though in Allen’s absence. Lavi sorely missed his cuddle time with Allen which he sought begrudgingly with Link and Link sought someone to eat the things he made. So, the two of them tried to help each other out. Lavi didn’t have Allen’s appetite but any means, but he delivered any leftovers to Kanda, Alma, and Lenalee if he couldn’t finish them. In response Link gave Lavi his cuddle time, though it was a little awkward at first. Lavi had to admit though, Link was fun to have intellectual conversations with.

Cross took it worse of all though. He didn’t go back to drinking or anything, but he began to stop showing up to work. His days were spent staring up at the ceiling or sleeping. Sometimes he’d pick up his guitar and play something, but quickly grow bored of it. It was meaningless without Allen there trying to figure out what song he was playing, or him singing along with him. Cross was in the biggest depression Tiedoll had ever seen him in. Everyone else was trying to move forward. Cross was staying back. He couldn’t move forward.

After the fourth week something sparked him up a bit though and it was thanks to Tiedoll who happened to be watching the very competition Allen was entered in. Marie came over to the house to hang out with his younger siblings and Tiedoll wasn’t paying too much attention to the T.V. however, Marie pulled him out of his thoughts when he gasped.

“Hey is that Allen!?” Marie blurted out happily. He always loved to hear his student’s voice and thought he wouldn’t hear it again, at least not for a long long while.

“Allen!?” Alma shouted and ran over to the t.v. he almost faceplanted had it not been for Kanda grabbing his shirt to keep him up, who also rushed over at the sound of moyashi’s name. Daisya even rushed in, but his grinning face soon turned serious.

Tiedoll put down the sketchbook he was holding and looked up at the T.V. to look at the child up on stage. His eyes widened in shock. That was Allen…but definitely not the Allen they knew. He knew Allen was skinny, but he was never that skinny! He looked tired and his eyes were glassy and bloodshot. Maybe it was just Tiedoll being Tiedoll, always worrying over his kids and his friend’s kids. Always on the lookout for something wrong. Maybe he was over reacting, but when he looked at Allen, he knew something was very very wrong.

Tiedoll picked up the remote and made the T.V. go back to when Allen first started his performance, then he hit record and let it play. The boy was shaking awfully. His hair looked limp and he looked a sickly pale. He managed to do his performance well, even though he sure didn’t look like he could. Tiedoll watched Allen stare off blankly into the crowd, his eyes lifeless as they applauded, and then watched as he quickly walked off stage a hand to his mouth.

“Dad something is wrong with him,” Alma was the first to state, his bottom lip trembling. That wasn’t Allen.

“How the fuck is Red? Did they change his name?” Kanda growled out. Why the hell did moyashi look that way. He looked so sick.

“Red Whittaker is an awful name,” Daisya agreed. Marie frowned at the seriousness of the situation. He knew Allen could fake a performance, even if he wasn’t feeling well. It must be bad enough if he’s actually showing how sick he is.
Tiedoll picked up his phone and dialed Cross’s number.

Cross lazily picked it up, “Tiedoll I already told you, I’m not interested in fucking going out somewhere tomorrow.”

“It’s not about that Cross. It’s about Allen. Get your ass over here now.”

Cross’s eyes widened and his stomach sank sickeningly.

~

Cross and Anita rushed over to Tiedoll’s house as soon as they could and watched the replay of Allen’s performance. Anita’s hands flew to her mouth. Cross was downright pissed. Red Whittaker? They changed his fucking name!? The name Mana gave him!? Cross managed to save his words until after his performance.

“I’m bringing that boy home. He needs to come home. Now. As soon as possible. I don’t give a shit I will kill whoever stands in my way,” Cross growled.

“Cross don’t be rash. We don’t have proof.”

But Cross was in rage mode.

“One month! One fucking month and now he looks like this! Tiedoll he looks like a fucking druggy! Do you see his eyes!? I swear to God if I find out someone has been drugging my son up, I will go on a murderous rampage. I will gut the ones responsible like a fucking fish, don’t you fucking stop me!”

Tiedoll moved over to his friend, ready to restrain him if things got ugly. He understood how intense parental instincts got and there were many times Tiedoll nearly lost his cool towards those who dared to hurt his sons.

“Cross, I understand that. We have to be careful though. We have to execute this as smoothly as possible and we need evidence. Maybe he’s just not readjusting well…”

“They changed his name! Did you see that bruise on his cheek? It’s just enough that you can see it. Allen has never been that skinny, even when Mana was taking care of him!” Cross raged. Anita was crying.

“I know that Cross. but these are his birth parents. If we’re going to get him back, we need solid evidence, not just one video,” Tiedoll advised in a calm voice in hopes he could calm his friend down.

“Oh, I’ll give you fucking evidence. Timcanpy is all we need,” Cross growled out, his red eyes taking on a murderous, fiendish glint. A bit of the old Cross has resurfaced. Tiedoll didn’t know whether to be thrilled or scared.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry if you’re last name is Whittaker. I was trying to find rich people sounding names and that was the only one that didn't make me cringe super hard. Next part will be here soon. After this train wreck I shall go back to the suggestions and begin writing off of
those again. This fucking mad me cry. I hate myself for writing this lol. Sorry for parts that may be confusing I was writing this sometimes until 4 in the morning. When I get into a mood it happens. Enjoy!
Allen Gets Taken Away Pt. 2

Chapter Summary

Allen is with his new family but things are definitely not what it seems. Cross is making hell freeze over and Lavi does what he does best to help Allen get back home.

Chapter Notes

Pt. 2 my dudes. Triggers include: child abuse, anorexia, Cross being super fucking pissed and breaking Tiedoll's door, Lavi being a fucking genius. There is also a little Link x Lavi thrown in here.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before Allen knew it, it was nearly time for school to start back up. Allen was running on steam and his moods shifted from panic/nervousness to feeling numb or depressed. He had one more competition right before school started and the coaching sessions were getting longer, he swore it. Apparently, this one was higher stakes which meant more practicing for Allen. Allen who was already wore out had another new problem and that was the fear of using the bathroom. As for how that started, he had Mrs. Whittaker to thank.

Apparently, for whatever reason, she thought Allen had used the toilet wrong and that it was dirty. She dragged Allen by his ear towards the bathroom one day and towards the toilet pointing down at the toilet seat.

“When you make a mess, you clean it up!” She screamed.

Mess? All Allen could see was a perfectly, normal, pristine toilet seat.

“I-I don’t understand-“

“When you go to the bathroom don’t leave such a mess! Other people use it to you know! Absolutely disgusting! You can’t do anything right!” she screamed before leaving Allen with his so called ‘mess’.

Allen was absolutely confused and chalked it up to her being a bit batty because of too much stress. Except it happened over and over and over again. Sometimes he didn’t even last use the bathroom and she’d still drag him in and yell at him over leaving a mess and how boys were disgusting. Allen wouldn’t have minded, he was already used to being yelled at on a daily basis, but then she began to become physically violent.

“How many times have I told you!? It shouldn’t be that hard!” she screamed after slapping Allen across the face for the…how many times was it this week? She scratched him this time around to...that was going to require more make-up.
“I’m sorry,” Allen muttered. He wasn’t sorry though. He was in his apathetic moods.

“I know you’ve been slacking off with your singing coach to! You’re never going to get anywhere in life if you slack off. Not everyone has your natural born gift!” she continued to scream. Then she grabbed his chin roughly and forced him to look into her eyes,” Look at me when I’m talking to you!”

“You should be grateful that we found you and took you in. You should be grateful for the things you have, not every child has their own singing coach, their own bed, or live in a house like this! You are a spoiled brat! Clean this up!” She shouted before stomping off. Allen looked over at the toilet. Seeing absolutely nothing once again. Sure, Anita would complain sometimes about the boys having a bad aim (Cross would say something dirty like how she wasn’t complaining last night when they were having sex about him having a bad aim) but she never took it to the extreme. It was just a thing she had to put up with being around boys (although Cross and Allen always tried to be considerate to the only female they had in the house).

So, Allen began to have frequent accidents, mostly on days where he was already wired up on whatever that bitch gave him, and he would panic over the most trivial things. He would always try to hide them though. It was already bad enough he was being punished over something nonexistent as it was. There were days he wouldn’t be able to hide it and got punished for it. Cross already threatened Allen to ‘put the fear of God into onto him’ but Allen felt like he already got a taste of God through the Whittaker’s punishments. It wasn’t all hitting, sometimes they’d get creative and send him away without food, sometimes they’d lock him in the basement, there was a time when Mr. Whittaker got really creative and threw a diaper at him telling him that if he thought he was a baby he should put it on. That was a little humiliating, especially when it was in front of his guests that day. However, the Whittaker’s didn’t know Timcanpy was hidden throughout the house and recording them in their abusive acts. There were times Allen didn’t know it either.

Kevin stayed mostly away from Allen, letting his parents make his life a living hell which Allen appreciated. Even if the kid did hate him. Allen figured it was out of jealousy reasons because he didn’t seem to do anything. He was just sort of there. He didn’t have a singing coach, he didn’t have anything in particular he really took part in from what Allen could see. The Whittaker’s also seemed quite disconnected from their son…although they seemed disconnected from a lot of things like being a decent human being. He hadn’t seen them show any kind of affection to Kevin other than buying him anything he wanted to keep him away which worked wonderfully.

There were times Allen got his revenge. He stole money from Mrs. Whittaker’s purse (although this was mostly to add up his own funds for his plan on escape), he snuck into Mr. Whittaker’s office once and unscrewed the screws in his chair just right so it would break out from under him when he sat down. If they sent him away without food, he’d sneak down and climb up onto the counters to grab food from the cupboards. Never anything in excess…after all he couldn’t be found out. Just handfuls here and there of chips, cookies, cereal pieces, anything he could get his hands on. Granola bars were a godsend. It was on one of these nights Allen found something that royally screwed up his escape plan…

The front door was locked and upon closer scrutiny he could see a security camera mounted outside of the entrance way. So, they have a security camera…did that mean they also had an alarm system set to go off if someone leaves at night? Or did that mean whenever Allen decided to take the chance, he had to book it and try to make it as far away from the house as possible before disguising himself (after all he can’t walk out in his disguise otherwise, they’d know what to look for). They really came prepared, didn’t they? It made Allen question just what exactly Cross did when he was younger…after all it seemed they thought Allen’s misbehavior stemmed mostly from being under Cross’s household…
Cross… Allen really wish he could hear his voice right now. Allen didn’t even know what he’d tell him. He wondered if Cross forgot about him or if he was working feverishly for a way to get Allen back home. He wondered how Lavi was doing and if he found someone new to blabber to of all the new things, he learned in a recent book he’s read. He wondered if Link found a new dance partner, the thought of that made Allen’s heart hurt. Did Kanda find a new beansprout? He hoped not. Even though he loathed the nickname moyashi, that was his nickname and he couldn’t imagine someone else being called it. What about Lenalee and Alma? Was Alma still as bubbly as ever? Allen hoped so because well that was what made Alma, Alma. Was Lenalee relying on her brother again to help her with her hair? I mean, Komui could do it but God sometimes the way he did Lenalee’s pigtails was atrocious! (Allen never fixed them until after Lenalee was away from Komui because they didn’t want to break his heart. It’s become quite a bonding thing for Komui to put his little sister’s hair up in pig tails. Allen just fixed them, so they stayed for the rest of the day). Especially when the guy was sleep deprived and on the verge of insanity. Did anyone miss him or where they carrying on like nothing happened? Allen didn’t know if it made him feel better to imagine everyone else carrying on with their lives or being broken up since he left. As he laid in bed curled around Timcanpy, he thought of these things and imagined his friends going through their daily lives.

~

“I miss Allen,” Lavi whimpered for the millionth time, his head tucked under Link’s chin as the two of them went through their usual routine of trying to take the place of the other person’s void where Allen was supposed to be.

Link hummed in agreement, resting his chin on Lavi’s messy, red hair. The two of them were watching some boring ass documentary on god only knows what, Link tuned on several minutes ago. That’s something he’s been doing quite a lot lately…

“This isn’t the same…” Lavi whined, his green eyes laced in pain. He moved around to look at Link with a pout.

Link sighed, “You’re right but we can only do what we can…”

“Have you decided whose, going to be your new dance partner?”

“No…I don’t think I even want one. Maybe I should quit dance-“

“Dude Allen wouldn’t want that…”

“Well what does it matter? He’s not here anymore. Besides, like you should talk, you’ve been hanging out here everyday since Allen left. I’m not saying I don’t enjoy your company, but it’s not like we’ve been doing anything. All we’ve been doing was sitting here watching stupid documentaries!”

“Well fine! Let’s mix it up a little! Spice things up a bit!” Lavi shot back moodily as he picked up the remote and began flipping through channels. He landed on a channel that was broadcasting a relatively local singing competition.

“Let’s watch people sing and try to sing along with them or make fun of judges, I don’t care! Just do something!” Lavi suggested, but his irritation was quickly replaced by shock, concern, and joy. Was that…no way…was that Allen up there!? (Yayyy plot convenience!)

“Allen…?” Link breathed, his attention locked on to the small boy on stage that began to sing and seemed on the verge of collapsing. His voice sounded so weak and hoarse, not at all like Allen’s
usually powerful and emotional singing. Allen looked like he was skin and bones. Link was quite familiar with how fragile Allen felt underneath his hands, he was familiar with feeling his boniness when they practiced or when Allen decided Link would be his designated chair whenever he was around. This was totally different though...this was someone who was sick...who was starving...malnourished. His eyes were hollow, and Allen was shaking like the leaves on a tree during a thunderstorm.

“Allen!” Lavi yelped and ran closer to Link’s television. On any other occasion Link would tell him sitting that close to the t.v. wasn’t good on his eyes, but he was too much in shock at what he was seeing to care.

“What on earth happened to you?” Lavi whispered as he watched Allen finish his performance and teeter backwards a bit like he was about to fall. Allen managed to catch himself though and exited off the stage, his head down and his hair hanging in a lifeless curtain around his face.

“Link…” Lavi said, turning around to look at the blonde, tears were rolling his cheeks, but his green eyes were lit up with a flame that Link hadn’t seen for two months,” Can I use your computer?”

Link blinked at the odd request but allowed the red-head access as he walked off to make some tea, slowly trying to piece together the mess he just saw. When he went upstairs to his room with a second cup for Lavi, Link found the young man feverishly looking up information and writing it down on a piece of paper he scrounged around for.

“Sorry, should’ve explained more,” Lavi blurted out.

“Nonsense,” Link said as he set the cup next to Lavi, “Are you finding anything good?”

“Yes and no. I found out where his birth family is, their names, and what they do for a living. The guy runs a wealthy business and his wife seems to be a stay at home mom though she sells paintings and things she knits to make money. They have a son named Kevin that goes to a private school in the city. Apparently, there’s also been articles out with people interviewing them about Allen...they’ve been saying something about losing him when he was kidnapped as a baby and finding him again. You know the typical ‘miracle story’ bull shit but something smells fishy to me,” Lavi explained as his eyes scanned page after page of information.

“How so?”

“I’m looking through past articles that have been written to see if there was ever a story or something talking about a Whittaker baby being kidnapped. So far, I’m not finding anything…”

“So, you think they lied?”

“Yeah. Apparently, that’s not the only dirt I got on them. Mrs. Whittaker was a prostitute back in the day. There’s no doubt that she’s Allen’s birth mother. Ya know how sometimes articles run a segment talking about all the babies born during a particular week or day? Well there definitely is a Red here…but not a Whittaker…he wasn’t even born on Christmas.”

“When was he born.”

“June 9th. Allen is a summer baby. Not a Christmas one. I’m surprised they didn’t run an article on his arm, this family seems to love the spotlight, especially if it involves sympathy. Guess they thought their son having a cursed arm would destroy their reputation though. Mrs. Whittaker’s last name at the time was Kelly. She must’ve married Mr. Whittaker sometime after Allen’s birth and
decided to take his name.”

“So, his real name is Red?”

“Yeah, right? Who would name their kid a simple color like that? Gotta say though it’s kind of catchy right, Red Kelly? That last name is Irish you know, maybe Allen was a leprechaun this whole time and we didn’t even know. He’s mischievous like one,” Lavi laughed. Even through all this awful shit he was sifting through of what the Whittaker’s have done over the years, he had to say, it was interesting to learn about his best friend’s past.

“Yeah…it does…wait what are you doing?” Link asked, seeing Lavi attempt to log into Mr. Whittaker’s business or at least that’s what it looked like to Link.

“Hacking into his business.”

“Hold on! I said you could use my laptop, not possibly give it a virus!”

“Oh my god Link you worry too much. You’re not going to get a virus and if you do, I can fix it. I’ve hacked into plenty of things before especially the school to change my grade. Haha, they didn’t even know what hit them.”

“You did what!”?

“It wasn’t that bad alright! The teacher gave me a zero on an assignment I turned it and wouldn’t believe me when I told her I did. It’s not like I’m one of those people Link. I’m not a cheater. I just make things right.”

“S-Still! Ugh…whatever we’ll talk about this later,” Link said as he walked over to grab a spare chair to sit beside Lavi.

“Link, I can do this myself…”

“I’m sure you can, but this deals with Allen and as far as I’m concerned, we’re both his friends so this deals with me to. Besides, two heads are better than one,” Link responded as he picked up a pad of paper and a pen, intending to take notes.

“Allright then. Let’s get to work.”

“Think we’re going to have enough information here to work with?”

“Plenty,” Lavi said with a smirk.

Meanwhile Cross was doing his own research and keeping tabs on Allen. With each time he saw Allen, he grew more and more desperate to collect as much evidence as he could. The kid looked even sicker and Cross knew deep down that they were doing something to Allen. Sure, the kid could have re-adjustment issues, but no parent in their right mind would let a child go that far without a proper intervention. They sure as hell wouldn’t shove their child in a competition looking that sick, although Cross probably was not one to talk. He should’ve pulled Allen out during that choir competition when he looked paler than a ghost and was running a fever, but Allen begged and pleaded, and Cross let him do it. He had to rest before and immediately afterwards he forced the brat to rest though, whether he wanted to or not.

He was surprised when he received a phone call from Bookman’s kid that night.
“Hello?”

“Cross?” a squeaky, still hadn’t hit puberty voice asked. Why is a kid calling him?

“Yeah….hello?” Cross asked, unable to figure out who this kid was over the phone.

“It’s Junior,” Lavi chirped out his nickname after hearing the confusion on the other end. Oh. Was that really Junior!? He sounded a hell of a lot different on the phone.

“Junior!? The fuck? Why are you calling? Does Bookman know you’re still up? Do you know how late it is-“

“Yeah yeah yeah, let’s talk about that later,” Lavi butted in, “Anyways, Two Spots and I- Shut up man I’m on the phone- anyways we saw Allen’s performance on the t.v. and I did some research on his birth parents! We have to get him out of there, have you seen him!? I found some dirt on them that we could use-“

“Hold up Junior. We’re not trying to get ‘dirt’ on them. No offense kid, but you guys should be staying out of this. Let the adults handle this. We’re not trying to blackmail them, we’re trying to find evidence that they’ve been abusing Allen and not taking care of him,” Cross interrupted, thinking that Lavi dug up childish, trivial things that would make them look bad instead of anything that could land them into enough trouble to be investigated.

“It’s not like that at all! We found out Mr. Whittaker has a business and has been stealing money from his employees. Not only that, but I think he’s been evading taxes as well,” Lavi stated matter of factly. Cross was amazed, proud, and a bit concerned with how Lavi knew all this.

“S-Seriously?”

“Yeah!”

“And how did you manage to find this out?”

“I’ll tell you only if you don’t tell Bookman,” Lavi said.

“He hacked into Mr. Whittaker’s banking account and business webpage,” Link blurted out. apparently Lavi was on speaker phone.

“What the hell Two Spots!?“

“What? It’s for a good cause? Besides you’re using my computer!”

“You managed to hack into all that?” Cross sputtered out. This kid knew how to hack into shit? I mean, he knew the kid breathed and processed information, but he just figured the kid was just smart and observant. He didn’t think the kid grabbed his information via hacking. Hell, he didn’t even know Bookman had a fucking computer for the kid to hone in on his hacking skills! He was impressed, but also scared to know what kind of shit he had on Cross.

“I see. Fine, huh! You can thank me later! Just let me know where I can forward all my information to,” Lavi beamed, Cross could imagine the red-head puffing out his chest.

“Damn, remind me to call you up when we need a good hacker. Thanks kid,” Cross smirked, it probably wasn’t enough to get Allen back at the moment, but it was something to go off of. It was enough to land his birth father in jail…
Allen’s throat was killing him. He lay in the dark basement, pressing his burning cheek to the cool floor. He lost the competition. He didn’t win first, second, third, judges’ choice, nothing. Absolutely nothing. Sure, there were always going to be days where you won and you lost, especially when it came to competitions. It sucked, but Allen could get over it. What he couldn’t get over was the Whittaker’s reaction to him losing. It wasn’t even his fault. He couldn’t help that he was sick.

His throat was killing him since last night and when he woke up, he knew he wouldn’t be able to perform the way he had practiced with his singing coach time and time again. It was a fool proof performance…Allen was just sick. It was going to happen eventually if his body’s condition had anything to say about it. When Allen got home, all he wanted to do was to curl up on his bed and sleep. He should’ve known it wouldn’t be that simple. The Whittaker’s were absolutely silent on the ride home. So quiet you could hear a pin drop. Allen could feel it in the air. They were unbelievably pissed at him.

Right as he walked into the entranceway, the front door slammed behind him, sealing his fate. Then the back of his shirt was grabbed, and Allen was literally lifted off the ground as Mr. Whittaker took him into the basement. Allen was thrown against the cold floor and he heard the sound of a belt unbuckling. Shit! Allen looked around, in a haze, trying to find a place to scramble away to, but his body was moving slow. He didn’t have any time to run and when he heard his belt whiz by his head, Allen immediately did the next best thing and curled up into a tight, little ball.

“How dare you make us look like such fools! Do you have any shame at all!?” the man hollered as he whipped Allen over and over again. Allen tried to stay as silent as possible, especially since his throat hurt but he found that to be quite difficult with how hard the man was whipping him with the belt.

Allen yelped as the leather hit over a particularly sensitive area on his back. He wouldn’t uncurl himself though. Protect yourself, Allen. You have to protect yourself. Just bite your tongue and bear it. He’ll go away soon. After God only knows how long, the whipping stopped and the man went back upstairs, breathing heavily. As he heard the man stomp upstairs and slam the door, Allen wished he would fall over and have a heart attack. Once he felt safe, Allen slowly uncurled himself and pressed his burning, wet cheek to the cool ground. Fever. He had a fever and he knew it.

Allen let the coolness of the floor seep into his body and lull him into sleep.

He wasn’t sure how long he was out, but Allen shot into full alertness when he heard the door open and the sound of heavy footsteps come down. He felt his stomach sink. He slowly sat up and as he did Mr. Whittaker grabbed him roughly by the arm and pulled him back upstairs. It took a little bit for his eyes to adjust, but when they did, he found he was being led back to his room. He was roughly shoved into it with a quick growl from Mr. Whittaker of ‘behave’ before his door was slammed behind him. Allen stayed on the ground for quite some time, only opening his eyes when he felt Timcanpy press himself against his face. His fever was still there, and he still felt like crap, but he was thankful to see the nap had helped.

He slowly got up and crawled into bed where he passed out once again.

It was then that Allen found out that winning competition equaled reward, or as close to a reward as one could get in a household like this. It seemed more like they were celebrating themselves and their wonderful plan of using Allen for their own self gain. If he lost a competition, he was severely punished.
Allen thought that he would be starting school again but a few days later he was confused to see Kevin getting ready to go to school and Allen being held back at the house. That wasn’t right. He was a child. He had to go to school. He wanted to go to school to get away from this hell hole! Getting out of this house gave Allen an opportunity he needed to try and escape! When he asked why he was not going to school as well he was given the answer of ‘only good boys go to school.’ Well that didn’t seem right. Cross said all boys had to go to school otherwise he’d break into their houses and scare them into going to school. It was against the law not to. They had other plans for him though. He still went through the same routine although some things have changed. He’d wake up, try to shove his wet bed linens in the washer if he had any, drink that juice, practice, eat, put his bed linens in the dryer, get yelled at, go upstairs to his room, get yelled at again, grab his bed linens from the dryer, stay in his room, get yelled at over something again, eat, get yelled at, shower, pretend to go to bed, go downstairs, steal food, go to his room, eat, talk to Timcanpy until he fell asleep. Repeat. Each time he’d be yelled at for something or another, sometimes hit, but it’s become such a daily occurrence Allen couldn’t pin point what it was anymore. It all just blurred. Allen was practically in a constant state of anxiety because he didn’t know what was going to trigger the Whittaker’s to yelling at him and when it was going to happen.

As days passed on Allen wondered when or if a cop was going to show up and take him to school himself. He prayed and hoped that they would, but they never showed up. Allen was stuck in this endless cycle that was slowly driving him mad. He was sure he was going mad because he began to see Cross laying down beside him in his bed or sitting beside it. He was even beginning to hear his voice, and not only his but even Lavi’s and Kanda’s. Soon it became a collective of voices that Allen would hear and they became more frequent.

The first time it happened Allen was resting on his bed after practice. He heard Cross call his name. Allen jolted upright, every nerve ending on high alert as he whipped his head around in search of Cross.

“Dad…?” Allen asked, feeling his heartbeat quicken in a hopeful little dance. Was it truly just his imagination? He could’ve sworn he was there…his voice sounded so real. His voice had disappeared but popped up again just as Allen was falling asleep.

“Allen…?”

Allen’s eyes snapped open and he swore he saw Cross right in front of him, smiling at him.

“Daddy!?” Allen yelped, lunging towards Cross. He wished he didn’t because was met his hands was nothing but the comforter on his bed.

 “…Dad?” Allen whimpered in confusion as big fat tears rolled down his cheeks. How dare his mind play such a nasty trick on him…”

As the voices and hallucinations became more frequent, Allen began to welcome them. If he saw Cross there, he didn’t move his hand to touch him, though he desperately wanted to. He knew he wasn’t real…but he still liked to have him there…even if this Cross didn’t say anything. Allen also began to talk to himself in his room, usually the conversation depended on whose voice Allen listened to. If Lavi happened to be he heard, he began to talk about things that Lavi liked, or he’d ask how Lavi was doing. If he missed him. If it was Kanda’s voice he heard, Allen would do the same thing or talk about his day. He’d tell Kanda he missed him, even if he was such a jerk sometimes. Allen laughed sometimes when he heard Kanda call him moyashi. Even the Kanda in his head still called him moyashi…it’s funny how a nickname, meant to be an insult could spark such joy in Allen during this time.

He loved it when he heard them call his name. Allen. Allen. Allen. Walker, Link mostly called
him that, a new addition to his collection of voices. Either way, he loved it. There were no yells of Red being aimed at him. He was hearing his real name again from the people he loved. Even if they were not real, it still gave Allen some peace to hear them. They were especially more frequent after Allen had a beating. He would hear Anita coo at him and call him ‘baby’, ‘sweetheart’ and if he imagined hard enough, he could imagine her petting his hair back. If he imagined hard enough, he could smell Lavi’s books. If he imagined hard enough, he could smell the smoky smell of Cross, he could smell Link’s baking and Kanda’s weird lotus flower shampoo (No, Allen wasn’t being creepy. Kanda just always smelled strongly of lotus flowers. Okay…although there were a few occasions that Allen, non-creepily smelled Kanda’s shampoo in their bathroom. It wasn’t creepy okay!?). These conversations never got too far. Sometimes Allen would be lucky enough to get a response, but all he actually heard was his name. It was Allen who kept up the conversations.

One morning, three in and a half month since Allen began to live with the Whittaker’s, Allen was caught talking to himself…well Lenalee. Lenalee’s voice just called out to him this morning and so far, Allen hadn’t had a conversation with her, so of course he was going to devote some of his time to her. Even if she wasn’t responding to him.

“Who are you talking to?” a childish voice asked. Allen blinked, pulled out of the conversation he was having with Lenalee to stare at Kevin who stared at Allen like he had just begun to speak in another language.

Allen opened his mouth to respond that he was talking with Lenalee but realized that would make him sound crazy.

“No one,” Allen finally settled. Kevin shook his head at him in disbelief.

“You lost your bloody mind you freak.”

Allen watched as Kevin stood there for a few more moments, before slowly walking away to go to school.

“Wow Lenalee…that’s the first time he ever spoke to me since being here…” was all Allen could say.

~

Just as Allen was getting to his fourth month of being at the Whittaker’s he had won quite a number of competitions. Allen somewhat felt proud of them, but he was mostly just glad that it meant that they would stay out of his hair for a while. His mental health was degrading rapidly though and even with the special juice Mrs. Whittaker gave him, he was still absolutely exhausted. He didn’t do much after practice at all. He just slept and slept, talked to his friends and family…well hallucination wise. He managed to stop losing weight so quickly, but it was still steadily declining. It was easy for Allen to get winded and his practices were suffering because of it. He just couldn’t get enough air in his lungs it seemed. His chest hurt and it was easy to make himself dizzy. Panic attacks were always the norm since Mrs. Whittaker gave him that juice, but nowadays just having one completely wore Allen out for the rest of the day. It was becoming harder to stop them to. He was, in every sense of the word, a mess.

Days just blurred and Allen couldn’t quite remember what day it was or how long he was here. It felt like an eon. Allen was having a harder time telling reality from hallucination and there was quite a few times Allen screwed up and corrected people that his name was Allen Walker. If they were at a competition, the Whittaker’s would laugh it off and cover up his remark. When they were alone, they were less than pleased at having Allen talk back to them about his name not being Red. Allen forgot that he was supposed to be ‘Red’ around the Whittakers.
Mr. Whittaker made sure to frequently remind Allen what his real name was, which left him panting hard, his face a dark red, and defeated. No matter how much he beat Allen. No matter how many times he slapped him, whipped him, yelled at him, Allen wouldn’t accept his name being Red.

“Your name is Red!” Mr. Whittaker would yell and slap Allen hard across the face.

Allen would scream back,” No it’s Allen!”

“What’s your name!”

“Allen!”

Wrong! Smack!

“What’s your name!?”

“Allen!”

Wrong again. Smack!

Over and over and over and over until Mr. Whittaker was out of breath and Allen was nearly unconscious. It was like a new game they invented. It was after the first time Mr. Whittaker did this to him, that Allen finally relented and let Timcanpy go. It was late at night and during a particularly lucid period of time, Allen decided that he couldn’t go on like this any longer. He needed Timcanpy to go and get help. Allen knew he should’ve done this earlier, but he was afraid to part with the only real, touchable thing he had from his home. Timcanpy was the only thing that kept him sane during the entire thing and now he was letting him go, hoping that he would get the help that Allen needed. Being at competitions, people seeing how skinny he was, how tired he looked, was not enough. He needed to do more.

So, late at night, Allen walked over to his room’s window which could only go up a certain amount. It wasn’t enough for Allen to fit through, but it was enough for Tim.

“Tim. I’m going to miss you, but I need to do this for me. I need you to go home first. Go see Cross. Check up on them for me and let them know what’s going on, okay? We shouldn’t both have to suffer here anymore. If something were to happen to me, you’d be trapped in this nasty house forever,” Allen said with a soft smile.

Timcanpy fluttered nervously in Allen’s hands, not wanting to leave his companion alone in such a devastating state.

“It’ll be okay. We’re going to escape from this place, but I need you to help me out. I need a disguise Tim and you’re the only one who can get out of here right now. When you come back, can you bring me a wig? I think I can break into their room and steal some of the old lady’s make-up to. I need you to do this for me Tim. I’ll be okay. I’ll be on my best behavior and they won’t have any reason to hurt me,” Allen reassured the little golem who still seemed a little unsure with his plan.

After fluttering up to nuzzle against Allen one last time, the little golem took off into the night. Leaving Allen by his lonesome.

~

Then came Allen’s next competition but this one was a lot different than the previous ones. Allen
was beyond exhausted. Last night was his first day and night without Timcanpy and he found it quite difficult to sleep without the golem pressed up against his cheek or resting in his arms. Allen had the worst time getting out of bed. His vision was blurry, and he felt woozy. Of course, Allen desired to do the very best he could, after all, if he didn’t the Whittaker’s would make his life a worse living hell than it already was. So, Allen got dressed, ignoring the fact he could clearly make out his spine as he changed his shirt or how skinny his stomach was, or how his hip bones protruded unnaturally. It was like he was slowly becoming a skeleton.

Then Allen slowly made his way downstairs, gripping onto the banister tightly as he made his way down. Something was very off…well more so than usual. Maybe he was just too tired. All he had to do was make it through his performance and then he’d be able to go home and replenish his body of sleep. As the day went on though Allen really felt bad. He found it difficult to stand up by himself and found himself leaning against walls or taking every opportunity to sit down. The lights looked weird to and Allen developed a headache. This was bad. This was different from being tired.

It felt like eons before it was Allen’s turn to perform but when it was his turn he shakily stood up, ignoring the fuzziness of the lights, ignoring the way his head pounded. Allen slowly got on stage and stood in front of the microphone. As he looked up at the lights, Allen saw his vision turn black.

When Allen came to, he was at the hospital and the Whittaker’s were nowhere to be found.

~

Cross was quite surprised when Timcanpy showed up, well surprised didn’t really cut it. Basically, Cross was off driving around town in his cop car when he noticed something glinting in the sky. He didn’t think too much of it…that is…until the glinting thing came closer…and closer…well damn it sure was moving pretty fucking fast….Cross slowed down and squinted at the little thing…it had wings…a tail…

Smack!

“FUCKING CHRIST!” Cross shouted in surprise as the little thing landed rather roughly on his windshield like a random bug flying into the windshield when you were speeding down the highway. This wasn’t a random bug though…this was…

“Timcanpy!? The fuck are you doing here!? You gave me a heart attack! You’re supposed to be with Allen!” Cross said, immediately going to roll down his window to grab Tim by the tail and bring him into the car so he could properly yell at him.

Timcanpy growled irritatingly at Cross, clearly not here to play games. He was on a mission! After the initial surprise, Cross turned to worry. Why was Timcanpy here? Did something really bad happen to Allen? Was he severely hurt? In the hospital. Dead? Timcanpy managed to maneuver himself out of Cross’s grasp and flew in front of his face, clearly in a state of emergency.

“Fuck…” Cross muttered as Timcanpy opened his mouth, cutting to the chase. He wasn’t going to like what he was about to see.

~

“Oh, I am going to fucking murder those sons of bitches!” Cross seethed, slamming Tiedoll’s door wide open hard enough that it broke the door. He was beyond pissed off. Tiedoll was sure he could see the man’s hair begin to move like flames with how angry he was. Three veins stuck up in the
man’s forehead and his face was a dark shade of red.

“Cross what on earth-!” Tiedoll shouted, being cut off when he saw Timcanpy, “Oh my…”

~

Timcanpy played everything he had recorded within the Whittaker’s household once again to fill Tiedoll in. The times Allen was stuck down in the basement, the times Mr. Whittaker was yelling right in Allen’s face, Mrs. Whittaker force feeding Allen that magic juice to ‘pep him up’, Allen getting sick from it, Allen hallucinating, every little thing. Cross was shaking in barely controlled rage when he watched that fatass scream right in Allen’s face, hell they were almost touching noses by how close he was to him. Cross wanted to break his fucking neck. How dare he scream like that at Allen.

Tiedoll’s eyes were dark and he didn’t speak for a long long time. He was also beyond pissed. After Cross stomped into their home, his children were curious as to what made him so angry, but Tiedoll forbade his children to watch what Timcanpy had to share. He didn’t want them to see what their friend had been going through for the past four months.

“I’m going to slit their fucking necks. I’m going to rip off that guy’s testicles and shove them down his throat. I swear to God-“

“Cross, I understand but you have to calm down.”

“Don’t tell me to fucking calm down! That is my son! He is hurting! He has been hurting like this for months! He was fucking hallucinating about me, about his friends, and Anita!”

“We have enough evidence to support our case. If you lose your cool now you will completely jeopardize everything,” Tiedoll said, as he reached his cellphone to call the police down at the town Allen was at, “Is there a way you can get those videos on a flash drive of some sort?”

Cross nodded.

“Then busy yourself with that.”

Cross, as much as he hated to be bossed around by Tiedoll, obeyed. It gave him something to do and kept him from burning the entire town to smithereens in his rage after all. Plus, it was a lot more productive Timcanpy followed Cross and the man stalked over to Tiedoll’s computer to do just that.

~

Cross had all the video Timcanpy had stored over the four months transferred to a flashdrive just as he received a call from the police station five hours away from where he lived. They wanted to see the evidence and wanted to speak with Cross right away. As far as the kids were concerned, they were kept mostly in the dark but that didn’t make them any less fearful over what was going on. They knew it was about Allen. It had to be if Cross was like this. Did something awful happen? Did they finally find what they needed to get Allen back? They didn’t know. Kanda, Alma, and Daisya were the closest to what was going on, but all they could do was report back to the rest of their friends what they were witnessing. All they saw was Cross bursting through their home talking about murdering someone, then Tiedoll and Cross holing themselves up in a separate room, forbidding them to join in. Then Cross stomped off to their dad’s study to download something onto a flashdrive. Finally, Cross received a call and just as quickly as Cross made their way into their home, he was gone and speeding away in his car.
Cross called up Anita to let her know what was going on and she promised she’d drive up to where Cross was as soon as she got off of work. Cross stopped by the house to grab the files of information Lavi graciously sent him with a sticky note that said, ‘kick their ass for me’ and a smiley face. The files contained everything on Mr. Whittaker’s illegal activities dealing with his business. Cross and Anita decided they would stay in a hotel room as they sorted out business and made their case. Cross refused to leave that town without Allen. He didn’t care how long it took or how broke he got. He would not leave without that little boy with him again.

When Cross got there, it was too late for him to go speeding down to the police station and raise hell, so he checked in a hotel room and waited for Anita who appeared later on into the night. She wanted to see what evidence they picked up on Allen, but one look from Cross told her to wait on that. Even with the exhaustion, fiery anger still crackled in his eyes, just below the surface. Whatever it was, it riled up Cross to the point where he couldn’t go to bed. He couldn’t stop clenching or unclenching his fists. He wouldn’t stop glaring at the wall, even after Anita rubbed his back and carded her fingers through his hair and whispered about what they would do when Allen was back under their roof.

First thing in the morning Cross went to the police station and presented his evidence. They were not pleased at all that Cross was basically recording the Whittaker’s against their knowledge and invading their privacy. However, with the astounding evidence presented that was the least of their problems. Allen was to be taken out from the Whittaker’s custody immediately and was to be placed in child protective services until they could pass this through court and sentenced. Cross of course decided to go to court and get legal custody of Allen Walker. Though he felt confident the judge would rule in his favor, there was always the chance that he would pass Allen off to another family member instead. Cross only hoped his previous two years with Allen would be enough to sway the judge in his favor.

Before child protective services had a chance to take Allen away, he was sent to the hospital after collapsing and seizing during another singing competition. Shit. He was definitely not going to like that. Cross requested permission to be with Allen in the hospital and was surprised that he even got it. Perhaps the evidence was good enough that they decided Cross would be a definite aid to Allen recovering in the hospital. Who knows. (~Plot convenience~ I don’t know if this would actually be a thing or not) Cross was pissed they wouldn’t allow Anita in with him. Whatever. Before Cross left the station, he promised he would text and update Anita on everything, and yeah he meant practically everything. She wouldn’t let him go until he promised that he’d tell her every cut, every bruise, every little owie they put on her little baby so that she could put a hex, fitting for every little wrong they caused their little boy. God, I love it when she curses people, Cross thought to himself.

When Cross arrived at the hospital, police were on the scene and taking Mr. and Mrs. Whittaker into custody. Cross resisted the urge to laugh and flip them off. He also resisted the urge to walk over and punch Mr. Whittaker in the face. Fucking asshole. He would’ve loved to chop off his head and stick it on a pole in front of his house to ward off trespassers. He had bigger things to worry about though. Allen. He walked to the receptionist, asking where he could see Allen. Allen? Allen Walker? Ughhh. Red Whittaker. Cross hated spitting those two words out. Oh, yes, he’s right this way. Fucking hell, who would name their kid that? Allen Walker suited the kid a whole lot more…

After walking through several hallways and passing by so many doors, the woman finally stopped in front of a closed door.

“Well, here we are. He’s stable although we’re running tests on him. That boy has been through quite a lot…” the woman sighed with a soft smile, “Let us know if you need anything else.”
Cross nodded, feeling a little anxious about what lay beyond this door. It was a different story seeing Allen behind a screen, but now he was going to witness everything that has happened to him over the last four months. Four months. How crazy it was to see everything unravel in such a small amount of time.

“Thank you,” Cross responded, watching the woman walk away before taking a deep breath and closing his hand around the door knob. As he released his breath, he slowly opened the door revealing a small white room, a couple of chairs, an I.V., a heart monitor, and a little body laying on the bed. Cross felt himself break. I am so sorry Allen, Cross thought to himself as he walked over to the bed and collapsed on one of the chairs. Tears were cascading down his face.

“Fuck. I am so very very very fucking sorry. Shit I fucked up. God, I fucked up so much,” Cross sobbed quietly as he looked at Allen’s small chest slowly rising and falling. Bandages were wrapped around his head and his face was a sickly pale. His eyes had dark rings around them, his hair looked dry and limp. His lips were chapped and faded out. The only color Cross could see what the fading bruises on his cheeks, on his arms that look like fingerprints. God he was just skin and bones. He’d never seen Allen look so skinny…

Cross continued to weep by Allen’s bedside, feeling guilt eat him up inside. God, he was sure Anita would be a total hysterical wreck to see her baby like this. It was probably a good thing she didn’t come. Cross could only hope that things would get better from now on. That Allen would be returned to him and that he could try to make everything right again. He knew it was going to take time and that they may have to start way back to the beginning, but Cross didn’t care. They’d take it at Allen’s pace. They’d get him back to being Allen again.

Chapter End Notes

Fun Fact June 9th is Child Abuse Awareness Day, if my calculations were right. I looked it up but my eyes are a little wonky from writing so long so I could've read it wrong. Also I really loved the last name Kelly and as I put Red and Kelly together it sounded really catchy. Sort of like a rebel name like some bandit from an old western or something. I also thrive on Allen being Irish and having freckles lol.
Allen Is Taken Away pt. 3

Chapter Summary

Last part folks. Can you imagine I did all these in a span of five days...yeah probably...I probably have a lot of grammar errors huh lol? Triggers include: anorexia, depression, anxiety attacks, heart throbbing sad but happy moments.

Chapter Notes

I need some cuter nicknames for Cross to call Allen...dammit. I had one picked out but it just doesn't fit right...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Allen woke up, he was in a blinding white room. This wasn’t the Whittaker’s house…nor Cross’s house. What was that strange beeping noise? That pain in his hand? His head. His body. He felt like absolute garbage. Like someone hit him with a truck. Allen slowly looked around. He was hooked to machines. Hospital. He was in the hospital. Noooo…. He hated hospitals.

“Hey there buddy. How are you feeling?” a familiar voice asked though it was a bit raspy. Allen’s eyes widened. No. God please no. Don’t let this be a dream. He couldn’t take it anymore. He had enough. Still though…he wanted to see. Even if it wasn’t real. So, he turned around and looked at Cross. Wow. He looked quite realistic.

Cross smiled softly as Allen’s eyebrows furrowed together in confusion. Cross looked tired…very tired, but also relieved. Allen didn’t know what to say to this hallucination. Cross took the initiative though and carefully took Allen’s hand. Oh! Oh, he was touching him! He could feel him! That was quite shocking for Allen, after all he couldn’t feel his hallucinations touch him before. God he’s gone completely over the edge, hasn’t he?

“I’ve gone…mad…” Allen squeaked out, not quite believing what his senses told him.

“No, you haven’t. You’re not mad Allen,” Cross stated, bringing Allen’s hand up to his face, “This is real. This is very very real.”

Allen’s eyes looked over at his hand, slowly registering that he was touching Cross’s face. It was like a flare went off in Allen’s eyes. Cross could see life return to the boy’s eyes as he registered that what he was seeing was actually real this time. He was touching Cross. Actually touching him! Cross was here!? Could he go home!? Was he here to take him home!? Was this over!? Allen’s eyes went wide and began to fill with tears, his mind repetitively telling him. Cross was here. Cross was here. Cross was here.

Allen jolted up, “D-Daddy?” ignoring the pains and aches or the way his vision went hazy when he did so to touch Cross even more.

“Whoa whoa whoa, careful Allen. Careful bud we don’t want to pull your I.V. out. Calm down, your heart is racing and if it goes too high, they won’t let me in here anymore,” Cross chuckled
softly as he moved to sit down on the bed, letting Allen climb onto his lap to touch him. Cross
leaned back in the bed to let Allen lay on top of his chest. The kid wouldn’t stop touching him. His
hair, his face, his glasses, hands, arms, chest. He couldn’t settle on anything. All he could process
was that Cross was here. Cross was right here. Allen was safe now. Allen is Allen. Allen is Allen
Walker. No longer Red. Red is gone. Allen is safe. Allen laid his head down on Cross’s chest,
listening to his heartbeat. With every beat the mantra repeated itself. Cross is here. Cross is here.
Cross is here.

“You’re okay. You’re okay now. I’m right here. We’re already figuring out how to bring you
home. I’m going to fight tooth and nail to get your butt back home. You don’t have to deal with
those assholes anymore. They’re gone now,” Cross soothed, running his hand through Allen’s hair.
Allen absolutely melted. Four months was a long time without affection and boy was Allen craving
it. Every little bit of tension melted away from Allen’s body. The two stayed like that with Allen
laying against Cross and Cross giving him all the affection he’s been missing out on. It disturbed
Cross how bony Allen felt against him. He was definitely malnourished, and it was going to take
quite a bit of doing to get Allen back to where he was when he left Cross’s house. Allen was
already underweight going into Cross’s care and it was already a huge struggle to get him to a
healthy weight, this was going to take a lot of time and effort.

“When can I go home, daddy?” Allen asked, his eyes barely holding themselves open as they
looked at Cross. He didn’t want to fall back to sleep though. What if Cross left again?

“I don’t know yet buddy. We gotta do some things first. I need to go to court and tell them why
you should be coming home with me. Then when we get home, we have a lot of work to do,”
Cross said poking Allen’s ribs gently, “We gotta get you healthy again. Twinkie can help out quite
a bit with that, but you need more than sweets. I don’t think that’s the only thing we’ll be dealing
with either.”

Allen pouted and his eyes began to fill up with tears. So, they wouldn’t let him go home with
Cross? It was great he was here, but Allen was really hoping that he could go back home with him.
He wanted to be in his bed again, to curl up with Lavi on the couch and watch boring
documentaries that Lavi found absolutely interesting. Allen would watch them though just to be
with Lavi. He wanted to play with Lenalee’s hair and mess around in some make-up with Alma. He
wanted to shout at Kanda again and call him stupid and he wanted Kanda to call him moyashi. He
wanted to eat Link’s sweets and see how much he could push his buttons.

“I know…I’m sorry. I’m doing everything I can. It’s just going to take some time. I swear I’m not
leaving without you in my arms though, alright? We’re going to get through this. C’mere…shhh,”
Cross said, shifting around so he could sit up and rock Allen as the child began to cry.

“I’m not going anywhere kid. Alright? I’m staying right here next to you,” the man said, kissing
the small child’s face. It didn’t take long for Allen to pass out again into the
deepest sleep he had for four months.

~

First thing Cross noted was that Allen regressed a lot and not only in his weight. As the doctors ran
their tests, they found Allen had a urinary tract infection, was severely underweight, anemic, and
was drugged with Adderall to keep him focused and awake to perform. Though they didn’t know
quite exactly what Mrs. Whittaker put into her mixture they knew for a fact Allen had that specific
drug in his bloodstream. They figured she tried to hide it in an energy drink like mix to get him to
take it. Most symptoms he experienced in the Whittaker household was from being drugged up
such as psychosis, stomach pain, nausea, frequent urination, and loss of appetite. Adderall was a
stimulant drug and while it calmed those with attention deficit disorders, it did the opposite to those who did not have the disorder. However, Cross was quick to learn that it wasn’t only the drug that caused the loss of appetite. Sure, not eating for a long period of time was known to screw up the body’s signals of hunger, but Allen seemed to be very conscious of how much he was eating. Allen ate like a bird and didn’t have the same gusto he had when it came to food.

Allen was also had frequent day time accidents as well as bedwetting Cross quickly found out…he wished he packed an extra set of clothes. This really upset Allen, even though Cross told him over and over again that it was fine. Part of it was due to the infection which made Allen go frequently and have sudden intense urges, another part of it Cross became aware of was the fear of using the bathroom. These new things didn’t exactly shock Cross, he’s heard of traumatized kids regressing into earlier stages of development, but it was a bit shocking to see the extent of damage that family had done to him. One part of Allen was ten and the other parts were stuck in the past. The kid was a total mess and it hurt to see what four months managed to do to the kid.

Allen was going through withdrawal symptoms as well, which Cross was not a stranger to. Withdrawal sucked. Allen was going through panic attacks, insomnia, depression, achiness, difficulty concentrating, irritability, headaches which only made Allen seem even more split. Sometimes he was acting like a ten-year-old, other times he was acting like he was three, sometimes five. The kid was touchy and having temper tantrums fit for someone so much younger than what he actually was. There was quite a few times Cross was losing his own cool and had to step out a few times, as much as he hated to leave Allen.

“Breathe. Just breathe. You’re okay…I got you. It’s okay buddy. I know it sucks but it’ll get better. I promise it does get better,” Cross cooed, walking around the hospital room with Allen in his arms during one of his fits. He didn’t want to eat the portion of food he was supposed to as requested by the doctor because it was ‘too big’ and Cross pushed him a bit too hard. It bothered Cross a lot when Allen didn’t eat or refused to. He was used to seeing Allen eat and it scared the shit out of him to see him starving himself. Even though Cross though he was pushing Allen gently to eat, it was apparently too much, and Allen began to throw a fit. The only thing Cross could think to do is just get the food away from him and hold him, talk to him, reassure him. Just drop everything, comfort Allen, and reapproach him later.

Same with everything else. If he knew Allen had to use the bathroom, Cross tried to coax him to use it, sometimes even bribe him. If it worked, great. If it didn’t and Allen threw a fit, Cross stopped pushing and went through the works. It was a little bit different than the eating routine considering Allen had moments where he would not ‘let go’ so Cross would go about trying to get him to let go. He was more concerned with Allen not screwing up his body anymore than where he did his business. He would reapproach him, but he wouldn’t push it. Cross found this process of dropping everything, comfort, reapproach to produce more successes in the long run. It was slow and took a lot of patience, but it worked on Allen in the past when it came to socializing and going out of his comfort zone. He had to meet Allen where he was at and sometimes this involved treating him like he was three, or five, or seven, or wherever he was at the moment. As long as he was making progress, Cross didn’t care how long it took.

The kid was clingier than a case of fleas, but this came to be his advantage when they deemed Allen healthy enough to be discharged. They wanted to take him to a different place to take care of him as the court case proceeded. But the moment they tried, Allen threw a huge enough fit where they deemed it safer for Allen to be with Cross than in an unfamiliar place until they figured out who would have custody over him. (~Plot convenience~).

Anita was all over Allen when Cross first brought him back to the hotel. He already had him talking to her on his cell phone when he was still in the hospital but it adorable to have them reunite
face to face. Cross felt more at peace than he had been in a long while when he saw Anita’s eyes light up like fireworks as she ran over to Allen and began peppering him with kisses.

“Hi mommy,” Allen greeted, allowing Anita to practically suffocate him in affection. He was in a good mood at the moment, although Cross guessed it was because he got most of his energy out when he refused to go with the social work people. Either way, Cross wanted Anita to see Allen happy the first time she saw him again.

“Oh, my goodness I missed you so much! God you are skin and bones. Well it’s a good thing we have plenty of food for you back at the house. I’ll make all of your favorite dishes,”

Anita cooed as she took Allen from Cross. Even if it wasn’t confirmed that Allen was to be in their care again, Anita couldn’t help but gush over all the things they’d do when they got home. Anita wouldn’t let Allen out of her sight and the two were inseparable for the whole day.

The disadvantage was that Cross needed to go to the court hearing and Allen couldn’t come with. Thankfully, Cross had Anita there to help now rather than trying to calm Allen himself.

“Nooo I don’t want you to go,” Allen cried, clinging to Cross’s leg.

“Buddy I’m going to come back, but I have to go do this one thing, okay? You want to go home, right? We can’t go home unless I go. They need me there so I can plead my case,”

Cross said, bending down to Allen’s level, his voice took on the tone of an adult talking to a crabby five-year-old. Allen wasn’t having it though. Cross sighed and picked him up.

“No, don’t go,” Allen continued to cry loudly.

“Allen, I won’t be gone for long, but I do have to go. I need you to stay here and keep Mom company and protect her when I’m gone,” Cross said, trying out a new tactic to get Allen to calm down, “Can you do that for me?”

“Noo.” Allen didn’t want Cross to go. Even if he said he was going to be back, even if Anita would still be around him, Allen felt so anxious to see Cross go. He already had to be taken away from Cross once and he didn’t want to have him be taken away only to never return again.

“Allen, come on now. Look, we can go get some ice cream when I come back. Okay?” Cross murmured, reaching up to wipe away his tears. But Allen didn’t want ice cream. He wanted Cross to stay here. He wanted to go home. It was so hard for him to concentrate on any one thing. All he wanted was to be back in a familiar place, to try and piece back what he was supposed to be and what his life was supposed to be. He didn’t like this waiting game or the fear of being taken away again at any moment.

Cross couldn’t waste much more time with him though and reluctantly gave him to Anita. Allen began to cry louder as Anita took him, his hand reaching out to Cross.

“Try to keep your temper in check,” Anita sighed, knowing very well Cross was going to be tested today. If he fucked this up, then there would be no getting Allen back. As much as he hated the thought of seeing Allen’s birth parents, of hearing all the excuses they would make, he would bite his tongue and keep himself calm. It was for Allen’s sake, not because he was afraid he’d get arrested for attempted murder.

“Yeah, I will,” Cross responded with a soft smile. He leaned down to kiss Anita before he pressed a kiss to crying Allen’s cheek, “Behave for Mom and eat something for lunch, okay? I’ll be back
before you know it. I love you two.”

“Love you. Go kick some ass and take name,” Anita smiled sweetly, rocking Allen as Cross left the hotel room to go out to his car. His heart clenched when he heard Allen scream for him but Cross also felt anger bubble up deep inside of him as he thought about seeing that man’s face again. The way he screamed at Allen in those videos. The way that woman…no she wasn’t a woman…no woman would ever treat a child that way. She was a snake…the way she smacked Allen around, yelled at him, drugged him. They were going to pay.

Meanwhile Anita was back at the hotel room whispering sweet nothings in Allen’s ear, rocking him, rubbing his back, and singing the little lullaby she always sang to him to help him to calm down. She hoped things would go well today. She really didn’t want to give up Allen after just getting him back, especially with how much pain he was going through.

“Oh honey, it’s okay. He’ll be back soon. Everything will be okay. Dad is going to do great and they’ll let him have you and then before you know it, we’ll be home. You’ll be able to relax and see Lavi and Lenalee and all your other friends,” Anita cooed, wrapping a blanket over Allen’s body which was always cold nowadays. It took a long time for Allen to calm down and to stop calling out for Cross but once he was silent Anita was alone with her own thoughts and worries about the results of today.

~(I am sorry ahead of time for some of these details. I’ve never been in a court setting and I’m not exactly smart in legal matters. Maybe I should’ve taken my parent’s advice to become a lawyer instead of being a psych and addictions studies student lol)

Cross was familiar with court settings, not just because he was a juvenile in the past, but also because of his field of work. However, this time walking into the court room felt different. Cross was nervous as all hell about saying something wrong. He had nothing to lie about. He had enough evidence to back up why he’d be a suitable father thanks to several coworkers and friends who have witnessed his interactions with Allen. He made sure Allen was caught up on his immunizations, his house was clean and hazard free, he made sure Allen was eating right and sought help when he was having a hard time getting the kid to gain weight. There was nothing they had on Cross…well except for the alcoholism part but Cross was nearing his second year of being sober. Even then, Cross’s episodes were when he was younger and when Allen wasn’t in his care.

As Cross walked through the double doors of the court room, his eyes shifted over to Allen’s birth parents. He felt fire crackle up within him as he watched that man’s pudgy face scrunch up and stare Cross down. Oh, that’s cute, you think I’m afraid of you just because you have a bunch of money, Cross thought to himself. He could barely stomach looking at Allen’s mother. She had his eyes and her hair was definitely the spitting image of Allen’s before his hair turned white. The man on the other hand looked nothing like Allen, just some rich, fat, greedy asshole that saw an opportunity to use a kid’s talent to make more money. Cross raised his hand to be sworn in and proceeded to take his seat. Cross was happy to see that most of the attention was put on Allen’s birth parents, although there was some attention directed at Cross.

Most of it dealt with his past drinking episodes, his gambling, etc. Some things directed at him was the fact he invaded the Whittaker’s privacy and recorded them somehow of their evil acts which was illegal and a violation of their human rights, ladi da. Compared to the amount of shit his parents did to him though, it was more like a slap on the wrist for Cross. They also questioned how Cross managed to figure out Mr. Whittaker’s illegal activity in his business but that was mostly deflected by the fact he got a tip from someone. It was easy to overhear things in his line of work and he took it to his advantage. It was fun to see the judge grill his parents though and the way that fat man’s face flushed a deep red as he stumbled around on his words. It was funny to see all the
excuses they were making, trying to shift the blame on Cross that it was his fault Allen was so misbehaved. Misbehaved or not, their actions were child abuse, and nothing could excuse drugging up a kid, shoving them down in a basement as punishment, taking away food, whipping them until their back was bleeding or disregarding the fact your kid was malnourished. Even though it seemed things were a breeze for Cross, he still couldn’t help but to be nervous. The justice system sometimes didn’t work in one’s favor, even when it was clearly obvious what the decision should be. Sure, his witnesses gave good testimonies on his part, but you never know when it came to the court system.

Mrs. Whittaker tried to make the excuse that Allen had an attention deficit disorder as a means to justify her giving Allen Adderall which was dumb at best because he had no medical diagnosis of it. They were desperate though. They had such a huge reputation to uphold and now there was undeniable evidence against them that can destroy their reputation and give them prison time. It was all pathetic at best and made Cross’s stomach turn just to hear how dumb and evil these bastards were. They also had other evidence pointed at them of lying about Allen being kidnapped. They sold Allen into the circus to make a quick buck and to get rid of him. Who would want a kid with a paralyzed left arm, especially in such a rich family? It would turn them into a joke, they would be seen as undesirables. When they saw Allen again at the state singing competition, they found use in him and came up with a story to try and get their son back so they could exploit his talent for money. Greedy fucking people.

It was a long day with barely controlled rage, heartache and nausea when he had to watch Allen suffer once again on the videos and hearing endless fucking excuses and lies pouring out of their mouths as well as their lawyer. As the jury went back to make their decision, Cross was left to sit alone, a bundle of nerves. The decision seemed quite clear, but Cross was an outsider in this town. The Whittaker’s had a reputation in this town as well. He could only hope they would make the right decision and let Cross have rights to Allen. It felt like forever until the jury came back and the judge. Cross was not filled with rage anymore, instead he was scared to death and his heart beat was almost deafening.

“The jury has found the defendant, Whittaker’s as guilty of all charges. Mrs. Whittaker is sentenced to ten years in prison for the crime of mistreating and abusing a child. Mr. Whittaker will be sentenced to twenty years in prison for tax evasion, embezzlement, and also mistreatment and abuse of a child. Red Kelly, also known as Red Whittaker or Allen Walker is to no longer to be in your custody, nor your other child Kevin Whittaker. Kevin Whittaker is to go to other relatives to be cared for.”

“Cross Marian…” Cross thought he was going to throw up when the judge said his name. Shit please don’t send Allen somewhere else. Please let him stay with him. He’d go absolutely insane without him! These last four months were already torture enough! He wouldn’t be able to go back to Anita to tell her that they’d have to give up Allen all over again. He wouldn’t be able to tell Allen that after all he’s been through. It would kill the kid!

“…is to receive full custody of Allen Walker. The court is adjourned,” the judge said authoritatively, glaring at the Whittaker’s who began to raise a huge stink and officers led them away. Cross could fucking cry and he almost did. For once the justice system took his side! God, that must’ve been the hugest fucking sigh of relief he’d ever had in his entire life so far. Cross had full legal custody of Allen. Allen was his son. He was his father. Officially. Cross had to take a few minutes to regain his composure before he could drive back to the hotel. He was to sign the paperwork tomorrow at the courthouse and after that they could finally go home and get the hell away from this town. Anita was the first to approach him when he returned to the hotel.
“Hi,” she breathed, “God I got so worried…they really kept you there long. Did it go okay? You didn’t kill someone did you? Are you hungry? There’s pizza left—“

Anita was cut off when Cross leaned down to kiss her on the lips. Oh god, was this a good thing or a bad thing?

“Cross…?”

“It went fantastic. They gave me full custody of him. All I need to do is sign the paperwork and we can get the hell out of here…” Cross said with a soft smile, his eyes twinkling.

“Seriously?” Anita asked as tears filled her eyes. She knew Cross had enough evidence but even the most fool proof case could go not as planned. She began to weep as Cross held her,” Oh thank god. God I was so worried.”

“You’re telling me. I want to piss myself and puke my guts out at the same time;” Cross laughed in relief as he rocked Anita back and forth as he held her.

“God, I can’t wait to get the hell out of here;” Anita laughed after a few minutes of crying. She wiped the tears from her face.

“How was Allen today?” Cross asked.

“Oh my god that boy wouldn’t stop crying for you for at least an hour. I’m so glad things worked out. That little boy wouldn’t be able to take it if things ended differently. He ate almost two slices of pizza today and I got him to talk to Lavi. God, I knew he could talk but I was almost scared he’d make himself pass out by how fast he was talking to Allen. It was adorable! He’s laying down now, that seemed to really tire him out, but he was really happy to talk to him,” Anita gushed proudly.

“Perfect. Well I hope he’s hungry for some ice cream because he deserves it,” Cross smiled as he spotted a little curled up ball on one of the hotel beds. While Cross went over to Allen to let him know he was back, Anita was blowing up everyone’s phones with the good news. She was getting endless texts from them asking about Allen and the results of the court case the entire day. Finally, she had something to tell them.

Cross knelt down next to the curled-up ball on the bed and ruffled up Allen’s hair. Allen whined and scrunched up his little face in annoyance.

“Allen…little bird? Do you want some ice cream” Cross cooed, using one of his favorite nicknames he had for Allen. Allen popped open an eye to see Cross, smiling softly as he woke up a little bit. Cross was back! Yay! He was in a pretty good mood again after talking with Lavi and taking a small nap. He was still tired though, but if Cross was back, he could hold off sleep for a bit.

“Did you have a good nap? I heard you talked with Junior and he nearly talked your ear off. Glad to see he didn’t;” Cross said, poking Allen’s ear as Allen stretched out from his ball.

“I couldn’t understand him;” Allen stated, nor could he remember really what he said. It was like all the things Lavi wanted to tell Allen burst like a damn at the opportunity and he wouldn’t stop talking. Allen didn’t mind though. He missed Lavi’s voice and he knew Lavi needed to work this out of his system before they could have a proper conversation.

“There are times where I can’t understand him either;” Cross agreed as Allen moved over to throw his arms around Cross’s neck, a silent request to be picked up, “Guess what I found out today?”

“I get to be your daddy.”

“But you’re already my daddy.”

“Well yeah but now I’m officially your daddy, that means no one can take you away from me anymore. How does that sound?”

Allen moved his head up to look at Cross at the mention of not being taken away. Official? Not going to be taken away?

“So, I’m not going back there?” Allen asked, just to make sure.

“Nope.”

“They’re not going to take me anywhere?”

“Nope. Nobody is going to take you anywhere away from me or your mom.”

“We’re going home then?” Allen squeaked as he looked at Cross in hope, his eyes filling up with tears.

“Yeah. Once I get the paperwork signed, we’ll blow this popsicle stand. What are you crying for? I can’t be that bad can I?” Cross smirked, but it was hard to deny his own emotions.

“Stop being stupid. I love you and you’re ruining this moment,” Allen said in a very Allen-like way as he sniffled.

“Well jee, sorry,” Cross responded sarcastically, “I love you to.”

“Can we still have ice cream?” Allen squeaked through his tears.

“Yeah we can still have ice cream,” Cross laughed.

When they finally tied all the loose ends and got in the car to head out of town, Allen finally felt every last bit of anxiety leave him. This was real. It was finally over. He’d never had to see his birth parents again. He’d never have to be called Red again. He could leave his past behind. He could honor Mana again by going under Allen Walker. He wondered if Mana was proud of him and of the way he didn’t resort to violence after living in a place like that. He wondered if Mana would approve of Cross. He felt like he would. Mana always saw the good in everyone. He thought Mana would be happy to see Cross taking care of his Allen.

After five grueling hours of driving and lots of bathroom breaks with some accidents (it was going to take Allen a long while to get his bladder and everything else back up to speed). They made it home, except there was a certain red-head sitting on their stairs with the biggest and stupidest grin on his face that Allen missed so much. When Allen got out of the car, Lavi rushed at him with a call of his name in a blur of red and green but stopped in his tracks just before he could bowl Allen over. Then he gingerly pulled his bestest besty best friend into a hug.

“Welcome home. I wanted to be the first one to welcome you home,” Lavi choked out as happy tears streamed down his face. Allen felt his bottom lip tremble as he hugged Lavi back.

“Thanks, Lavi. I’m glad to be home.”
The pair spent the rest of the day and night together with Lavi cuddling Allen until he was all cuddled out. They didn’t really talk all that much. They just sat there, enjoying the other’s company. Allen felt completely relaxed and almost normal as he took in the familiar smell of the house, sat on the familiar couch, hugged Timcanpy, and laid down on his bed. Sadly, Lavi did have to leave to go to school but he promised that they would catch up soon and get together with all their friends. Allen had a lot of recovering to do before he could go back to school.

First thing was that Allen had to get over his withdrawal symptoms and regain his energy back. Lavi being around was great, but he also really wiped Allen out, even though all they did was sit around and sleep (mostly on Allen’s part). Nightmares became a frequent thing again after a year without, this time there were new nightmares Allen would have to fight off. Being in a familiar environment with familiar rules and regulations helped Allen relax a lot more, though he still struggled against his fear of ‘making the toilet dirty’ and being punished for it. He also still struggled with eating, although his appetite was growing more and more each day. Cross just had to constantly remind Allen that it was okay, that he could eat his fill. He also had to remind him to use the bathroom frequently and woke him up once during the night to have him go so they could get his body back into sync. Allen wasn’t all obedient either and would try to deny his body of food or relief.

Allen also began to get severely depressed, another withdrawal symptom, alongside suicidal thoughts. There were days Allen couldn’t sleep and then was sleeping way too much which didn’t help matters. Cross would push Allen to get up periodically during his darker days. He pushed him to eat and then let him sleep for awhile or lay down. Then he’d get him up to take a shower and let him lay back down. He may make Allen walk with him down the sidewalk and back before letting him lay back down. Allen also had days where he was nothing but anxious and attention-seeking so Cross just went through what he always did when Allen was panicking. He would drop everything and get him in a quiet part of the house and go through breathing exercises with him. It was just them going through the long process of getting Allen’s habits back to where they were before and rebalancing him. Cross and Anita worked out their schedules so they could stay with Allen, since his depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts concerned them. Plus, they wanted one of them to be there in case he did have a panic attack episode or threw a temper tantrum from being overstimulated or frustrated.

It took about two weeks for Allen to really get back into the rhythm of things. Once Cross was sure Allen was physically up to par, he let more of Allen’s friends come over. He was a little scared to send him off to their house because he wasn’t sure what was going to send him into an episode, even though they were getting farther in between. Link was the next one to come over with a huge load of pastries. He heard from Lavi how skinny Allen was and did what he was most good at to help Allen gain his weight back. Allen instantly attached to Link like he usually did when he was over at Link’s house, though he noticed Link was a lot more careful around him. Allen wanted to dance around with Link which Link was fine about, it’s just that he didn’t let Allen do any risky tricks. Allen was definitely out of shape and not as flexible as he was before. No problem though, Allen swore to Link that he’d practice, even if he wasn’t allowed to go back to practice or school yet. He was happy to know that Link hadn’t replaced him, and he was ready to bake to Allen’s content.

Link was a godsend. After he first came over and gave Allen his treats, Allen’s appetite improved greatly. With Lavi coming over almost daily Allen’s mood was also improving alongside his appetite. Soon Kanda and Alma showed up and it was like nothing changed between Kanda and Allen. In an instant those two were bickering with each other, although Kanda didn’t go far enough to try and strangle Allen with his own two hands. That would come later when the moyashi’s strength fully returned. Kanda began to treat Allen much like a plant, in other words, Kanda began to nurture Allen even amongst all the insults and bickering....
“You’re skin and bones moyashi! How are you going to grow when you’re like this stupid!?”

“Bakanda you are spraying me with a water hose!”

“Moyashi’s need water to grow!”

“What’s next are you going to throw shit on top of me to!?”

“Maybe…”

“Bakanda I swear to God!!”

Even if…well he took nurturing his moyashi in the literal sense. Either way it was funny to Alma who infused all of his contagious bubbliness and excitability to Allen. Kanda meant well and he truly did because he gave Allen these special rocks that had a dent in them. They were worry stones. He also gave Allen a weird necklace that smelled like lavender.

“What the heck are doing? Trying to propose to me with a rock, Bakanda? I knew you loved me.”

“Shut up moyashi. They’re worry stones. You rub them with your thumb, and it’s supposed to make you feel better. That stupid necklace is a diffuser. It makes your stupid mind and body calm down. Moyashi’s can’t grow if they’re always worried all the time!”

“But I’m not worried!”

“Not worried my ass! You’re like Alma on a sugar high!” Kanda said. So he noticed Allen’s nervous ticks like constantly touching his face, twirling his hair or playing with his hands huh?

“Am not, stupid Bakanda!” Allen said, but kept Kanda’s rocks on him and the necklace either way. Thanks Kanda…

Then there was Lenalee who hugged Allen for a very unnaturally long time explaining to him how much she missed him and how her pig tails looked like a wreck without him and it wasn’t the same watching fashion shows without him. She had begun to talk with Road a lot more in order to find some company that would be interesting in fashion shows. She found out it was not exactly Road who would be intensely interested in fashion shows (though they still bonded over it since Allen’s absence) it was the Noah twins. Who would’ve thought, right? Road was equally surprised. If it hadn’t been for the twins being super bored and following Road to Lenalee’s house they would’ve never found out.

After a good three and a half weeks, Cross deemed with great reluctance that Allen was ready to go back to school. Well…okay it was Allen who begged and pleaded Cross that he wanted to go back to school. He was so freaking bored at home and all his friends were there! He was already so far behind that he would have to attend summer school as it was to catch up. So, after many many reassurances (mostly from Allen to Cross), Cross finally dropped Allen off to school ten minutes late because ‘OH MY GOD DAD I’M FINE LET ME GO! I WILL CALL YOU IF I NEED ANYTHING! X4’ in the span of the car ride from the house, to school. Least to say it was hard for Cross to let Allen go back to school. It was remarkable how fast Allen improved since being home and Cross didn’t believe it for a second. Allen proved him wrong though and went to school for the rest of the week with zero incidences.

That wasn’t to say everything was 100% normal. There were still nightmares, some panic issues, some depression, but for the most part Allen was doing good. He was functioning again and being a normal kid. He went to dance practice. Talked with his friends. Worried about middle school next year. The only difference was that he stopped going to choir practice. Marie was a little sad about
it, but Allen still stopped in after dance practice and sung with him, he still excelled in music class and said he’d perform at the school talent show. He was just done with choir. As long as Allen kept his love for singing and music, Marie didn’t mind. He was just glad after everything he’s been through, he didn’t lose his love of it.

Chapter End Notes

(Whew we clocked out at 25k ladies and gents! Sorry for such a long read. Just had a lot to get out of my system. Sorry if some parts were messed up, like I said I went into writer’s mode and usually if I do that, I find it super hard to stop writing. Anyways, I’ve been taking a Children and Trauma class this semester and I’ve learned a lot but there is also a lot of sad things to hear about. In a way, I sort of used this to vent all that sad stuff out of me. It’s also something I played around with a lot in my head for a good year so even if it doesn’t match all that was in my head, I’m still happy with it. I hope it made it as realistic as I could without making it excessively triggery, although maybe I let my imagination get carried away. I am an Addiction Studies major and although I have not researched into Adderall that much so I looked up the effects of it for people who are not ADHD so that be where I got my information from. I know medication can react differently with everyone and some ways of doing drugs are more effective than others so maybe this isn't 100% legit? Either way I tried my best. I also looked up some legal stuff, but like I said I'm not a lawyer and those guys study hardcore to learn everything so that may not be all 100%. Least to say, expect some happier fluffy stuff after all this heavy stuff. I’m going back to the suggestions ya’ll sent.

Krory and Miranda’s date is still sitting unwritten…just hasn’t hit me like a brick wall yet but we’ll get there. I also plan on setting up Link and Allen’s relationship a bit more. Linkllen is end game [sorry my dudes] with the main story point…which I don’t know where it exactly is anymore lol. Linkllen is a ship that doesn’t get a lot so that’s why I chose it, but I also plan on doing some offshoots of Lavi x Allen, possible Yullen, etc. I want to sort of play around with everyone and shift things around to do more ‘what if’ like drabbles. Like what if Allen fell in love with Lavi instead of Link? What if Lavi fell in love with Lenalee…or Kanda with Lenalee? I also really hope to explore into Cross’s past a lot more to, I know I said that a lot, same with Krory x Miranda date, but I do have them in the back of my mind. Usually I just go with whatever scenario hits the forefront of my brain first and just go down the list. So yeah, if you got suggestions, let me know. I can’t guarantee I will hit it right away, but I do look at them from time to time, so I always have it sitting in the back of my mind slowly forming itself and waiting to hit me in the face. Thanks for reading and thanks for all your lovely comments. Seriously, I am so motivated and happy when I see them, especially when it’s freaking two paragraphs [I nearly shit a brick every time lol]. See you next time, although probably not for a bit, I got some big projects heading my way as well as finals!)
“No! I don’t wanna go!” Allen shrieked, kicking his legs as Cross dragged him to the car by the back of his hoodie.

“No! I don’t wanna go!” Allen shrieked, kicking his legs as Cross dragged him to the car by the back of his hoodie.

“Too bad. We got to. You haven’t lost any of your baby teeth and that is a huge problem considering your age,” Cross said sternly. He wasn’t going to let Allen back out of this one. However, Allen had other plans and managed to twist his body enough to get out of his hoodie, then his little imp took off running back to the house. Cross nearly made it to the car when Allen managed his grand escape, so he wasn’t quite happy that he had to go back to the house to play hide and seek with Allen.

“Allen Walker you get your scrawny ass back here or I swear I will give you something to whine about,” Cross hollered as he stomped back into the house to go find Allen. Fuck. He really hated it when the brat hid himself because he was tiny enough where he could hide literally anywhere.

“Brat we are running on a tight schedule. If you don’t get your ass out here by the time, I’m done counting to three I will whoop your ass. Ya got it?” Cross hollered when he walked back into the house. His eyes scanned around for a tuft of white. He wasn’t in the mood today to deal with Allen running off.

“1….”

No movement. Everything was absolutely still. This kid was going to test him today wasn’t he?

“2….”
Still no movement. Cross was getting more and more irritated.

“1 swear to god Allen don’t make me say three. I am not in the mood to deal with this shit today.”

“2 ½….” Cross growled out, giving Allen one last warning. Still absolutely no movement.

“3. Well congratulations kid. Your ass is grass,” Cross hollered as he walked around the house. He was on full alert for any sense of movement. While Cross was counting, Allen was attempting to climb up on the ceiling fan (He’s done it before but not when he was rushed to hide) and thank god for Cross walking under it when he did because in his haste Allen lost his grip on one of the ceiling blades and fell with a squeak right into Cross’s arms (although he nearly dropped his ass because he wasn’t quite ready to have an armful of kid). How convenient indeed. Cross would’ve laughed if he wasn’t so pissed off. I mean first the kid runs off and puts them behind schedule, now he nearly fell and broke his neck.

Allen slowly looked up at his captor. Cross looked down at his victim. A few moments passed and with a quick jerk, Allen tried to wrench his body away from Cross. Oh no. Not this time. Cross hugged the brat tightly to his chest.

“Nope. You’re not going anywhere, especially after that fucking stunt. You could’ve nearly gotten yourself killed!” Cross growled, reaching up to twist Allen’s ear rather harshly, not enough to leave any serious injury, but enough to let him know he better not do that again, “You ever do that again and I will make sure you won’t be able to sit for an entire month. You can be afraid all you want but if you’re going to pull risky shit like that then we have a major problem.”

Allen yelped, beginning to cry in defeat as Cross carried him out to the car. Cross put Allen in the car and closed the door before moving around to the driver’s side. Allen meanwhile was kicking at the door to the car, basically throwing a typical child temper tantrum. Well Cross wasn’t having it, especially since his car was old and there was a time that fucker popped open and Allen almost flew out of said car. He reached over and twisted Allen’s ear again.

“Kid I swear to God, ya better knock that shit off. I will not have a repeat of last time. You can cry, scream and bitch all you want but you will not fucking kick my car or nearly break your damn neck. Ya understand?” Cross growled as he started up the car and began the drive to the dentist’s office. Allen heard all about the dentist’s office from school. He heard what they did to you and how they put their hands in your mouth. How they pull out your teeth, give you shots in the mouth, and drill your teeth. He wanted nothing to do with that! I mean he used his mouth to eat! He loved his mouth and loved to eat food! Anything coming between him and food was a total no go. No freaking way!

“All right, they’re not going to do anything that bad. All they’re going to do is check your teeth out. No tooth pulling, no shots. Calm your ass down, you’re going to hurt yourself.”

“I! Don’t! Care! ! Aint! Gonna! Do! It!” Allen screamed. Cross could feel a headache coming on. It seems like this was going to be a “Red day” and Cross didn’t know whether he should be happy about that or not. There were periods of time, especially times of great stress that Allen would revert to his original personality, Red. Red came in little flashes. Barely perceptible but noticeable now that Allen would actually talk back at Cross. Sort of like spark off a lighter, a perfect image to how Red was. That polite, quiet, respectable kid exterior was a mask…well most of it. The only reason Cross knew about Red was because he actually seen the kid around and how he interacted with Mana time to time before the car accident. He saw how bratty the kid acted sometimes around Mana, even though the guy mellowed him out quite a bit. Red was truly Allen, the one who acted bratty, who had the dirtiest mouth a kid could possibly have, that was afraid, angry, and hypervigilant. When he found Allen at the crash site, he could barely recognize him as that bratty
kid that walked around with Mana. Hell, the crash itself was so strange to begin with. The kid had a very precise scar on his face. How the hell did one get star on his forehead from a car crash? Either way, that was a story for another day. Cross could only hope Allen would be done with his fit when they got to the dentist’s office. At least the kid resorted to just curling up in a little ball, crying and screaming rather than trying to kick the door open.

By the time they got to the dentist office, Allen calmed down considerably. All that were left were sniffles and shakes. Cross could tell by looking into those furious, scared, gray-blue eyes though that he was dealing with the hellfire that was Red. This little lighter didn’t run out of fuel just yet.

“Alright you little fireball let’s get this over with,” Cross sighed, noticing that Allen refused to budge. Cross rolled his eyes and picked him up, earning a totally nonthreatening growl. It sounded very much like a little boy needing a nap. He wouldn’t even look at him. He just glared down at the floor or anywhere that wasn’t in Cross’s direction.

“Good afternoon! You must be our three o’ clock appointment?” the receptionist asked cheerily when Cross walked in.

“Yeah…sorry” Cross responded, looking at the clock. It was 3:45. They were super freaking late. The receptionist gave a knowing smile as she looked at the angry child in Cross’s arms, “That’s alright. Why don’t you take a seat. We should be able to get you in shortly.”

Cross walked over to one of the plastic chair and sat down with Allen on his lap to make sure he wouldn’t try to run off somewhere. Allen was pouting and glaring, occasionally sighing loudly or growling in disgust to make sure Cross knew just how pissed off he was. Cross was not threatened or moved by any of this, in fact he actually began to pet Allen’s head as if he was a pissed off kitten. Then one of the nurses called them back to let the real fun begin. Cross already called ahead of time to make sure if it would be alright for him to hold Allen on his lap so he didn’t try to make a run for it or stab the dentist. Whichever came first. The last time they were at the doctor’s office (not the first-time mind you) he actually tried to wound the doctor, let’s just say he wasn’t in an Allen-like mood that day and absolutely wanted no part in being in that office. Sadly, none of them had a choice. Allen was under weight and required to have his blood tested to check on his body processes to make sure his body was getting the nutrients he needed.

So, Cross walked into the dentist’s office and sat the angry boy on his lap whose expression shifted into one of fear and defiance. Allen didn’t care what they tried to do; he wouldn’t open his mouth for anyone. They waited for a few minutes in tense silence, you could hear a pin drop in the room. Well, mostly silence. Cross was attempting to bribe Allen into cooperating.

“Look, we’ll get some ice cream afterwards, alright? But you have to be cooperative because if you don’t and this takes too long, then the shops will be all closed and we won’t be able to.”

Allen huffed, craning his head away from Cross when he tried to make eye contact with him. His eyes were narrowed into such tiny slits that it almost looked like his eyes were closed.

“Come on kid. I’ll let you hang out with Lavi tomorrow. You guys could go to the mall and see a movie or go to the arcade,” Cross continued to bribe. Allen had a love hate relationships with malls. If there weren’t so many people at the mall, then he was fine with it. He loved looking at all the stores and the weird things people would sell at times; he especially loved the food court.

Allen still refused to budge. God this kid was stubborn…

“Okay…I’ll make you mitarashi dango and let you hang out with Lavi tomorrow at the mall if you
let this guy check out your teeth and be cooperative,” Cross caved in, playing his wild card.

Allen still pouted but his eyes shifted over in interest. Mitarashi dango and hanging out with Lavi? But mitarashi dango? That’s really driving a hard bargain. Cross kept his face serious even though inwardly he was smirking in victory. He had his brat’s attention now. He just needed to find that one thing that’ll have Allen completely cave in.

“We can still get ice cream as well and not at that crappy place we went last time. We’ll get the good stuff.”

Shit this man was pulling everything he had to get Allen onboard and it fucking worked. I mean, if Cross gave Allen a few more moments he would’ve said yes regardless because ‘mitarashi dango’ duh! But Cross made the deal extra extra sweet so there was no way Allen could back down now. Allen heaved a huge sigh of defeat. Cross grinned wolfishly.

“Fine but if he does anything funny, I’m biting him, and I’ll hide your glasses and instead of peeing in your boots I’ll poop in em and I will eat all of the food in the house that you like.”

“Don’t you think that’s excessive?” Cross responded in irritation.

“No. How else am I going to fill your boots with poop? It needs to come from something,” Allen responded in a smart-ass tone of voice. Well the kid wasn’t wrong. The kid also wasn’t lying and in Cross’s experience, he’d rather deal with piss in his boots rather than shit.

“Yeah but you are literally a shit machine as it is. It’s not like this guy is going to give you a shot or something.”

“You have two boots.”

“Ah come on you’d do that to both of them?”

“If you force my hand then yes. You don’t know what’s going on in his head, maybe he’ll decide to do something weird. Besides you’re not the one having someone’s fingers inside their mouth. What if he’s an old pervert?”

“He’s not an old pervert. I wouldn’t send your ass to a sketchy ass dentist office.”

Allen gave him a look that said he begged to differ.

“On purpose…I wouldn’t do it on purpose. I did research on this, alright? He’s not going to do something weird to you,” Cross corrected himself.

“Or maybe you didn’t and you’re just telling me that to make me feel better,” Allen stated. Oh, wowie this really was a Red Allen day wasn’t it!?

“Really kid-“Cross started to protest but the door opened and the dentist walked in. Cross snapped his mouth shut, deciding they would settle this later. Allen eyed the dentist warily as he walked in. He seemed to be a man around his thirties with short, dark, curly hair. Not at all like the old, white-haired, elderly neighborhood pervert who had a fetish for the mouths of children. Okay…but still Allen refused to trust him fully, especially when he extended his hand to Allen in greeting.

“Hi there, bud! How are we doing today?” the dentist asked.

Allen had an urge to bite his hand right then and there, but he resisted. Remember, ice cream,
“I heard that you’ve never been to the dentist before, huh? Well, you have nothing to worry about. All we’re going to do today is check out your teeth, do a little x-ray to make sure everything is okay since you haven’t lost any baby teeth yet, and maybe give your teeth a nice wash. Should be absolutely painless,” the dentist responded cheerfully as he got his equipment together than he needed.

That still did not make Allen any less nervous, even as the doctor explained what he was going to do, what he should expect, etc. It still didn’t make Allen jolt in fear when the chair was leaned back, and bright lights shined in his face. Cross tried to rub the tension out of his shoulders but tried to speak as little as possible. He didn’t want to interject unless he absolutely needed to. There was a moment of hesitation on Allen’s part when the dentist finally asked for him to open his mouth, but Allen was surprisingly cooperative. Although unbeknownst to Cross Allen was feeling quite anxious about the whole thing. He just kept calm and collected by reminding himself of all the things Cross promised.

It seemed the dentist meant what he said though and was taking things slow as to not scare Allen. He didn’t feel any pain as of yet as he poked around his mouth. It was just that knowing someone was looking and prodding around there made Allen highly on edge. After poking around a bit, Allen was allowed to close his mouth for a bit.

“Good news. You don’t seem to have any cavities or broken teeth. Bad news, it seems you may have some issues with grinding your teeth, this is also known as bruxism which is common in children your age. It can be caused by many things like stress, anxiety, genetics, or night terrors. It seems very mild, but we want to keep an eye on that, and I will be giving you some mouth guards to help. Considering your history and the fact you haven’t been to the dentist until now, you’re very lucky. Alright, so now we’ll take an x-ray of your mouth to see what’s going on with your adult teeth, yeah?” the dentist explained as he set up one of the weirdest contraptions Allen has ever seen.

He had to wear this weird heavy vest thing and Cross wasn’t allowed to sit behind him when the dentist did it which spiked his anxiety immensely. It was a strange white machine. He had to place his head in this rectangular like space and have his head positioned in these weird bars of some sort to hold his head in position. He also had to bite down on this weird metal thing to keep his mouth open slightly. It was weird and scary and everything within Allen screamed at him to escape. He disliked it immensely. He hated his head feeling restrained and it was hard for him to keep still, especially when he saw a red-light flash in front of his eyes. Thank god it didn’t last long at all though because if it did Allen was sure he was going to flip out and ruin any attempts of getting what Cross had promised if he behaved. It was painless. Weird and scary yes, but painless. Was it something Allen wanted to do again? Oh hell no. He just wanted this to be over. He was getting tired from his body running on anxiety and he wasn’t sure how much more he could take.

Cross stood by, wondering how much more Allen could take. Sure, he was calm and quiet on the surface, but Cross could see the fear in his eyes. He saw the hunted, animalistic fear look that crossed Allen’s face when he was forced to stick his head in the x-ray machine. He was almost afraid the brat was going to snap right then and there, but surprisingly Allen kept still and calm. If the dentist noticed any annoyance, he didn’t comment on it. He continued to be friendly and reassuring throughout the whole process and took things slow.

Then came the teeth washing part and that was another weird and scary experience. At least Cross was able to return to try and ease the ball of frayed nerves that was Allen. First of all, Allen swore to God that guy was scraping and grinding off his teeth, at least that’s what it sounded like and it made Allen a bit twitchy. Well okay, a lot twitchy. No amount of shoulder rubbing, or reassurances
could stop his twitching. Plus, it took for freaking ever! Or at least it felt like it. Then the guy was flossing his teeth which already made Allen more annoyed and jumpy because it was freaking weird to have something shoved in between your teeth, especially with someone else doing it. Then the guy forced him to spit out whatever the hell he was scraping off his teeth and that looked… disgusting. Allen was beyond relieved when the dentist finally decided to leave him alone after cleaning his teeth. Sure, the entire thing was basically painless, but that didn’t make it any less uncomfortable. He was exhausted and this guy’s friendly attitude was pissing him off. If this had gone on any longer, he probably would’ve stabbed the chair with some pointy dental equipment until the fluff pooled out from it and threaten to do the same with the dentist.

Once the ordeal was over with, Allen gave Cross the crabbiest, most fed up look an eight-year old could muster before promptly, nuzzling his head into Cross’s neck in exhaustion. Cross resisted the urge to roll his eyes at Allen’s drama and instead listened to what the dentist had to say.

“So, there doesn’t seem to be anything wrong with his teeth other than some signs of tooth grinding. None of his teeth look impacted, there’s no cysts, or temporomandibular joint issues. The most likely explanation over him not losing any teeth yet is more likely caused by his earlier years of malnourishment. It’s just going to take time,” the dentist said and the two of them were free to go.

“That wasn’t that bad was it?” Cross asked smugly.

“I still hate it,” Allen huffed crabbily.

“Sounds like someone could use a nap.”

“Sounds like someone should make good on their promise. I behaved,” Allen fired back.

“Yeah, surprisingly, but I don’t know. You’re being quite snarky with me right now—”

“You said to behave and do what the guy says. You didn’t say I had to be nice towards you afterwards. I’m still angry at you and I’m hungry. You owe me at least something.”

Cross shrugged. Okay he had a point there and him being hungry could explain the crabbiness as well. “Alright, but if you don’t remove the stick up your ass once I get you ice cream I’m not going to let you go hang out with Lavi tomorrow. Got it?”

“Fine.”

So, the two made their drive back home and to the ice cream shop. After inhaling several large scoops of ice cream Allen was in a much better mood which only confirmed Cross’s theory that most of the kid’s bitchiness was probably because he was hungry. Which were most cases dealing with Allen. Red Allen dissipated after the cold, creamy treat and Allen was Allen again. Cross was relieved that he wouldn’t have to watch his boots like a hawk in fear of having it used as a toilet, his glasses would not be stolen, and his junk food wouldn’t be eaten...at least not as quickly. When they got home, Allen disappeared, probably still a smidge butt hurt about being forced to go to the dentist. However, that didn’t keep him away for long. Oh no, when he saw Cross going into the kitchen, that brat followed like a dog, except this dog promptly crawled up his back and settled himself there to watch him, a ritual between the two of them. Allen was just in charge of not dropping himself to the floor since Cross’s hands were already busy. As long as he didn’t try to choke Cross or pull his hair, Allen could stay on his back like a koala bear for all he cared since the kid weighed close to nothing.

“So, you’re finally done being butt hurt?” Cross asked.
“Yeah.”

“So no making my life a living hell?”

“Yeah. This time I only peed in your boots,” Allen chirped.

“What!? Dude we had a deal!”

“I’m joking! But Tim put a dead mouse in there… I didn’t know golems hunted mice.”

“They don’t. He’s been watching too many cat movies and shit. Ya’ll are fucking gross.”

“At least we don’t shed all over the place like we’re Chewbacca or something.”

“I have half the mind to throw you off my back and send you to the floor for that comment,” Cross growled, though Allen knew it held more bark than bite. Cross loved their bickering.

Allen gasped, “I didn’t even know you even had half of one!”

“Oh, now you’re dead. C’mere you little imp,” Cross growled, grabbing Allen’s leg and holding him above the ground in front of his face, only Allen was upside down as he stared at him grumpily. Allen blinked and promptly stuck his tongue out at Cross. Cross blinked in annoyance before sticking his own tongue out at Allen.

“Oh yeah? Well this is what you look like,” Allen responded before sticking out his tongue and crossing his eyes before doing the ‘cuckoo’ gesture with his hands, “Look at me I’m Cross and I’m so hairy I put Chewbacca to shame. We used to have a couch that was brown but now it’s red because I shed so much. There’s rumors I turn into a werewolf at full moons and I eat little children for breakfast and use their tears as salt. But only normal children.”

“Oh, look I’m Allen and I like to sit in weird positions to freak out my guardian and sleep in weird ass places. I also cheat in cards and I have a black hole for a stomach,” Cross responded in a high-pitched voice, “Brat if I’m a werewolf, what does that make you?”

“I don’t sound like that and I can’t help that sometimes sitting with my legs behind my head is more comfortable than not. The dryer is also a great place to sleep, you’re just jealous cuz you’re not small enough!” Allen retorted,” And I would be a were wolf pup. A vicious one.”

“Yeah… you’re so vicious kid. You’re more like a chihuahua,” Cross said with an eyeroll.

Allen pouted at that, “Nu-uh! I don’t shake like one!”

“So!? You’re still small and you yip a lot! Plus, you bite sometimes, and you pee in people’s shoes when you’re pissed at them!”

“I’m marking my territory! Just be happy I don’t pee on you!”

“You have before!”

“That doesn’t count! I had bed wetting diapers on, and I can’t help it!”

“Yeah well technically it still counts! You’ll be able to deal with it eventually!” Cross yelled back, being strangely encouraging even if they were having a mock fight. It wasn’t surprising though, they had plenty of bicker matches like this which probably sounded extremely weird to other people. It was like they carried on a normal conversation with each other, but through yelling.
“Yeah, well you pick your nose I saw you,” Allen squeaked out.

“No, I wasn’t I was itching my brain!” Cross yelled back, although his anger was mostly fake.

“You don’t have one, remember!?”

“Says who!?”

“Me!”

“At least I don’t lick random things to claim them as mine and then wonder why I got sick afterwards.”

“I’m marking my territory! Besides, you should clean better! I wouldn’t have gotten sick then!”

“You shouldn’t be licking things in the first place!”

“Well what else did you expect!? I’m a kid!”

Cross paused at that. Shit, he was right.

“Well stop shit kids your age do!?” Cross responded, knowing he probably lost this bickering match.

“First you tell me to act my age and now you tell me not to! Make up your mind! When’s dinner gonna be ready!? I’m hungry! Also I’m getting dizzy!” Allen yelled back, still stuck upside down.

“You just ate!”

“I know but I’m a black hole, remember!?”

“Soon! It would’ve been done sooner but you wanted to smart mouth me!”

“Well maybe if you didn’t make it so easy to annoy you, I wouldn’t smart mouth you!”

Cross set Allen back on the ground before saying, “Tch! Go play in the knife drawer ya lil imp!”

“I don’t wanna play in the knife drawer I wanna play in traffic!”

“It’s too late to go play in traffic!”

“Well fine! I’ll just go play with the garden tools!” Allen shouted, stamping off in fake anger, although he was trying hard not to laugh.

“Well fine then! That’s just as good! Just stay where I can see you and don’t let any werewolves run off with you!”

“Alright! Tell me when dinner is ready!”

“Alright then!” Cross yelled back.

~A couple months later

“Oh my god the dentist did something to me!” Allen shrieked one morning, shaking Cross from a deep slumber. His brat was already up and about for the morning, which wasn’t a surprise. Even if Allen slept with Cross, the brat still woke up before the older, but at least he was nice about keeping quiet…for the most part…unless he was hungry. If he was hungry, he’d wake Cross up via
nerf-gunning him awake or throwing blocks and shit around. He tried calling the house phone multiple times to get him up to. When it came to food, Allen would do anything.

“W-What? The fuck that’s been months ago,” Cross responded groggily as he looked down at his tiny brat who was flapping his arms around and freaking out, “What’s the major malfunction kid? Someone better be dying…”

“I’m dying! See he made my tooth loose! I knew he couldn’t be trusted!” Allen yipped and yapped, showing the first tooth of his top row of teeth being loose.

Really….? That was the problem? Cross was too tired for this shit.

“No…the dentist didn’t do anything brat. Your tooth is loose because your adult tooth wants to come in. It’s supposed to get loose and fall out. You’re fine, so calm your shit. It’s too early,” Cross groaned as he placed a hand on Allen’s head and pushed the kid back and forth slightly. He looked at the time. Well fuck, it was time to get up anyways.

“Well it’s annoying! What if it falls out when I’m asleep and I choke on it!”

“You’re not going to choke on it…”

“You don’t know that.”

“God if you’re that concerned about it, I can yank the sucker out for you then!”

“No way! You’ll make it hurt!” Allen whined, pressing a hand to his mouth in fear.

“Then stop your bitching…at least until I had some coffee.”

So, after learning that the dentist didn’t do anything to him, Allen became obsessed with his loose tooth for the entire week. He wouldn’t stop showing Cross how loose it’s gotten or wiggling it with his finger or tongue. He complained about it wanting to come out, but the moment Cross mentioned about pulling it out for him or getting the pliers to do so, Allen clammed up and shied away. Cross wasn’t sure what the big deal was. When he was a boy he didn’t have to worry about loose teeth because most of them were knocked out from his dad punching and slapping him in his rages. Any stragglers were easily taken care of by just yanking them out. Least to say the kid wouldn’t shut up about it. At all. Which was fine for the first day or so, but Cross was getting tired of it and he also wished the dumb thing would fall out so Allen could stop obsessing over it.

By the end of the week they’ve been over the same conversation for the billionth time of Allen wanting the tooth out but being too scared about pulling it out himself or having Cross do it.

“Just quick it a quick tug and then it’ll be out. It’s not going to hurt that much,” Cross said.

“No,” was Allen’s quick response as he sat in front of the T.V., watching cartoons, the light casting a gentle glow on him. Cross rolled his eyes.

“I don’t know what you expect me to do about it then.”

Allen whined in frustration at his response.

A few minutes later Cross was struck with an idea! Timcanpy!

“What if we tied a string to your tooth and had Tim yank it out for you?”
“That sounds fun!” Allen chirped and Tim grinned, apparently liking the sound of that plan.

So, Cross grabbed a piece of string and tied it around Timcanpy’s tail and then tied the other end carefully to Allen’s tooth. Of course, they ran into a new problem. Allen got nervous and refused to count Tim down or have anyone else do it.

“All I already told you, Tim will zip that sucker out so fast you wouldn’t even feel it.”

“Yeah but what if the string isn’t tight enough and it doesn’t come out? What if I he just pulls me along with him.”

“Kid that isn’t going to happen. Trust me your tooth is so loose it’s going to easily fall out…plus that would be pretty funny…”

Allen glared up at him. He didn’t think it was funny at all.

“Look, just trust me. It’ll be fine-“

Cross paused when he saw a flash of yellow zip away from them. Apparently, Tim grew tired of waiting over whether or not they were going to do this thing or not, so he decided for them. With a tiny gasp, Allen’s tooth was out and Timcanpy was flapping around, grinning victoriously.

“Well okay then, that works to,” Cross mentioned as Tim flapped back to Allen to deposit his baby tooth into his hand.

“So now what…?” Allen asked, staring at the tiny bone in his hand.

“What do you mean?”

“Well I don’t know what to do with this,” Allen admitted with a small lisp as he tongued the empty spot in his mouth the tooth left. Allen walked over and put it in Cross’s hand.

“Well I don’t want your weird, germy tooth. Put it under your pillow, give it to the damn Tooth Fairy, you’ll get money,” was Cross’s response.

“Who’s that? A gay creepy guy that collects children’s teeth and leaves money,” Allen asked, thinking Cross was using the term fairy as a slur. He’s heard the term used plenty of times on the streets before and he was actually a little pissed for Cross using it.

“What? No! It’s a fairy ya little imp. Like Santa Claus-“

“Oh, so it’s not real,” Allen stated.

“The fuck do you mean it’s not real? Well maybe not that but Santa Claus is.”

“Is not. Santa is supposed to give presents to everyone, and I haven’t gotten one thing from him. Mana tried to pretend to be him, but he wasn’t sneaky enough. I saw him.”

“He is to. Mana was just doing his job for him, he’s an undercover elf. That’s why he knew so many things and why he was a great clown. He could make everyone laugh and happy, like Santa does. Right? So he could easily be an uncover elf. Santa can’t give presents to people who travel all over the place sometimes because they’re tricky to locate, but he used Mana to do his work for him,” Cross explained on the fly. He didn’t quite know why he was in the first place. Why the hell should he care if the kid believed in Santa Claus or not? Still, I mean he was just a kid…and
well…even with his shitty home life ‘Santa’ always managed to bring him something. Even if he
was a shitty kid. Later on, he found out his mom, during her more lucid and sober moments, was
the one behind the whole ‘Santa’ act but being able to believe in something like that when he was a
boy gave him something positive in his life which he needed. He wanted to try to infuse that same
positivity, even if it was fake, to Allen. Every kid should think of Santa being real at least once in
their life. They should believe in magic, that was part of being a kid, right? That was another
experience Cross could give Allen, although he doubted the kid would believe in a story like that.
It was worth a shot and anything to do with Mana the kid was bound to believe…at least as long as
it was in a positive light. Cross never told Allen that Mana was basically a nut case or that the car
accident they were in was becoming less of an accident the more Cross researched into it.

Allen looked at Cross skeptically for a long time, digesting the story he told him. Mana was a
really nice man…a little off at times…but maybe it was because he was homesick. Maybe the
warm weather scrambled up his brains because he was so used to the cold of the North Pole before
he came down to be a circus clown. It’s very possible. Mana did know a lot of things, whether it be
from his travels or because he was one of Santa’s elves. It always seemed Mana seemed a little
magical to.

“So, the Tooth Fairy isn’t real…but Santa is?”

“Yeah.”

Allen nodded, seeming to accept the idea, “You really think Mana was an elf?”

“Of course. I’m one of Krampus’s elves, Santa’s evil counterpart. I let Krampus know which kids
have been good or bad so he can whoop them with a bundle of sticks or eat them on December 5th.
I would know a Santa elf if I met one,” Cross lied smoothly.

Okay, now that was believable.

“Wait so have I been a bad kid?” Allen asked, a little afraid of this Krampus dude.

“Nah, there’s plenty of other kids who are straight up monsters compared to a little imp like you.
Besides, he has a rule where he won’t come after his elves’ kids because his elves can already beat
their own kids with sticks if they so choose,” Cross assured.

“So, you could eat me if I misbehave?” Allen squeaked in fear.

“No, that’s gross, but test me and I may beat you with a stick, but that’s only for severe cases,”
Cross sniffed coolly.

“Okay…” Allen responded a little uncertainly.

“Besides, you’re a pretty good kid. You have nothing to worry about,” Cross reassured further,
ruffling Allen’s hair. He seemed to relax after that explanation.

“So, do I still get money for losing a tooth?” Allen asked. He looked a little bummed out.

“Yeah, I guess so,” Cross sighed as he walked off to go find his wallet.

“Yay!” Allen yelped happily.
(So, what do you guys think of Cross being one of Krampus’s elves huh? The Mana part broke my heart lol. Sorry for not updating in almost…well practically two weeks. Finals weeks is slowly approaching and while I have still been writing, I haven’t been able to really finish anything concisely yet. Plus, the stuff I have finished are angstier and I don’t want to dish those out yet. I want something fluffy and happy. I hope your finals go swimmingly and anyone who is graduating, congratulations and good luck on your future endeavors. See you all next time! Feel free to always send me suggestions!)
Random Snippets

Chapter Summary

These are just random snippets/headcanons/scenarios compiled together because none of my drabbles are quite done yet. I’ve been busy, but I didn't want to keep everyone hanging! If you missed Baby Allen there are a few drabbles with him in it!

Chapter Notes

(Just a collection of funny/domestic parent to child interaction scenarios. Mostly the more disgusting, uncomfortable parts of parenthood with random antics in between. You’ve all heard of them, maybe even experienced them in a way. Nothing with any definite endings. Just random snippets that I couldn’t really think of ways to fit them in…or maybe I could’ve but I just wanted to write them out anyways before I forgot them. Allen is 8 unless otherwise specified.).

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~Showering in Privacy? You Wish! (Lots of toilet bodily function humor because that seems to be a huge guy thing…at least in my experience living in a house with my dad and brother while mom works.)~

Cross never realized how much he has taken showering alone for granted until he took in a certain imp whose bathroom needs always seemed to happen around the exact same time Cross decided to shower. He personally thought Allen just timed it that way on purpose to irk him and as much as he tried to get the brat to hold it and wait for him to finish up in the shower, he caved. After all, if Allen had an accident, he’d be the one forced to clean it up. The annoying part was the times when Cross was done with his shower, but I had to stay in the shower with the water on until Allen finished up.

That being said Cross was not surprised that five minutes into his shower he heard the door slam open unceremoniously as the brat walked in.

“Really? Hasn’t anyone taught you to knock? It’s rude to walk into the bathroom when someone else is currently using it,” Cross said his familiar remark.

“We’re both used to it by now,” Allen responded back nonchalantly as he went to the toilet to do his business.

“Doesn’t mean I like you stinking up the bathroom with your bodily functions. You could’ve at least closed the god damn door.”

“We’re the only ones in the house. Who cares? Besides I’m not the one who decided to be a parent!”
Well, the kid got him there.

“I swear you do this on purpose,” Cross stated.

“I swear you just pick stupid times to shower,” Allen retorted.

“I don’t barge into the bathroom when you’re using it.”

“Good because you make it smellier when you do use it.”

“Excuse me? I beg to fucking differ. Not like your shit smells like roses,” Cross protested. Oh parenthood, where discussing bodily functions becomes quite the norm. I have been reduced to this, Cross thought sadly.

“You’re right…maybe it’ll smell better in your boots,” Allen said, Cross could hear the mischief in his voice.

“What is up with you threatening to use my boots as your toilet all the damn time?”

“Well I would go for your hat, but I like to wear your hat sooo…”

At least the brat was being honest.

“Well you wear my boots to sooo,” Cross mimicked.

“Yeah but they’re too big and heavy. You’re big foot.”

“I thought I was Chewbacca.”

“That to. I hope I’m not that hairy when I grow up.”

“Are you done yet?” Cross asked with an eye roll.

“Nooooo”

“Well hurry up before I pass out from you stinking up the bathroom.”

“Like you’re to talk! You smell gross coming home from work, and you try to suffocate me with your stinkiness.”

“That’s the smell of despair and depression, you to will emanate that smell when you grow older,” Cross said, as if he was explaining something that was filled with awe and amazement.

“Despair and depression smells like sweat, and I want no part of that,” Allen deadpanned

“Yes, like a real adult.”

“Anita doesn’t smell that way.”

“That’s because women are strong and smart enough to mask their despair and depression.”

“Dad. It’s called perfume,” Allen deadpanned.

“…..” was Cross’s response.

“…..” Was Allen’s response.
“Are you done yet?” Cross asked again, changing the subject.

“Nooooooo!”

“What the fuck are you trying to do, break my toilet again?”

“Hey, whoa, that’s both of our faults. We both use it.”

“Bull shit. Don’t you lie to me.”

“You know, for someone who hates dirty things, you sure do talk about poop a lot.”

“I can’t help that I have a shitty sense of humor. Besides, I’m not one to talk, that seems to be the humor kids your age are into,” Cross quipped.

“You’re awful.”

“Seriously kid are you done ye-“

“NOOO!”

~Showering in Privacy? You Wish! Pt. 2~

There were times when Cross would try to take a shower and his brat would decide that it would be a fantastic opportunity to also take a shower. To be fair, when Cross decided to take this little imp in, he knew he was sacrificing some of his privacy. He just didn’t know it would be to this extent.

“Really…?” Cross deadpanned, watching Allen take off his shirt.

“Yep!” Allen stated happily, not willing to let Cross have a moment of privacy.

“Why…?”

“Because.”

“Because why?”

“Beeeeecaaauuuussseee.”

“What if I don’t want you to?”

“Then I guess it sucks to be you. Plus, we’ll be saving water.”

“When the fuck did you care? I have to pay the water bill.”

“I don’t. It just sounded like a good excuse.”

“I thought you said my hairiness bothered you.”

“It does. Your hair clogs up the shower drain. That doesn’t mean I don’t love you any less though.”

Gee….thanks kid. It’s always one thing or the other with this kid. As Cross looked down at said
brat, happily standing there with his hands on his hips, he found he was not going to win this one.

“Fine…get in you lil gremlin,” Cross grumbled.

“Okay!” Allen chirped.

“I’m warning you though I’m going to make sure you are squeaky clean though. I know you don’t wash behind your ears!” Cross retorted.

~Weird Compliments/comments~

*There were times Allen could be sweet, but there were also many times Cross had received weird compliments from the child. Most times Allen would stand there and look up at Cross or towards him (depending on the situation) before blurtling the first thing that popped into his head (or at least that’s what it seemed). Cross thought personally that half of the things Allen says are all just to see what kind reaction Cross would have.

*Some of the weird…sort of compliments he received were:

*Allen, randomly looking up at him and squinting his eyes, “You don’t have boogers in your nose today.”

*Allen, randomly hugging Cross and inhaling his scent deeply, “Wow you only smell like despair today instead of depression.”

*When Cross was driving one time and a bird smashed itself on the window, “That’s only one bird this week. That’s improvement.”

*Or when Cross was buying a new T.V. (since Allen broke it…that will be a later drabble), “YAYYY WE’RE NOT POOR FOR ONCE!” (Yeah, well thanks to you breaking the T.V. now we’re poor again. Brat…)

*There was a time Cross gave Allen a Sour Warhead. Allen put it in his mouth for about five seconds before spitting it out in Cross’s hand and saying, “That tastes like your soul.” (Yeah, don’t ask. Cross doesn’t know how the kid knows what his soul tastes like either. He was already repulsed by the kid spitting the piece of sour candy into his hand).

*Another time Allen decided to be stupid while playing on some rocks near the lake and nearly fell into the lake. After regaining his footing, he looked at Cross and said, “I guess the Fates want me to annoy you a little bit longer. Shame.”

~Random Antics (Baby Allen or Toddler Allen)~

“Excuse me!? What do you think you are you doing!?” Cross shouted at the little, diaper clad, boy that was currently throwing away his money into the trash can. The brat dropped the wallet he held in his hand and looked up innocently at Cross.

“Hee hee, hi daddy~ “Allen responded with a huge smile, trying to cute his way out of this one.
“Oh no, you’re not going to get out of this one. I work hard for that money ya know? Where do you think all your diapers and food come from huh?”

“Mommy!” Allen responded gleefully.

“Well he isn’t wrong. If it wasn’t for me you would forget to,” Anita laughed before continuing, “I remember the time you ran out of diapers and used a curtain as a makeshift diaper.”

“Yeah…but I still help to you know…” Cross responded glumly, placing a hand on Allen’s back before gently pushing him away from the trash can so he could retrieve the money he threw away. Allen toddled over to Anita who was playing with Timcanpy. Allen busied himself by trying to grab Timcanpy’s tail which whipped around side to side playfully like a cat’s tail would. It was always entertaining to watch Tim interact with the child, especially when they talked to each other which was mostly incoherent squeaks from Allen and Tim trying to mimic the squeaks. Cross looked up to see Allen stick Tim’s tail in his mouth, eliciting an indignant squeak from Tim and a stubby little limb flailing in Allen’s direction. Allen laughed at Tim’s annoyance and mimicked his limb flailing. Then Allen toddled away from the table, dragging Tim with him. Cross smirked in amusement at Tim dangling from Allen’s mouth, wiggling around angrily.

“You know one of these days he might bite you back, I hope you know that,” Cross called after the little one who back sassed him in a series of incoherent squeaks. Cross deadpanned before shouting after him, “Your argument is invalid!”

Allen shouted incoherently back at him.

“I can’t believe you’re arguing with a toddler,” Anita giggled.

“He started it,” Cross shrugged.

~Random Antics (Baby or Toddler Allen) Pt. 2~

When it comes to small children, anything can set off a temper tantrum. For Allen, sometimes he just threw one just to throw one either out of attention or boredom. There was a moment where he got marker on his hand and ran up crying to Cross. After washing it off, the brat would run off and mark himself up, then come back crying. Sometimes he’d just stand there, put himself on the ground and start crying. Cross could be doing anything, sitting and talking to Mother, cuddling on the couch with Anita, going grocery shopping and suddenly Allen would start the waterworks.

So, Cross decided to video tape him one day. He was reading a textbook, the T.V. was on. It was playing some cartoons when Allen, sitting down, quietly watching, looked over at Cross and threw himself on the floor, beginning to cry. Cross looked up from his textbook, assessing the situation. He didn’t necessarily throw himself on the ground too hard, so he wasn’t crying from being hurt (even then Allen had a tendency to fall and bump into stuff a lot, though he never cried unless it was a particularly hard hit). Cross fed the brat recent enough (for Allen’s case) so he shouldn’t be crying because he was hungry. From where Cross sat his diaper didn’t look like he was full, and he didn’t smell anything, so it probably wasn’t a dirty diaper either. So, the child was probably throwing a fit because A) Dad wasn’t paying attention to him or B) he was bored and wanted to throw a fit.

Cross withdrew his phone, deciding he would video tape this moment for later amusement.

“Looks like my brat sprung a leak,” Cross said as he videoed the bawling little boy, “So what brought this about? Huh? Do we need to take a nap?”
“Nooo!” Allen shrieked from the floor, banging his fists on the ground.

“Well then I don’t know what else to do. Are you sure you don’t need a nap?” Cross asked, acting naïve on purpose.

“Nooo nap!” Allen screamed.

“Well then why are you crying? Did Sesame Street make you cry?”

“Nooo” Allen continued to cry.

“Are you bored?”

“Nooo” Allen whined.

“Do you want a hug?”

“Yeahh”

“Okay then come here.”

That only made Allen cry harder.

“Buddy I’m not going over there. If you want a hug you have to come over here.”

Allen continued to cry for a good minute or so before he realized Cross meant what he said. His crying died down to whimpers and with a small sniffle he got up and toddled his way over to Cross. Cross smirked victoriously as the little boy made his way over to Cross’s side, an adorable little pout on his face. Cross ruffled up Allen’s hair before helping him up. The little boy nuzzled his wet face against Cross’s shirt, a gesture which repulsed Cross (but he got good at covering up his disgust over the years), but man just rolled his eyes and put his arm around Allen.

“Looks like I fixed the leak,” Cross commented before stopping the video.

~No Privacy While Going To the Bathroom. Ever. (Both Child and Baby Allen. Baby Allen First. This one is quite short sorry.)~

One thing that Cross missed was having absolute privacy when going to the bathroom. It was already hard enough trying to lock the little imp out of the bathroom to go take a piss and even then, full privacy was never secure. The brat would end up sitting outside of the bathroom, bawling his head off because Anita or Cross wouldn’t let him in the bathroom for a few moments before peaking from under the door. Cross would love to say that he didn’t get used to it…but the sad thing is…he did. He got used to all the gross, awkward, and uncomfortable moments of parenthood. He never would have imagined he would carry on a conversation with a toddler while on the can. God, he thought everyone’s bitching and whining about parenthood was exaggerated…but lo and behold…they were true. He wondered what else would be true in the coming years.

~Child Allen~

Yeah…turns out little babies aren’t the only ones who seem to follow you around like a little duckling when you think about trying to use the bathroom or shower in peace. At least the kid had the decency to sit outside patiently instead of crying, whining, or peaking under the door. That still
didn’t make it any less annoying.

“You know…I don’t sit outside the bathroom talking to you when you’re taking a shit,” Cross mumbled, cutting Allen’s blabbering off. Cross heard Allen huff indignantly and could picture the annoyed look that crossed his brat’s face at having his story interrupted.

“You do to!”

“Yeah when I’m in the shower. I’m usually in the bathroom first brat!”

“Yeah, well, whatever same difference. Besides, you’d only be on your phone anyways. I’m entertaining you with my awesome story telling skills. Now, where was I before you rudely interrupted? Oh yeah, as I was saying Lenalee said-“ Allen continued to sass and he continued to ramble on and on about something Cross tuned out minutes ago. He would rather be on his phone than listen to this brat talk. But now all he could do was stare at the wall wondering how his life ended up like this.

~Fighting Over Who Gets to Change the Diaper (Random Antics Pt. 3. By the way I work as a CNA so I may be projecting a little bit here haha. Enjoy reading Cross suffering.)~

Cross and Anita’s relationship was pretty good for not being married and for having a kid (who wasn’t even blood related and had a deformed arm). They didn’t fight all that much. They were a pretty good team…that is…until Allen needed a diaper change. So yeah, they fought…daily…but as far as real fighting went it was little to none. It was with good reason, if Cross had anything to say about it that is. There were even times they would pass him off on Tiedoll if they were that desperate. Tiedoll took it like a fucking champ without batting an eye which always made Cross annoyed but also awestruck. I guess there were perks to have four kids though. It wasn’t that Cross couldn’t handle changing a diaper…he could…but Allen was something else. He was a cute baby, that is something Cross and Anita could not deny, but the kid ate a lot so when the inevitable happened…well…it was never a pretty sight. There was actually a couple of times Cross had to bail because he couldn’t stomach it. Boy, he couldn’t wait until the brat was toilet trained. So yeah, when it came to those moments Anita and Cross fought… and sometimes they played dirty.

Like now. They were driving back from the grocery store when Cross saw the familiar, fear inducing, expression come across that little pudgy face. The furrowed eyebrows, the way his face was beginning to turn red and those little fists balling up-

“Not it,” Cross called out.

Anita looked up from her phone, confusion written across her face, “Wha-? What do you mean-“ She looked back at Allen, seeing ‘the face’.

“No way Cross, that isn’t fair! I changed him last time! It’s your turn!”

“It is so fair! It’s not my fault you were too busy looking on your phone to notice!” Cross protested before smirking, “I hope you prepared yourself because he ate a lot for breakfast today.”

“Cross, I’m not doing it. It’s your turn,” Anita deadpanned.

“Well, that’s a shame because I already said I’m not doing it.”

“It doesn’t matter what you said. I woke up to him crying, after sleeping three hours because I
worked last night to change his diaper. You are doing this one or so God help me.”

“Sweetheart….I love you…and I know you work very hard…but I am so not going change him. I swear to God I will change him for the next two days if you change this one. I swear. I am almost positive I am not going to be able to stomach doing this one,” Cross responded, near pleading because the expressions coming across the little brat’s face made him more and more nervous about the car seat he was in and whether or not this smell was going to forever permeate his car.

“Cross, he’s peed on you, spit up on you, and pooped on you, you’re telling me you can’t change one single poopy diaper?” Anita deadpanned.

“Well yeah, but those were times where he was smaller… and didn’t sh-“ Cross said, earning a glare from Anita from nearly saying the word shit, “I mean poop that much…and now he’s bigger and…”

“Wow, the great hardcore Cross Marian is afraid of a baby’s diaper,” Anita smirked.

“Don’t you start. You have seen what he is capable of,” Cross said, he’s eyes narrowing.

“Yeah, and those times I was forced to clean up after him. Remember?

God damnit, Cross thought to himself. She was right. Cross was too chicken to do it himself.

“So, Allen, who do you think should change your diaper? Huh?” Anita cooed to the little one who seemed finished doing what all kids his age did best. Destroying things… with the most innocent and sweetest smiles while doing so.

Cross shuddered when he heard the kid squeak out, “Daddy!” Damn it, Anita. Using the brat against him. She could be so beautiful, yet so cruel.

Anita gave Cross the most smuggest smile before saying, “Well Daddy looks like you got this one. Man up and take one for the team.”

Cross gave Allen a wary look, getting an innocent, relieved smile in return. Why did that smile look so threatening?

Cross heaved a huge sigh, “Fine, but I don’t guarantee I’m going to be able to keep my composure.”

So, when they got home, Cross gave a pleading look to Anita. Anita smiled sweetly before getting out of the car and leaving him with the little, smelly creature in the back with a,

“Good luck Marian.”

Cross watched Anita walk into the house before slowly turning to Allen who gave him a toothy grin. He smelled absolutely revolting. Cross could feel his stomach flip in discomfort.

“Well… guess we should get this over with huh?” Cross sighed as he got out of the car and went over to get Allen out of his car seat. A little whimper escaped Cross’s lips when he saw there was shit everywhere. The car seat would need washing. Whoever said parenthood was fun was a fucking masochist… or at least that is what Cross felt at the moment. Allen gave Cross a strange look as the man held him arm’s length away from him and walked into the house, towards his room. Cross could hear Anita snickering as he made his way there. Then he deposited the little boy on the changing table and stood there dumbly for a few minutes, as if he was trying to figure out the best way to diffuse a bomb. Allen shifted uncomfortably, blinking up at Cross innocently.
“Well…alright then…” Cross said warily as he began the god forsaken task that was probably going to kill him. Cross wasn’t sure how Anita managed to clean Allen up all those other times, because he was struggling even doing this. Cross nearly lost his composure about four times during the whole ordeal which felt like it lasted for eternity. Finally, after god only knows how long, the brat was clean and diapered. Allen giggled and clapped his hands, as if congratulating Cross on his god-awful quest of changing his diaper. He decided to forgo pants since the kid already destroyed one outfit today. Thanks kid…but I don’t feel like a champion, Cross thought to himself as he eyed the soiled clothing in disgust.

Cross set Allen on the floor so he could go toddle off to destroy more things, “Alright you little imp. You’re free to go.”

Anita looked up, giving the pale, sickly and battle-weary Cross a sweet smile as he collapsed on the couch next to her.

“That wasn’t bad was it? I even cleaned the car seat for you.”

“Thanks,” Cross muttered as he watched Allen toddle about the living room.

A minute or so later Anita looked up and said, “Oops looks like we have a round two.”

Cross opened an eye, having been trying to take a nap to see ‘that expression’ cross Allen’s face again. God fucking damn it I literally just changed him, Cross thought as he groaned loudly. He couldn’t do a round two…not after the first round.

Anita laughed at Cross’s reaction as he stared at his son with the most suffering look….

“Tag me out?” Cross asked, putting his hand out, practically pleading.

“Oh my god Cross,” Anita giggled before taking it hand. She knew based on the sickly look he had that he wouldn’t be able to handle it, “I’m sorry for laughing, but your reactions are hilarious. I’ll take this one.”

“Thank you…” Cross groaned and he proceeded to continue with his nap.

~You’re always competing with your child’s bladder (Child Allen age around 8 like normal)~

Cross’s victories have been reduced to the smaller things in life…well sort of smaller things in life depending on how you look at it. Having fast enough reflexes to make sure your child doesn’t land face first on the pavement? You’re winning at life. Your child managed to put themselves to bed and is sleeping peaceful. Hell yeah, take that life! You didn’t have to fight your child to brush their teeth tonight? Sweet! One of the many other victories that Cross prided himself in, is winning against Allen’s bladder. You know how it goes. You tell your kid to use the bathroom before a trip in the car and they say that they don’t have to go. Then five minutes later they’re in the back complaining that they have to go, and it feels like you’re playing life on God-mode as you try to save your car seats from being ruined by urine. Oh yes. Cross is familiar with this game. He has yet to lose. He doesn’t know if that is a good thing or a bad thing. There is only one time Cross nearly lost and he should’ve seen it coming…

The two of them stopped at a gas station and they got sodas. The kid got an extra-large and downed that sucker like it would be the last thing he would drink for the entire day. Cross should’ve seen it
coming. He should’ve. But he didn’t…because maybe Cross just liked to test life. So, naturally five minutes after Allen finished his large soda the brat says.

“I have to pee.”

“I don’t see a gas station around here. Do you?”

“No…”

“Well then I guess you gotta hold it until we can stop somewhere. You decided to inhale your soda, now you get to deal with a full bladder.”

“Okay…”

A few minutes pass.

“I need to pee!!”

“I know. I clearly remember you saying that like three minutes ago kid. I can’t do anything about it until we hit a gas station. There’s people behind us and the cops are swarming this road, so you can’t just go out and do your thing either.”

“I can’t hold it until we get to a gas station! My bladder is going to explode!” Allen whined, shifting uncomfortably in the backseat. Cross started to get a little worried.

“Your bladder isn’t going to explode. Unless we get into a car wreck in which case-“ Cross trailed off once he saw the fearful look that Allen gave him, “Uhhh…forget I said that. You have to hold it. I don’t have a change of clothes for you.”

Allen whimpered but fell silent for a minute before he began to whimper, and tears began to fill his eyes.

“I seriously can’t hold it for much longer!”

“Why did you freaking drink that huge ass soda in the first place then!??”

“Cuz you bought it!”

“Yeah, but why did you drink it all at once!?”

“I’m a kid! I didn’t think it through!” Allen yelled back.

Well…the kid wasn’t lying. He did sort of know the answer to that one. Cross felt fear crawl up his spine. He was pretty clear the brat was not going to last for very much longer. They were still surrounded by cars and there was no gas station for miles. Shit. Then Cross’s eyes landed on his near empty pop bottle. Okay…that’ll work.

Cross chugged down the rest of his pop before shoving it in Allen’s face.

“Here, piss in this.”

Allen paused his whimpering and whining in favor of looking at Cross like he was nuts. He gave him a look that basically said “You can’t be fucking serious right now.”

“Well, hurry it up if you have to go so damn bad.”

Allen took the bottle, uncertain and a little repulsed that it came down to this.
“Seriously? You’ve pissed on a tree, in the backyard, in a port-a-potty and probably god knows where else and this is where you draw the line?” Cross commented. Well he wasn’t wrong…but still.

“And make sure you don’t piss on the floor. I know your aim is shit,” Cross growled.

If Allen wasn’t desperate to pee, he would’ve said something back to the man but for now he was concentrating on not making a huge mess.

When he was done, he tried to give it back to Cross who said, “Ewww no! What the fuck man. I don’t want your piss up here with me. Here’s the cap, just put it on their tight and keep it back there until we can throw it away.”

Allen rolled his eyes but did as he was told.

“Cool….Jack Sparrow has a jar of dirt and we have a pop bottle full of piss…” Cross commented.

~Random Antics (Child Allen)~

“You two are a bunch of weirdos you know that?” Anita asked, her phone in hand recording the latest antic the two came up with. It snowed a lot overnight. A lot. So, Allen came up with the idea of being tossed in the snow in his pajamas out of boredom. However, he also roped Cross into it after much begging. So now, there they were. In the cold. In pajamas. With Cross holding Allen ready to toss him into the huge snow drift that threatened to blockade them within the house.

“What can I say? I love tossing kids,” Cross said with a smirk before he turned his attention on Allen who looked a little nervous, “Don’t tell me you’re thinking of backing out now.”

“No way!” Allen responded, screaming girlishly when Cross pretended, he was about to toss him, “Hey that was rude!”

“You sure? This snow is pretty deep. You might get swallowed whole,” Cross said, ignoring the glare Allen gave him.

“If that’s how I die, that’s how I die.”

“Not the last words I would’ve chosen but good enough. Ready? 1….2….3!” Cross responded before tossing Allen into the snow drift.

A blood curdling shriek left Allen’s mouth, “OH MY GOD THIS IS SO FREAKING COLD!!!!”

As Allen climbed his way out of the snow drift, that quite literally just about swallowed him whole, he watched Cross prepare to dive into the snow.

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“Any last words Marian?” Anita asked, fighting back giggles as Allen continued to whine about how cold the snow was.

“Yeah. It’s been real. Can’t believe a brat lured me into this. I will see you all in hell,” Cross cackled with a salute before jumping into the snow. Allen cheered enthusiastically and cackled when Cross cursed at how cold it was.

“HOLY FUCKING SHIT THAT’S AS COLD AS THE SEVENTH CIRCLE OF HELL!” Cross blurted out as he got out of the snow drift, “Shit it got up my pants what the fuck!”
Then there was a flash of gold zooming towards the snow drift and when they turned to look, there was a yellow, spiraled tail wiggling out of the snow drift.

“Timcanpy joined in to! Yay Tim!” Allen cheered.

“You guys are both going to get yourselves sick one day. I suppose you expect me to take care of you?” Anita chided lightly, but still laughed at their reactions. Allen walked over to pull Timcanpy out of the snow drift, meanwhile Cross had a nasty plan up his sleeve. He walked over to Anita, a loving smile on his lips.

“Well then, I guess we’ll just have to take you down with us,” he said as he leaned in to embrace his lover, Anita felt the man tug on the collar of her pajama shirt and shove snow down the back of it before taking off in a sprint.

Anita gasped before running after Cross, “Cross Marian you jerk! Get back here! You’ll pay for that!”

“I love you!” Cross called out before holing himself up into his room.

“Oh, bite me Cross!”

“Maybe later sweetheart!”

“Oh my god you guys are disgusting!” Allen shrieked.

~Sharing Bed Space Unexpectedly~

There was a sniffle. That was the first thing Cross woke up to after going to bed for a couple of hours. As he listened harder, he could hear more quiet sniffling and whimpering coming from his doorway. Allen. As Cross became more aware of his surroundings, he could hear no rain or thunder in the distance. It wasn’t a thunderstorm that was the cause of this late-night crying. It must be a nightmare then, or perhaps he just felt lonely in his bed. Maybe he was too scared to sleep. Makes sense if you were out on your own and had to fend for yourself. Either way, Cross was a little annoyed that the brat was just standing out there all alone, crying. He told the brat if he needed anything, he could come wake him up and get in bed with him. He didn’t have to stand there alone in his own thoughts, scared of waking Cross up and having him get angry at him.

“Allen. Come here,” Cross croaked out, the air turning silent as Allen was found out. There were times he would walk away, back to his room in shame and Cross would have to come grab himself (because he would be damned if he let Allen go to bed with fear on his mind). That wasn’t this time, instead, the little boy shuffled inside Cross’s room, his head down in shame.

“Oi. Why are you looking so ashamed like that? I told you many times now that if you needed something you could wake me up,” Cross croaked out as the little boy approached him. Cross rubbed a few circles in his back before scooting over and holding up the blankets, “Get in. Come on.”

Allen sniffled as he got under the covers and snuggled up against Cross’s chest. A few sobs wracked the little body next to him, but Cross hushed him and continued to rub his back.

“There’s nothing to be ashamed about. You don’t have to stand out there crying like that. Just wake me up next time.” Cross responded, although he knew Allen wouldn’t do so.
“We’ll talk in the morning. It’s late right now so get some sleep. Alright? I’ll protect ya,” Cross mumbled sleepily as he pet back Allen’s soft hair, easing him back into slumber. Even though he was nearly dozing off himself, he made sure that Allen was asleep before allowing himself to fully slip into unconsciousness as well. He knew he probably could fall asleep before Allen did and the kid would be fine, but he always waited until the brat was out before he passed out. Just in case.

When Cross awoke again it was to Allen’s foot in his face because the kid had a tendency to turn upside down in his sleep somehow.

~Sharing a Bed Unexpectedly Pt. 2~

Cross felt someone staring at him, so he opened one eye to see that he was somewhat correct. Except there were two little boys staring at him. One was Allen, looking teary eyed and ashamed. The other one, Junior, looked like he was about ready to fall asleep standing up.

“What’s up?” Cross croaked, but soon he got his answer as he heard thunder rumbling in the distance and Allen shudder in terror. Lavi opened his tired eyes, acknowledging the thunder, but soon shut them again in favor of continuing to doze off while standing. Now you may be asking yourself why Lavi decided to follow Allen into Cross’s bedroom. He seems perfectly okay with the storm and is even falling asleep while standing. So, what’s his problem? Allen. The two were attached at the hip and did almost everything with each other. Literally almost everything. They took a leak together most times, but if one of them wanted privacy in using the bathroom the other was already waiting at the door for the other. They showered together, ate together, napped together, did stupid shit they knew they shouldn’t do because it’ll piss Cross off together. Whenever Bookman had to go somewhere far away because of his work, he always dropped Junior off to stay at Cross’s house and continue his schooling (of course, promising Lavi that he would tell him everything he learned on his journeys and that one day, he to, will travel alongside him). When the two eventually had to split off, whether it be for school (since they were in different grades) or because Bookman returned, the two went into a depression of sorts. It was something both adorable and annoying because now Cross had to worry about tripping over two brats instead of one.

Lavi was used to sleeping with Bookman, so he never liked to sleep by himself. That’s another reason why he slept with Allen, so of course the eye patch clad child would follow his partner in crime here. So, in other words…yeah things got kind of cramped at times like these. Especially when Anita was over…like now.

Anita sleepily perched her head on Cross’s shoulder, glancing at the two children. She giggled softly at Lavi whose head was tilting backwards, his body following suit as he dozed off. Cross shot out his hand to grab the boy’s shirt before he could fall backwards, effectively waking the child back up. Lightning flashed, pulling Allen closer to the bed as he eyed the window warily.

“Allright. Get in you two,” Cross growled out. Allen bowed his head shamefully as he climbed in, taking refuge in between Anita and Cross while Lavi, too tired to move just flopped himself over on top of Cross. Cross huffed in annoyance while Anita giggled and put her arm around Allen who nuzzled his face into Cross’s back.

When Cross woke up in the morning, he not only had Allen’s foot in his face, but also Junior’s arm in his face. At least Junior didn’t move too much in his sleep like a certain brat did.

~Being Creative In Getting Kids To Sleep~
Allen usually had a hard time falling asleep, so Cross created an arsenal of things to do to help him fall asleep. Most times he’d rock him to sleep in the la-z boy chair and have him listen to the playlist he created for him on his phone. Sometimes he’d make warm milk or spray some lavender scent around his room or on his clothes to lull him. He always tried to time his sleep schedule according to the weather, since the kid was terrified of storms. He tried to get him to sleep before the storm in hopes that maybe he could sleep through it, which sometimes worked and sometimes did not.

If Lavi was over he’d have both boys on his lap, rocking them to sleep, though Lavi preferred not having music to sleep. Cross found music tended to do the opposite to Lavi. Instead of shutting his brain down it seemed to rile him up more. This is especially true with the T.V., although there were times he’d fall asleep watching a documentary. Another one of the many things he did, was to take Allen out in his car until he fell asleep. This became a huge favorite, especially with Lavi who always loved to explore and point out shit as they drove around like ‘Oh wow those guys are selling drugs to each other’ ‘Haha…that guy is stumbling around like he’s drunk.’ (probably because he is drunk kid, why are you pointing out things like this?)

What Bookman doesn’t know, won’t hurt him. Right? Anyways, Cross would plug his phone in through the AUX cable and have Allen’s playlist playing as he drove around to entice the little one to sleep. He’d have him lay down in the back (which yeah, he knew you’re not supposed to do that more than other people, but when the hell did he ever follow the law? Seems a little ironic sense he is also enforcing it.) and let the car do the lulling for him. Sometimes all it took was five minutes, other times it took half an hour to get him passed out, but it worked like a charm. For Junior it just depended how interested he was of the nightlife in town. There were times he could care less and would pass out within a few minutes. Other times he wouldn’t fall asleep at all, his green eye lit up, taking in his surroundings.

Either way was fine. Lavi could sleep anywhere, much like Allen, but with more ease. If he did end up falling asleep though, Cross would usually carry Lavi inside while Anita would carry Allen because Lavi was bigger than Allen. It was always remarkable to see what methods worked and what didn’t work depending on the day, but if Cross had to choose one that was fool proof it would be driving around in the car.

~Kids Are Stupid~

If there is anything Cross learned being a parent, it’s that kids do many stupid things. Especially when you get kids together. It seems like the more kids there were together, the stupider they would get. One day, Cross was just getting home from work when he saw Junior and Allen in a box at the top of the stairs. Oh…this was not going to end well.

“Are you two trying to get yourself killed? I swear, you guys plan your stupidity whenever I’m home so that I get to be blamed over the stupid shit you do,” Cross growled as he glared at the two idiots grinning within their box.

“We’re going on an adventure on the seven seas!” Lavi said.

“Yeah? Does it involve the ER? I’m telling you; you’re doing something very stupid,” Cross
warned.

“Nah, it’ll be fine! People do this all the time!” Lavi responded excitedly, holding up a form sword in the air.

“Yeah, you’re just being a buzz kill!” Allen chimed in.

“I don’t suppose you watched long enough to see what happens to them after they go down the stairs, have you?” Cross asked as he took off his hat, eyeing the box as he figured out the trajectory of it. He then set his hat down on the ground.

“Yeah, we did! But we’re awesome! We’re not gonna fail! Right Al!”

“Right Lavi!”

“Alright. Don’t say I didn’t warn you,” Cross shrugged, standing back with an eyebrow raised.

“Awesome! Alright Al! Let’s set sail!” Lavi squealed as Allen pushed the box off the top step of the stairs. They slide down a good few stairs before the box inevitable tipped. With terrified squeaks, the two were sent tumbling down the rest of the stairs to rest beside Cross’s hat.

Cross stared down at the two, unamused, and assessing the situation. The two boys pouted, both trying very hard not to cry, although Allen was the one that failed first. That sent Lavi into his own crying fit (if one cried, the other was bound to cry to).

“I told you two you were doing something stupid,” Cross chided as he picked each one up and brushed them off, assessing them carefully. No broken bones. Probably a few bruises, crushed dreams, and hurt egos. Better than what he was expecting.

“You’re fine. Just a few bruises. Probably shouldn’t do that again though,” Cross sighed as he ruffled up their hair. He noted with disgust that Allen’s nose was running like a river, “Ughh.. hold on.”

Cross walked over to a tissue box to grab a few tissues before walking back over to the two crying boys to wipe at their faces.

“Alright, that’s enough. Stop your bawling and go do something less reckless while I make dinner. Yeah?” Cross said as he finished wiping their faces. Allen sniffled loudly but Lavi seemed to have calmed down in favor of cooking up his next plan. It didn’t take long for the two to be redirected to the television. As long as they weren’t doing anything stupid. Cross didn’t care.

~Wiping away Tears (part of this may be turned into a full fledged drabble. Not sure yet. Warning it is sad and angsty.)

Wiping up snotty noses and tears was also another part of parenthood, but there was a time of year in which Cross was wiping away more tears and noses and I’ll give you a hint. It’s not flu season, although it came to be very close. Nope. It was the week of Mana’s death. That was the week where the atmosphere did a whole 360 and Allen withdrew from everyone. That was the week where Cross would lay with him on the bed in his room, silent, just keeping him company.

The day Mana died was both tragic and mysterious. Cross actually knew Mana back when he was young and stupid (last couple years of high school), though he mostly hung around Neah. When it
came to the two of them, they were polar opposites. Mana was a kind soul. Neah was a mischievous little shit. Cross was a lot closer to Neah than with Mana. Something happened to Neah though. He was the type of guy that was fearless. He went around picking fights just because he was bored, and he usually won those fights. He was a prankster. He excelled in acting and had girls fawning over him because he was pretty and a ‘bad boy’. Well, one day, Neah messed with the wrong group of people. It was a group the two of them heard about from the other groups they visited for drugs. Cross usually did errands to make some money so at least he’d have a full stomach and a decent shelter over his head because his dad was too fucked up to do it himself. Or remember to. So yeah, Neah messed with the wrong group and as far as Mana and Cross knew, Neah was murdered. Well, more like MIA, missing in action. Nobody found his body. This was towards the end of high school.

Once they graduated, Cross and Mana split up. Mana had a huge nervous breakdown and decided to become a circus clown while Cross was stuck doing odd jobs and drinking himself stupid. Cross always tried to keep tabs on Mana though. Then he saw Mana found a kid. A kid that reminded him of himself at that age. Cross didn’t care too much. He was just happy Mana was still alive.

Then Cross became part of the town’s law enforcement and he was called out on a fatal accident. It was nearing the end of winter and they had a particularly bad storm. Freezing rain and thunder. The roads were absolute shit outside and the weather channel said that no one should be out unless they absolutely had to be. Well that fatal accident that night, was the night Mana died and the night Allen fell under Cross’s care. What seemed to happen was that Mana hit a patch of black ice that sent his car careening off the road and into the ditch where it hit a tree. Mana’s car was quite old and did not have seat belts so both him and Allen flew out of the car on impact. Mana died on impact, his body broken, bloody, near his car. Allen meanwhile was sent further away. Breathing shallowly, bloody, but alive. Sure, Cross should’ve sent him to the hospital. He was about to actually until he saw the star carved into his forehead.

That’s where the mystery of the car accident comes in. How would someone get a star shaped scar like that in a car accident? The answer is…they wouldn’t. Someone carved that star into his forehead, for reasons Cross couldn’t figure out. Still that star was familiar. He saw it on the doodles Neah drew out of boredom in high school. Mana also had a strange affection to stars, but he doubted he would be so cruel to carve that in a child’s face. It was a symbol of Neah. Why did he carve it into Allen’s forehead? He didn’t know. When it saw it on Allen’s forehead though, that destroyed any resolve Cross had about taking the child in. Sure, the scared little blues through half-lidded eyes locking on his, the small, shivering, crumpled body, and the blood red, paralyzed arm crumpled away at him, but it was the star that made Cross grab the child and take him to Mother’s. It was a stupid thing. He shouldn’t tamper with any evidence at any scene, whether crime or accident, but still. He couldn’t help it. His instincts told him to do it. He had to take Allen in. He was lucky the kid even made it through the night, considering he didn’t know what the internal damage was upon impact. There was damage done though, mostly emotional. As to how the brat managed to move his once paralyzed arm, Cross chalked it up to his brains being smacked around just right for him to gain movement over it.

That was the week where the house was still and quiet. Very much like someone died in Cross’s house. When the day of his death finally rolled around, Allen refused food, refused sleep, refused to move, almost like a ritual of sorts. It was like the kid was denying himself of necessities because Mana could no longer eat, drink, or move himself. Then the day would pass. In a few days Allen would resurface, weary, but alive, his purpose revitalized. “Keep walking.”

During that week, Cross also found himself going into a sort of ritual. It was the first year under his care that Cross created it. He would stay by Allen’s side as much as he could. As much as Allen allowed. Coax him to eat, to drink, and sleep. He knew he probably shouldn’t feed into this
behavior. It wasn’t healthy to let the kid wallow in Mana’s death. What else was he supposed to do
though? Mana was the kid’s first father figure, albeit a crazy, sometimes neglectful one (without
meaning to), but his first father figure. The first person to show him unconditional love and the
brat lost him. Of course, he’d be torn up. He couldn’t just tell the brat to lighten up, to deal with it
and move on.

During this week Cross would witness an onslaught of emotional states. Profound sadness.
Survivor’s guilt. Rage. Disgust. Sickness. It was like all the things Allen suppressed under Mana’s
mask would rear its ugly head, threatening to eat him alive. That was the only way he could
describe it. As the years moved forward, the ugliness would die down a little. It was still there, but
less of a whirlwind than the first year it happened. That first year was hell. During a couple of his
rages, Cross was forced to wait outside of his room until he calmed down because the brat refused
any sort of comfort Cross tried to give. There were times where Allen would make himself sick
with the amount of emotions he was feeling. Other times the little boy would just walk right up to
Cross and rest his weary head on him, staring off into the void.

All Cross could do was sit there with Allen, riding through the stormy seas of grief, wiping his
tears away, and just be there. To make sure he didn’t hurt himself. To make sure he came back
from his journey in one piece. To make sure he didn’t dehydrate or starve to death. Unable to fix it.
Just witness it. It was another thing of parenthood that Cross hated, and that was the fact that there
were times where you wouldn’t be able to fix things. The feelings of hopelessness and anger as
you watch your child go through hell and all you can do is sit and watch. Hoping they’ll be okay.
Hoping they’ll come back. Trying to support them, to be lifeline back to reality.

~Kids Are Cute (I wanted to end everything on a positive, cute note)~

Kids are cute. Well okay…some kids were not cute…but you better not let any of the mothers to
those not so cute kids, know about it. If Cross had a say in it though, he’d say Allen was the cutest
kid ever. The kid knew it to and used it to his advantage. Cross caught the kid acting adorable
many many times. The kid loved to wear his hat or use his jacket as his own security blanket of
sorts. There was a time Cross caught his brat wearing his boots, jacket, and hat while strutting
around in front of a mirror singing “Cooler Than Me” like he was a bad ass. He might’ve scored
the role if he didn’t trip over his own feet every time, he took a step in Cross’s boots and had
something other than his underpants on. It was cute though…and Cross totally didn’t video tape
him in secret before sending it to Anita. Oh yes…he will use that to embarrass the shit out of him
when he was older.

Other times Allen would have what Cross dubbed ‘his girly days’ where he’d want to wear a dress
or skirt. Cross wasn’t against that, but he had rules. He wouldn’t let Allen go in public dressed in
the opposite gender’s clothes. This was more for his safety. The kid was already targeted because
of his eye and hair and he’d be damned to give someone else another reason to mess with his kid.
When he was older, he could make that decision himself, but not when he was still young. As far
as Cross was concerned, the kid could run around in a dress and make-up all he wanted in the
house. That wasn’t to say Cross accepted it with open arms in the beginning. He had some
concerns. He didn’t know if giving in to Allen wanting to wear dresses would be a good thing or a
bad thing. Plus, if he was being honest with himself, he wasn’t raised in a very open and accepted
household to begin with. Anita convinced him to lighten up and let Allen explore his identity. The
only way Allen would be able to figure it out was through trying it out. At least doing it in the
house will give him a safe, supportive space to explore.

It was cute though. The kid was good at make-up and dressing up, plus it was endearing to watch
the way his eyes lit up when he asked if he looked good and Cross said yes. It was even cuter when
Allen insisted on Cross pretending to be a prince and playing with him. The kid was absolutely
delighted in pretending to be a queen or princess (depending on what scenario he wanted at the
time). There were days where he would insist Lavi pretend to be the charming prince, which Lavi
took with great honor. Whether they were pirates in search of treasure (Lavi’s favorite) or princess
and prince charming, Lavi loved to role play with Allen. There were a couple of times where
Twinkie (Link) would come over and be absolutely baffled by Allen’s insistence of him becoming
prince charming. He never got up the guts to take on the role though, which is probably a good
thing because Lavi would get jealous.

One other moment that Cross found both irritating but adorable was the time Allen attempted and
failed awfully to make a cake…by himself. He tried to cover it up by saying he was trying to make
a snow angel. The brat didn’t even make it past getting out the ingredients before he was caught
red-handed. He was attempting to grab a huge bag of flour, when the weight of it knocked him off
of the counter, scattering a bunch of flour everywhere. Now when it came to Allen, Cross didn’t
bat his eye at thumps…that is if they sounded like little thumps. This was not a little thump. So
Cross immediately went to the kitchen to find out what was going on to find Allen slowly picking
himself up off the ground, covered in flour. The whole floor was covered in flour too.

“What in the hell do you think you’re doing!? Are you hurt!? Jesus Christ kid, you’re lucky you
didn’t split your head open!” Cross shouted.

Allen’s face twisted up, almost as if he was going to start crying, but instead he let loose a huge
sneeze, causing the flour on his head to puff out around him.

“Get out! I’m trying to make a snow angel!” Allen fibbed, his cheeks red and puffed out in
embarrassment.

“A snow angel!? Out of flour!!”

“Yeah! It’s called imagination! Grown ups like you wouldn’t understand it!”

“If you wanted to make a snow angel so damn bad, I could’ve shipped you off to Antarctica! They
have plenty of snow down there!”

“Yeah but I wanted to make it out of flour!”

“Flour isn’t meant to be played in!”

“Well maybe you shouldn’t have bought the flour in the first place!” Allen shouted back, pausing
momentarily to sneeze again.

“Flour makes food. We need food to live,” Cross shouted back as he tried to walk into the kitchen
to clean up the huge mess Allen made.

“Oh my god! Get out!”

“What do you mean get out!? This is my kitchen!” Cross protested as the child got up and tried to
push him out of the kitchen. Then Cross spotted the eggs on the counter and bowls. Oh…Ohhhhh
so that’s what the kid was doing!

“Yeah, but I’m using it! You can have it when I’m done!” Allen shouted as he continued to push
Cross out of the kitchen.

“Jesus! Alright fine! God! Just clean up when your done! I swear to god though if I smell smoke or
you start something on fire, I will ban you from setting foot in the kitchen!”

“Okay whatever! Go watch T.V. and take a nap, whatever adults do in their spare time! God!”

Chapter End Notes

(Hiya! Sorry for the lack of updates. We’ve just gone through finals at my college so hopefully I will be able to update more. I have several prompts in the making, none of them near finished hahaha. But I wanted to try and give you guys something for the wait. I tried to go through the drabbles I have, but none were huge enough or put together enough to count as ‘a drabble chapter’ in my eyes, so I produced some mini snippet/scenarios/headcanons in the meantime. I hope you guys enjoyed it. I tried to make most of them fluffy/happy/ or humorous in some way. Some other things you can hopefully look forward to sooner or later is that I am nearly complete with Allen’s playlist Cross uses to help him fall asleep/calm down. I have a lot of songs on there but I’m not quite certain about some of the songs being placed in there right now. I do plan on turning it into both a Youtube playlist and an 8tracks playlist. I also have a Linkllen playlist in the making, a Lavi Bookman playlist in the making, and a Lavi and Allen playlist in the making for the drabble series. Feel free to p.m. any prompts you’d like to see, or if you’d like me to do more in any one of these scenarios here. I swear to god I will do the Miranda and Krory date…they are just not being good muses right now. I really hope they’ll come back soon because I miss them both hahaha. I haven’t forgotten them though.

For those of you on Tumblr, I have a Cross Marian account created (well it’s actually a side blog) where you can interact with Cross from the drabble series. It is crossoveryourheartspreparetodie. So, if you’ve noticed some similarities in drabbles to some of the posts…that is why! Feel free to send asks both to me or Cross. Nothing too NSFW though. Also indicate whether your asking Modern AU! (aka this Cross) or Canon Cross. If it’s not indicated I will probably respond using Modern AU! Cross. Other than that, I will see you next time, and hopefully I will have one of the playlists done by then!)
Chapter Summary

So yeah this is basically a drabble that's been sitting on my desktop for nearly a month alongside many others. It's not totally finished yet, this is only the first part. There are mentions of rape, emotional abuse, anxiety attacks, and depression. I'll get around to making happier drabbles, but right now with my head space, I'm just not in that headspace right now. I have the amusement park one started. Hope you enjoy.

Chapter Notes

So yeah, obviously this drabble is about Link x Allen and is basically supposed to be stuff after the whole Jake drabble, give or take a couple months or so after the incident. If you don’t like Linkllen, feel free to skip this chapter. Trigger warnings for the rape mention, emotional abuse, depression, sexual assault, and anxiety attack. I have a link to a Lavi Bookman playlist I made recently if you wanted to check it out at the bottom of this chapter in the ending notes. It's not directly related to this series exactly. I am slowly putting together Allen's calm playlist.

When Allen got back to the hotel room the day he broke up with Jake he took Anita’s suggestion and consumed as much ice cream his stomach could hold. After he ate his fill, he fell into a deep sleep to prepare for the last day of the dance competition which was their group competition. Allen was able to keep himself level headed until it was time to leave the hotel for home. Once he got home Allen spiraled into a deep depression. It was Allen’s first ever relationship and an abusive one at that. Being the teenager that he was, he came to the conclusion that everything he knew of love was a lie and his whole world was a huge dumpster fire. He also found himself becoming hateful when he saw couples being lovey dovey out in public. Overall, he was broken hearted and moody. While Allen was now coming home when he was supposed to and staying out of trouble, it didn’t mean everything was back to normal.

Allen barely functioned since coming back from the competition and Cross had to literally pull the brat from his bed in order to get him to do anything. Whenever Cross dragged the kid out of bed, Allen would glare at him, bitching and complaining about it. It wasn’t like Cross was trying to be mean or insensitive to Allen’s pain, but Cross also knew that the more you fed into depression, the easier it was to be swallowed up. That’s why he tried to give Allen time to rest, but also made sure he got his ass out of bed here and there as well.

“Time to wake up sunshine. It’s past noon,” Cross greeted, barging into Allen’s room. The kid hadn’t showered in three days. It was easy to tell by the wonderful stench of body odor. Yay puberty. Definitely smells like Teen Spirit…well okay, minus the spirit…more like Teen Angst and Depression. Allen groaned in annoyance and curled up into a tight little ball hoping that maybe if he made himself small enough, Cross would disappear. Fat chance. Cross walked over and moved the curtains of his window to let the sunshine into his dark and depressing room. Allen
whined and tried to shut it out by slamming a pillow over his face.

“Uh uh. Not happening. You haven’t showered in three days. Get up kid,” Cross responded, walking over to the bed. “Leave me alone,” Allen groaned, his voice muffled by the pillow.

“Not until you decide to wash your ass,” Cross said, trying to get the pillow off Allen’s head, “I swear to God Allen if you don’t walk yourself down to the bathroom and give yourself a shower; I will do it for you and you won’t like the way I do it.”

Allen growled, his grip on his pillow tightening. Cross continued to poke, prod, and shake him though despite Allen’s resistance.

“I can and will do this all-day Allen. Don’t test me. You have to get up. Don’t blame me, blame puberty,” Cross said, unforgiving. Allen had to get up and Cross was going to do what he had to do to make that happen. He was not going to back down. After a few moments of Cross poking at his ribs, shaking his shoulders and ruffling up his hair, Allen had enough. With a pissed off growl, Allen removed the pillow from his head and slammed it down on Cross’s head before stalking off to the bathroom. That was fine by Cross though. He got what he wanted. Plus, he could grab Allen’s bed linens in the process to wash the stink of sadness from them. He got a change of clothes for Allen and after making sure he was in the shower, did just that. Allen didn’t like that. His plan was to sneak back into his room after his shower to continue sleeping the rest of the day away. As he walked back to his room, he saw his bed bare of all blankets, of all comfort and warmth. He emitted a noise resembling a cow giving birth. Cross rolled his eyes at Allen’s dramatic outburst and looked up at Allen who glared angrily at Cross. The teen walked over, grabbed a blanket, and flopped down on the couch to wait for his bed sheets to get cleaned. It was a small price to pay to get the kid to come down and socialize.

Getting the kid to go back to school was even worse after the break-up. Allen didn’t know what he would do when he saw Jake at school again, that is, if he was still going to school. After seeing that Jake would not stop his constant texting, Cross took away Allen’s phone. He decided they were going to get him a new phone and number (the phone was super freaking old anyways). Allen didn’t quite like that. Sure, he was angry at Jake and they broke up, but him texting let Allen know he was alive. Having his phone allowed him to stay updated on what was going on. Without it, he felt so cut off from everyone and lonely. Whatever. As far as Cross was concerned, he was more worried about Allen’s wellbeing than that brat he’s been dating for a good three months. Getting Allen to get up and go to school required back up. Lavi, Kanda, Cross, and Link had to team up together to get Allen out of bed. Lenalee, Road, and Alma were back at the school in case Allen tried to turn around and run away.

Kanda and Cross were the brawn. Lavi was to make sure Allen actually got ready for school (stay in the bathroom with him and make sure he didn’t lock the door) and Link was to make sure he ate something for breakfast (and sort of buffer for any hard feelings he may acquire over being forced out of bed). It went as smoothly as it sounds. That was to say not at all. Allen fought them every ounce of the way. Kanda and Cross literally dragged him out of bed and towards the bathroom to get ready for school with Allen kicking and screaming obscenities. Kanda ended up having to help Lavi because Allen was trying to shove Lavi out of the bathroom to lock himself in there to avoid going to school. Once their angry bundle of joy was dressed, spitting fire and growling like a demon from hell itself; the the two of them dragged Allen out of the door and made sure he had all his things. Cross shouted out a good luck, but his brat stormed passed without a backward glance. By the time Allen got to Link, he was the angriest he had ever seen him. Allen was pissed off and wouldn’t spare even a glance at Link or the goodies he made him. Link teamed up with them. So he was a traitor. Even if he meant good will.
“Give him some time to cool off,” Lavi sighed at Link’s concerned look as he saw a red-faced angry Allen storm off towards the school. Lavi looked a little frazzled and his clothes rumpled, but nonetheless fine.

“Jeez, Moyashi can really fight back when he doesn’t want to do something. The bastard’s been holding back on me all these years. He’ll fucking pay for that,” Kanda huffed as he tried to fix his ponytail that was falling out due to the shit storm that was Allen this fine morning. Allen stalked onward ahead, ignoring his friends. However, when Allen reached the school his anger quickly dissipated into fear and depression. Allen tried to turn and walk back home but two arms looped around his. One was Road, the other was Lenalee. Shit, they were in on this too. Alma ran off to go meet Kanda, apparently forgetting he was supposed to make sure Allen was not going to go anywhere.

That was fine. Lenalee and Road were enough by themselves as they smiled sweetly at Allen. There was nothing sweet about those smiles though. The grips on his arms meant business. Allen was to stay a prisoner here for eight tortuous hours. Allen’s eyes narrowed moodily. He proceeded to give everyone the cold shoulder treatment, even as Lenalee and Road still hung off of him, chattering away about something Allen could care less about right now.

“Wow, he’s really angry, isn’t he?” Alma commented from afar.

“He’ll get over it. Besides, it’s not like that jackass Jeffrey…or whatever the fuck his name is is here. Dad said he and his friends were arrested,” Kanda huffed as he stopped by his locker to pick up his things.

“Yeah, but that’s not stopping the rumors. I heard that Jake leaked the videos somewhere on The Tea, ya know that trashy website everyone from school goes onto to spread rumors about each other? I can’t believe he got pissed enough to do that. Fucking psycho,” Alma gossiped.

“Why the fuck couldn’t they choose something better to call it?” Kanda growled, pissed that Alma even got on that website. The last time he did he was broken hearted just because some anonymous user said that he had ugly eyebrows or some shit. That site was more trouble than what it was worth.

“I thought you said you were going to take those videos down,” Link hissed at Lavi.

“Dude I did, but that shit takes time and stuff online spreads fast. By the time I hacked into his account and got it taken down most of the school has seen it or made copies of it,” Lavi said looking guilty and putting both hands out in surrender, “There is only so much I can do.”

“Allen hasn’t…ya know…had he?” Alma asked in concern.

“He hasn’t seen it from what I’ve seen. Cross took away his phone. His new one doesn’t come in until tonight,” Lavi reported.

“Let’s keep it that way. He really doesn’t need anymore stress right now,” Link sighed, pouting at the box of goodies he had in his hand. He really hoped Allen would feel better soon.

“Try telling them that,” Kanda growled. The friend group looked towards the other groups of their peers looking at Allen and turning back to their groups to whisper. Oh, that’s not a good sign. Especially when Allen seemed to notice and hunch in on himself a little bit more. Sadly, before they knew it, they had to split off for classes. Link, Lavi, and Road were high schoolers, so they usually stayed in one part of the building compared to Allen, Lenalee, Kanda and Alma who were stuck in eighth grade and had to stay around the more middle school area. A lot of times the high
school and middle school intertwined with each other, so they’d see each other in passing, but they’re weren’t likely to share classes until they hit high school. (Drawing from my experience. Depending on the class it wasn’t surprising to have some seniors and freshmen in a class together.)

It was aggravating. Even in his classes Link could hear whispers of Allen leaving the mouths of his peers. Link didn’t see the videos himself. He was aware he easily could, but it was hard enough for him to stomach seeing Allen in the aftermath of those videos. He couldn’t bear the thought of actually watching them…do that…to Allen.

There were whispers of disgust that anyone would dare post something like that online, there were perverted whispers from the guys in class getting off to seeing Allen in that position. There was whispers of slut. Whore. Musings of whether or not they would have a chance to ‘tap that’. Link actually broke his pencil in anger when he heard a group of boys talk about that. It caused a good number of people to look over at him. Link looked up and narrowed his eyes in rage. They quickly turned back around to avoid his wrath. They should be disgusted! Outraged! Not talking about Allen like he was a piece of meat! It was rape! It was a total violation of someone’s dignity and privacy! Was this concept truly a loss on people his own age!?

Link wasn’t the only one. Lavi was also hearing the whispers, but instead of becoming angrier, he was growing guiltier. He wished he would’ve caught those videos faster, would’ve gotten rid of them faster. He felt that it was his fault that so many people knew about it. Even then, just because he took them off the website it didn’t mean that they were gone forever. He was sure there were people who downloaded it for their own sick purposes. Just the thought of that made his stomach turn.

Meanwhile, down in the middle school area of the building, Allen found it very hard to concentrate. He felt like everyone was looking at him. He’d look up from what he was doing to find people quickly turn away. He wanted to go home. He wanted to crawl back into bed and die. He began to hear whispers of slut. Whore. Skank. Fag. Surely this wasn’t directed at him? Maybe it was just his imagination. He was just being paranoid. That’s what he thought until he was walking down the hall towards one of his classes and he felt someone touch his ass. It wasn’t the whole ‘oops sorry, I was just trying to slip by and that happened’ shit either. This was a palm on his ass with the full intention of touching it. This was someone groping him.

Allen dropped his books in surprise and fear. He whipped around to see a couple of guys laughing at him. Then Allen felt all eyes turn on him. His face flushed in embarrassment as he collected his books off the ground. He flinched when he heard a cat call off to the side of him and before he knew it, he was dashing off into the nearest boy’s bathroom. He didn’t hear the sound of someone being slammed into the lockers and the choked off yelp they made as they did so.

Surprisingly, it wasn’t Kanda that lost his cool, though he was just about to as he walked out of his class and caught a glimpse of Allen walking past him. He saw one of the guy’s behind him reach out and grab his ass. He was two seconds away from being on that fucker and twisting his hand completely around. Lenalee, who shared his class, noted Kanda’s shift in attitude and held him back with a hand on his shoulder. Kanda seethed as he watched Allen whirl around on the two boys picking on him and attempted to pick up his books as fast as possible only to be whistled at. Then Allen ran off and Kanda’s head snapped to the side at the sound of something being slammed roughly into the lockers. It was Link Howard pinning the guy who cat called, his red eyes glinted with burning rage. Everyone knew Link had it in him to make someone’s life a living hell. They knew that since elementary school when someone dared to pick on his youngest sister Kiredori. He proceeded to put them into their place mercilessly. Kanda was the most feared in school with Alma as a close second. This was because Kanda was more likely to go on rages and effectively kick ass without breaking a sweat. Alma was a close second because he had Kanda’s rage and was easier to snap, but less effective at kicking ass because rage tended to cloud his senses too much. Kanda
could keep his cool, while Alma could not.

Link, however, was one that stayed calm and logical in most situations. When he snapped it was always surprising. Always with good reason and executed as perfectly as if it was one of his dance routines. He was an effective fighter, even if he didn’t flex his skills often. Link didn’t see the boy that coped a feel of Allen, but he was right next to the guy who whistled at him after he bent over to grab his books. It wouldn’t have been that bad if Link wasn’t already aggravated, but this guy was also the one that expressed interest in trying to get into Allen’s pants. Hearing him cat call Allen was the last straw for Link. How dare this bastard treat Allen that way! He didn’t have to see the blood trailing down Allen’s thighs that night. All he was interested in was satiating his own lust! He didn’t have to hear Allen wailing because his heart was breaking. He didn’t have to see Allen storm off this morning, angry because he had to go back to school. To face everyone here when he’d rather curl up in bed and sleep. He didn’t have to see the dead look in his eyes like Link had that day! He didn’t have to see the way Allen limped and winced the day after! Link couldn’t help it. His vision turned red and his body went on auto pilot as he grabbed the kid’s shirt collar and slammed him up against the locker. Link’s eyes locked onto his as his face was mere inches away from the other kid’s own shocked ones.

“L-Link!? Dude I was only joking~” the teen stuttered.

“Talking about someone as if they are a toy, like they are not human is not a joke. What happened that day is nothing to be joked about. It was a crime. If I ever hear you make that noise towards him again, if I ever hear you talk about Walker like that again, I will end your family line. Whether it be through castration or putting you six feet under. Do I make myself clear? This isn’t a threat. It is a promise and believe me when I say that I will make it look like an accident,” Link growled lowly, his eyes boring into the teenager’s soul that looked about ready to piss himself. His red eyes made him look like a demon straight from hell.

“Y-Yeah…” the teen squeaked out as Link slowly let him slide down to the floor. There was a dent in the locker. Link couldn’t think about that now, instead he stormed off to go find Allen.

Everyone around him parted like he was Moses separating the Red Sea. There was a variety of looks of shock, of surprise and smugness, mostly from Allen’s friend group. The guy who coped a feel on Allen seemed like he was trying to hide himself in a locker as Link strode by him. It wasn’t Link he should’ve been worried about though, because while Lenalee had Kanda under control, a certain red head was digging up dirt on said pervert. Link didn’t care. His focus was Allen. Where did he go?

When the doors closed behind Allen, he dropped his books on the ground. His palm was pressing against the wall as his legs turned to jello underneath him. Panic attack. He was panicking and it was too late to try and reverse it. Allen stumbled over to the corner of the bathroom, letting his knees buckle as he curled up against the corner, gasping for air. His vision tunneled as he spiraled down into his anxiety. He tried to desperately think of Cross’s voice coaching him to breathe like he always did when Allen had a panic attack. Usually he’d call Cross up at a time like this, but he was without a cell phone. That left him scrambling to find something to ground himself. It took only a few moments for Link to deduce where he was. it wasn’t hard. Where did school kids usually go when shit hit the fan, especially in the mass media? The bathroom. That or to try to relieve themselves of boredom by pretending they needed to use the bathroom. Whichever came first.

When Link opened the door, he found Allen, pale, shaking, pulling his hair and hyperventilating. His books were scattered on the floor. He saw this once or twice before when Allen had his first dance performance. That was the day they had their first duet performance together, but he was slated to do his solo performance first. Allen was scared shitless. He was hoping he’d be able to do
his first performance with Link by his side. It was easier to have someone else up there on stage with you. The fates obviously thought that shouldn’t happen. Allen still managed to pull through, but Link couldn’t forget seeing Allen curled up in the corner. The then eight-year old Allen was unable to move. They had to call Cross over to help him calm down. During that time, Link watched the older man calm the child. He studied his methods for use at a later time, should this happen again.

Now Link walked slowly towards him and knelt by his side. He grabbed Allen’s hands, gently massaging them in hopes to loosen their grip on his hair, “Allen? Allen. It’s me. Link. Let go of your hair. Grab onto my hands. Try to copy my breathing.”

“L-Leave me a-alone I don’t-“ Allen yelped, trying to shove Link away in his fearful state. He wasn’t even looking at him. He just had this faraway look in his eyes, like he was somewhere else. Even so, Link didn’t back down. He just grabbed Allen’s hands again gently to keep him from hurting himself and continued to talk him down like he’s seen Cross do.

“Allen I’m not here to hurt you. I’m not here to hurt you. Look at me Allen. Allen look at me,” Link repeated, even if it sounded redundant saying the same thing twice. Link didn’t move on until Allen’s bloodshot, wild eyes locked on his.

“There we go-“ Link said, getting cut off when the boy’s bathroom opened to reveal a student wanting to use it. He quickly realized he walked in at the wrong time though and after Link’s outburst, bolted out of there quickly to avoid his wrath. The interruption set Allen off again though.

“Allen? Allen? Look at me. Just look at me. Don’t look at the door. Just look at me. Breathe with me,” Link said softly, guiding Allen back to where they were. He took Allen’s hand and pressed it against his own chest so that he could feel it rise and fall with every inhale and exhale, “Just focus on breathing with me.”

After a few shaky, sporadic breaths, Allen began to focus on Link and on matching his breathing, breath for breath. In just a moment or two his breathing was beginning with slow to Link’s pace and his tunnel vision was fading. His head was buzzing and felt like it was stuffed with cotton, but he felt more grounded. He wasn’t spiraling around wildly in the storm that was his anxiety. He just wanted to go home. He needed to go home. He couldn’t be here. He was a freak. He didn’t know what Jake did, but obviously he did something to get people to call him those names. He did something to make that guy touch his ass, that guy that cat called him.

“That’s it. Just like that. You’re doing great,” Link breathed. He felt Allen jump when the bell rang, signaling the start of the next class.

“It’s okay. It’s just the bell. Let’s not worry about that right now. Just keep focusing on your breathing,” Link cut in as he saw Allen’s breathing pick back up from being startled.

Late. They were late. He made Link late to his class. The ever so studious and rule follower, Link. He’s awful.

“I made you late,” Allen whimpered as he grew more upset.

“I don’t care about that now. I care about you. You are more important than being in class right now.”

“No, I’m not.”

“Yes, you are.”
“No, I’m not!”

“Well, to me you are. We are dance partners and friends. Your well being is more important to me than sitting in on a lecture.” Link continued calmly.

“You’re an idiot,” Allen sniffed, beginning to cry.

“I’m fine with that-“

“You shouldn’t be! Just stop being nice to me! Stop giving a shit about me! Why didn’t you just throw me out of your house that night!? Or that night I was drugged!!?” Allen shouted, glaring at Link as tears streamed down his face. He didn’t get it. He didn’t understand this. Why would someone like Link ever associate with someone like him? He was a freak that was never going to be more than some plaything to someone else! Link was smart. He could bake. He could dance. Unless Link was treating him like some charity project. Was he? He was wasn’t he!? Was this just part of ‘his duty’ as a respectable citizen?

Link looked taken aback at that. Allen never shouted at him like this before. Sure, there were times where he’d get frustrated and snap during dance practice. Both of them had a tendency to do that when it was ‘crunch time’ before a big competition. He never shouted at him like this before though.

“Oh wait…I get it. I’m just some charity project to you. Some pitiful freak. Some lost cause. Some stupid fucking kid that you took upon yourself to try to keep out of trouble and fix. I’m just part of your duty aren’t I?” Allen said, his voice full of hurt and betrayal.

Wait. What? Link blinked in surprise. Where the hell was all this coming from? Did Allen really feel this way all these years? He wondered what kind of shit Jake put into his head all these months. Did he really believe Link was just doing this just to make himself look good? To be the studious, rule abider, hospitable, person he was supposed to be? Expected to be?

“Allen where are you getting this-? Allen, I let you into my house because you were hurting and I care about you. You are not a freak, a lost cause or charity project-“

“Really!? Because I sure fucking feel like it! Now everyone thinks I’m a whore that puts out! They think I’m a fag, which I guess is nothing fucking new, but it still hurts! I’m dumb enough to let Jake fucking use me like his own personal sex doll so surely, I’m dumb enough to let just anyone fuck me! So, Link do you want to fuck me to!??” Allen raged. The more he went on, the more this had less to do with Link and more to do with his own frustration and self-hatred over everything that transpired over the months. He hated it even more that he had developed feelings for Link along the way. Why did he ever think Link would ever feel the same way towards someone like him?

Link opened his mouth to respond but ended up closing it again. This apparently only further infuriated Allen in his rant.

“How fucking dumb am I to actually believe anyone would actually want to love me! Did you know he wouldn’t even touch my left arm!? He refused to look at it when he fucked me! He always made me wear a long-sleeved shirt when we did! He couldn’t even have the decency to fuck me decent enough so that I could even get off on it! All we ever did was make out or fuck because my dumbass thought that was how you showed love to someone! His sex toys did a better job satisfying me than he ever could! I was just some fucking trophy for him to show off and I was too dumb to even see that he was totally using me! Or maybe I did. But I didn’t even care he was using me! Well, I mean a little bit,” Allen continued his self-depreciating rant.
Link would have blushed at all the personal stuff Allen was shouting about in a public bathroom, but he was more concerned in making sure he didn’t hurt himself as he paced and ranted. It was a bit strange to hear his sexual activity. I mean he was in eighth grade for crying out loud! Although, kids their age did have a tendency to start young nowadays. At this rate they were going to be found out because of all the noise Allen was making, but Link was at a loss of how to comfort him. There was just so much anger and hurt in his voice that it was hard to really process it.

Allen whirled back on Link, his eyes alight with pain and rage. He wanted him to say something! Anything! Anything to calm the rage and pain bubbling out from inside of him. Allen growled and grabbed Link’s shirt and he began to shake him.

“Say something, damn it!” Allen screamed.

“Hey, what’s going on in here!? You two should be in class! I would expect this behavior from Walker, but you as well Howard Link?” came a man’s voice as the bathroom door opened to reveal Allen’s English teacher on his free period. He was a pretty strict man and a hard ass on all the eighth graders who took his class. Allen especially because when it came to anything with words, spelling, grammar, or reading, he sucked at it. When it came to this guy though, a lot of people deemed as ‘good writer’s have crumbled to their knees under his high expectations. Just ask Lenalee. Allen looked away in shame, the anger and pain dissipating a little bit as he realized just how loud he had been shouting.

“It’s nothing, Allen just wasn’t feeling well so I thought I would stay with him until he did,” Link vouched for Allen. He technically wasn’t lying.

“Well, whether or not he is feeling well doesn’t give him the right to holler loud enough for me to hear him from my room and disrupt everyone else’s classes as a result. Both of you. To the principal’s office. Go,” the man responded, effectively cutting off Link’s chance to calm Allen down and for them to deal with their conflict. Allen’s bottom lip trembled as guilt took the place of anger. He got Link in trouble. He dragged him down with him. He was truly a shitty friend.

Allen removed his hands from Link’s shirt, grabbed his books and pushed past them both to storm off to the principal’s office. Link followed behind him, wanting to catch up to Allen but he was walking too fast for Link to do so. Martha, the secretary in the office, looked up as Allen stormed in. Her brows furrowed in concern. She had a special place in her heart for Allen because his father, Cross, would always stop by and vent to her when he was a teen in school. She also saw him a lot in the office because Cross was what most adults would call a ‘troublemaker’ but she never saw him as such. Nobody gave him the time of day to learn what Cross was really all about other than Martha.

Martha was just about to get up from her chair to go talk with Allen as he sat himself in one of the chairs outside of the principal’s office, but stopped when she saw Link come in. That was highly unusual. Allen had sat in a chair that was against the wall and was staring at the ground as Link walked in and sat down as well. He was a couple chairs away from Allen. He wanted to give him space. The two sat quietly with Link side eyeing Allen occasionally. Allen kept his eyes on the ground. It didn’t take long at all for the principal to be ready for one of them to go in. Link volunteered first, even though Allen looked like he was ready to jump up and go first.

The door closed behind Link, leaving Allen by his lonesome. A perfect chance for Martha to walk over and check in with him. There were many other times this happened before, although mostly it had to do with some bully getting caught in the act of messing with Allen. Martha was no stranger to this. She had a hard time believing Link would ever bully Allen though. Still, people could be deceiving. Martha walked over and sat next to Allen.
“How’s it going honey? It’s been awhile since you’ve been sent here,” she started out.

“Fine,” Allen told the older woman, not wanting to go into detail about the hell that was going on inside his head.

“You sure don’t sound fine. I won’t push you though. How’s your daddy doing?” Martha said, deciding that she wouldn’t push Allen and instead decided to take the route of providing a distraction. Something to get his mind thinking about something else.

“He’s fine. We made up…well a little bit. He was an asshole this morning…”

“How so?”

“He dragged me out of bed today when I told him I didn’t want to go to school today.”

“Hmm yes. That sounds a little rude. But I’m glad you’re here today. Although under different circumstances would’ve been nice.”

“Not my fault,” Allen grumbled.

“Oh, so it’s Link’s?”

“No! I just snapped at him. He was just trying to be nice to me and Mr. Wilson caught us skipping class because I was screaming at him.”

“Oh…I see…” Martha hummed, “What an inconvenience. Mr. Wilson has always been…well less than understanding. It’s like he’s never been a teenager before. Did you apologize?”

“No…” Allen sighed, as he remembered the way Link was looking at him. The stunned, hurt, confused look that came across his face, “I didn’t get to. I didn’t even know why I said those things. I…I was so angry…but he didn’t deserve that. He missed class because of me, and I dragged him all the way down here because I can’t control my stupid emotions.”

“Well he didn’t look pissed off to me,” Martha said. When it came to her, she never sugar coated her words unless it came to elementary kids. She may be an old woman, but she acted very young for her age and became somewhat of a second counselor at the school. Some students felt she did a much better job counseling students than the actual counselor here. Basically, she was the school’s grandma that could swear, kick ass and take name if needed.

“He should be.”

“Oh, he’s a smart boy. I’m sure he understands. Besides, I saw the way he kept looking at you when you two were both sitting here. He’s concerned about you. Plus, he’s such a handsome thing. I knew the moment I saw him when he started school here, he was going to grow up handsome,” Martha smiled mischievously. She knew about Allen’s sexuality and was one of the first ones that he told. To this day she would always gossip about boys to him. God she was like a second mom. At least she was the one doing it, it was weird when Cross attempted to talk about men to Allen (I will write a drabble on this).

“Well still, he should be. Oh my god why do you do this,” Allen groaned, but Martha caught a flush of red lighting up his cheeks.

“Honey when are you going to date him? It so obvious.”
Allen choked, “He’s not gay.”

Martha gave him a knowing look, “Honey…he’s as straight as a circle. Besides, you haven’t seen him before he met you. The boy adores you.”

“We’re just friends,” Allen squeaked, “Besides I just got through an awful break up—“

Then the door opened, effectively cutting off their conversation as Link re-emerged. He didn’t seem at all shaken by the fact that he was in the principal’s office. He seemed completely calm. The principal also emerged, looking sternly at Allen.

“Well. It seems like everything is in order boys. Please return to your classes and stay out of trouble,” the principal said with an authoritative nod. Wait…what? Was it just that simple? He thought he was going to get into worse trouble because he was basically harassing and screaming at Link. Allen looked over at Link, confusion in his eyes. Link simply blinked at him, but he had a touch of a smirk in his eyes.

“Yes sir,” both of them chirped. Martha smiled over at Allen.

“Yeah, if you don’t stay out of trouble, I’ll tell your father Allen,” she quipped. Allen gave her a small pout before he left with Link.

“Have a nice rest of the day you two,” She called out cheerfully.

Link and Allen walked together to their classes in silence, at least until they had to split off. Well at least where they should’ve split off, but they lingered there awkwardly for a few minutes in silence.

“I guess I’ll see you at practice or something,” Allen responded as he went to go right.

“What’s the rest of your schedule?” Link asked, stopping Allen in his tracks.


“Your schedule? If it’s alright I’d like to escort you to your classes, at least until things calmed down.”

“Link I—“

“Could I?”

Allen opened his mouth to protest, but Link gave him such a determined, concerned look that it died on Allen’s lips. Plus, if he was being honest with himself, he did feel a lot more comfortable having someone around him if it meant getting those asshole guys off his back. So, Allen rattled off his schedule while Link calculated how fast he’d have to walk to make it to the end of Allen’s classes and make sure they would both arrive to their classes on time. Some parts of the schedule may be a little tight, but Link was sure he could handle it.

“Allright then, although I may be a little late after 6th. I shouldn’t take too long with the rest of them though.” Link nodded, already finishing his mental map as they continued walking to Allen’s next class.

“O-Okay,” Allen stammered awkwardly. It was weird to have a body guard, especially if it was the guy who you were yelling at about twenty minutes ago in the boy’s bathroom. When they got to Allen’s classroom, Allen turned around towards Link.
“Listen Link I’m sorry I….”

“It’s okay. We’ll talk about it later.”

“Alright then… well…thank you…” Allen muttered with a small awkward blush before disappearing into the classroom.

Allen found out quickly Link was a great bodyguard. Well it shouldn’t have been a surprise, especially with his throwdown already this morning. The rest of the friend group gave them a weird look at first glance but seemed more relieved that at least one of them would be around Allen throughout the day to avoid another morning mishap. There were times they would also follow Allen to his next class with Link or wait alongside Allen, so it wasn’t so awkward waiting for Link. This was especially true if they happened to share said class with Allen (which wasn’t often this semester sadly). Kanda and Link together had the masses shoving themselves against the locker on each side of the hallway for them which only happened once. It made Allen feel pretty awesome though. Although even with just Link people stayed off of Allen. Part of the reason was that the rumor of Link shoving a guy up against a locker threatening him spread like wildfire. The other part was that people knew Link was one of those you didn’t mess with. He was polite, smart, and good-looking, but he knew how to fight back. The incident today was just a reminder and the guy who touched Allen’s butt better count his lucky stars that Link didn’t see it because he would be in a worse off shape than that guy who cat called him. No worries though, he would soon get his just desserts as well.

Even away from the notion of having your ass handed to you on a silver plate and a polite ‘thank you for your time’, Link’s gaze was intense. Whether he knew of it or not, or even meant it, the guy had an intense look. Maybe it was because his eyes looked red or maybe they weren’t…they looked like a reddish brown to Allen if he was being honest. In a certain light, they flashed a bright red which made him look demon-like. Either way, it kept people off Allen. It may not stop the rumors about Allen’s new ‘body guard’ but Allen could deal with the rumors. He was fine with this. Link never seemed to break a sweat exiting his class, going to Allen’s, walking him to his class, and going to his own afterwards throughout the day. Allen was surprised to even find Link standing there right away at times. Most people would find that weird, but when it came to Link, it was hard to weird Allen out. He was beyond used to the nature that was Link Howard.

Finally, the end of the day had arrived and with it, dance practice. They were pretty confident of their routine after their recent competition, but they had to fine tune it for the regional competition. They had a lot more work to do when it came to the group routine though and Renny, their coach, made it known (I’m sorry but I can’t get this out of my head. She’s going to be probably a little if not fully ooc and I’m sorry, but I just seriously can’t choose another.). It wasn’t that she was a hard ass…well she was, also very competitive, but she was cool. She wasn’t as controlling as other coaches and actually accepted suggestions from the group for ways to make routines cooler or coming up with a new routine. If they messed around too much, you’d bet she’d be yelling at them and forcing them to do exercises. You also didn’t want to be the one to be lectured to by her, which Allen fell victim to many times when he was still going out with Jake and coming to practice late. There was once he didn’t come at all and Renny just about ripped him a new one. The whole team could hear her screaming at him beyond the thick walls of the gymnasium outside in the hall.

Road was sitting and watching Allen and Link practice some of their lifts in their routine as they waited for Renny to show up. Meanwhile Jasdero and Devit were watching as well but shouting out random ass commentary to try and mess them up. Well okay, not totally. Honestly, they heard about Allen’s bad day and decided they’d shout random stupid shit to make him laugh. There were
a couple of others off in their own corners stretching or going through their routines. There were surprisingly a relatively equal number of girls and boys in the group. It was a somewhat diverse group at least when it came to school cliques. There were a couple girls who were pretty serious and diva-like that usually stirred up drama within the group, but that’s what kept things interesting. One was named Ava while the other was named Kelsey. There was another girl who hung out with them, but she was a lot more chill, her name was Sarah and she had long red hair and glasses. They were also apart of the cheerleading squad. There was another girl, really petite like Road but with light, almost white, blonde hair. It was short and curly with a blue streak in it. Their name was Riley and they were usually paired up with Road for duets. Jasdero and Devit were paired together for duets, which they always did, excluding group performances. They never did solos. There was one other guy that was usually paired with Ava or Kelsey. He was pretty quiet. His name was Bryce and he was on the football team. He had a buzz cut and was quite buff for his age. Basically, a jock, but less of an asshole. Then there was Link and Allen. Link had done solos in the past, but he preferred being in duets with Allen. Allen was more of the ‘jack of all trades’ and was flexible with anything. Then of course you had dance groups for the younger kids, but they usually didn’t practice together with the older kids (*Might end up doing more of a drabble discussing the dance team more in length. Lemme know what you think.)

As Allen and Link were doing the last bit of routine in which they’re staring in each other’s eyes there was a shout.

“Haha Gay!!!” Devit shouted, breaking Allen’s concentration.

“Well, looks like the eye make-up isn’t working,” Allen shouted back, bending back to glare at Devit who faked a mock gasp.

“Dude my eye make-up is bitchin’! Link drop him on his ass!”

“Link would never drop me!”

Link rolled his eyes, grabbing Allen’s hands from his face and letting the top half of his body fall downwards, his head nearly hitting the floor.

“Jesus Christ Link you nearly brained him!” Road squealed. Allen was laughing instead of freaking out.

“That’s what makes it fun!” Allen responded.

“I would never let his head hit the ground,” Link said with an eye roll, although there were many times where Allen’s head nearly did hit the floor during their lifts. Allen wasn’t bothered by it though, he got a thrill from it, plus the judges seemed to love it. Well okay some of them. It made them sit the hell up and pay attention though.

“If his head isn’t nearly hitting the floor than it’s not good enough,” Renny called out as she walked in. Immediately they stopped goofing off. Link pulled Allen up, allowing him to get back on his feet again.

Renny had them running ragged today, but Allen was grateful for it. It helped him get his mind off of things and the impending talk he would have with Link to sort out what happened earlier. She only had them going through their dance a couple of times today with a little feedback. If there was any tension or weirdness that she noticed between them, she didn’t comment on it. The main focus was put on the group performance as well as a few other duets/solos that were lacking. Allen was tempted to try and stay to watch his teammates practice their routines, just to avoid Link. He didn’t have a phone on him so he couldn’t afford to screw around too long otherwise Cross would get
worried, though he was working a particularly long shift that night. Still, with all the things that happened today, he didn’t want to go home alone. Lavi left to go home and shower before coming back for drama practice. That being said, Link was his ride home.

So, being the gentlemen he was, Link decided to give Cross’s wallet a break and feed Allen before dropping him off for the night. Link texted Cross to let him know Allen’s whereabouts and the two sat in silence as Link drove them both to his house. Allen thought over what he was going to say and how he was going to say it. It was a little hard to remember what he even said in the bathroom that day. It was just all in the heat of the moment. In just a few minutes, Link was pulling into his parking lot and turned off the car. His siblings wouldn’t be home for another hour, so they had the house alone together until then. The two exited the car and walked up to the house with Allen shyly staying back behind Link. He waited for Link to unlock and open the door before he stepped inside, removed his shoes and placed his backpack near them. Link went over to the kitchen after taking off his shoes to go make some tea. Allen stayed behind near the entrance. God, he hated talks like these…

“All right? Did you want some tea?” Link asked, noticing the way he hung back. Usually he’d walk in and act like he owned the place. He’d lounge on Link’s couch or rummage through his kitchen for food. That was the routine they had, although Link would usually mess around and hide things in weird places to watch Allen look confused because ‘why the hell did you shove Cosmic Brownies in the fucking fridge Link?’ It was Link’s weird sense of humor.

“No. Just hot water,” Allen responded weakly. Link nodded, a little concerned but understanding at Allen’s withdrawn attitude. Allen slowly made his way over to the dining room table as Link made and set down their drinks. A silent gesture for Allen to come over. Link watched Allen tentatively sit down and stare at his drink for a little while before picking it up and taking a small sip. He then curled up into a little ball, his cup perched on his knees. He didn’t know where to start.

Link initiating the conversation after taking a sip of tea, “How are you feeling?”

“Better…” Allen responded, although he sure didn’t feel too much better. He felt nervous. The only other time the two of them had any sort of conversation like this was after the incident at Jake’s house when he asked Link what he thought love was. Link stared at Allen for a long time, as if figuring out how much of that was a truth or a lie.

“Are you still angry about this morning, about us getting you out of bed?” Link asked, deciding to start out simple and then work their way down to the core of things.

Allen hummed, “I feel a little betrayed…but it’s not like I could run from school forever. I’d have to deal with this eventually.”

“I’m sorry. We did it because we cared about you. I don’t think they expected today’s events to be quite this bad though. I sure didn’t.”

“Do you know why they’ve been acting that way? Everyone at school?”

“Yes.”

Allen set his jaw at that. So, he knew? Why didn’t he say anything?

“Did everyone else know to?”

“Yes.”

More anger.
“So, then what happened, since everyone else knows something that I don’t,” Allen hissed angrily, feeling betrayed once more.

Link calmly stared back at Allen before explaining, “Well. We didn’t discuss how we wanted to break the news to you until today. Everyone else thought it would be a better idea if you didn’t know, especially me because we didn’t want to add onto your stress. I know that information would’ve been nice to know, but you seemed so on edge already. No one wanted to push you over it. Apparently, things were a lot worse than we were expecting so that plan backfired. While we were at the competition, Jake posted some videos on the school’s gossip website out of anger that you broke up with him. It was videos of the rape. Lavi tried his hardest to get them taken down as fast as possible, but some people at school still saw it. We should’ve told you sooner so that you could have prepared yourself. For that I am sorry.”

Allen felt his heart skip and beat, and his chest turn cold. Videos? He posted the videos of…of that on there? Where people could download…and people saw his naked body…saw them doing that to him. Did Link see it? What did he think? Oh my god he really was a slut. It wasn’t like he was fighting back after all. He felt like he was going to be sick-

“Did you see them?” Allen choked out, his face a sickly white, his hands were trembling.

“No.”

“Are you lying?”

“No, I am not. I wouldn’t lie about something like this.”

“Well you sure didn’t tell me this fucking happened so can I really trust you right now?” Allen responded his voice shaking in rage and hurt. Link nodded. That was fair. The two sat in tense silence for a few long minutes. Link would’ve placed a hand over Allen’s shaking ones, but he was afraid that if he touched him Allen would lose what little composure he had or hate him for it.

“What do you think of me?” Allen asked, barely above a whisper. Did Link see him as a slut? Or did he see someone that was so desperate for love that he’d put up with someone abusing him for it.

“What do you mean?” Link asked.

“I mean exactly what I mean. What do you think of me? What do you really think of me?”

Link sat back in his chair, staring at Allen for what felt like eternity. This made Allen scared to fucking death.

Finally, Link spoke but his tone of voice was a lot different than what he usually used when it came to being logical or being a mother hen. This was a lot softer, a lot more passionate, sort of how Link talked when it came to baking, but a bit different. Allen couldn’t really figure out a way to describe it.

“I think you are beautiful. Beautiful enough it’s almost scary. Your voice is angelic. Every time I hear it, I get goosebumps. That’s what first led me to you. Then I saw who you were, and I saw your scar and your white hair. I couldn’t take my eyes off of you. It was a weird sight, but I thought they were beautiful and fitting. I liked how unique they were. I thought perhaps I did actually hear an angel that night, only this one didn’t have wings and it was very human. Then I heard you liked to eat a lot and I liked to bake so I thought I’d put my skills to use. If I could befriend you then I
could bake as much as I wanted because there would be someone there to make sure it didn’t go to waste. The fact that you even gave me feedback instead of the usual compliments was an added bonus. You helped me to change my recipes for the better. Then I got to see you dance and watching the way you curved your body like that was…enticing. The way you moved; you made the song come alive. You told a story. When you sing you also make stories come alive. When Renny first asked you to show what you got, I wanted to, I needed to feel that to. I wanted to feel whatever it was that you felt to when you listened to music. Then I got to performing with you and it became addicting. I found it hard to keep my eyes off of you. It’s an adrenaline rush…such an alive feeling…a human feeling to be next to you. To perform next to you. To listen to you sing. To watch you dance. It was never a chore to interact with you like with other people, excluding my siblings. I couldn’t figure out what to make of you. Of these feelings,” Link said, his eyes glazed over and staring out into space. It was a soft look, an almost unnatural Link look.

“Then you found Jake…and I guess what I felt was jealousy. I didn’t quite know. I knew what he was like, but I didn’t do anything about it because it would hurt you. The way you looked at him… it was fruitless to even try. It was annoying to see you look at him that way. It was annoying to see you with him all the time, of him taking you away from dance practice because I…well I really liked those times. Then you began to run off and everyone kept texting me. Wondering if you stopped by here. If I saw you. I found it hard to sleep those nights. I kept wondering what he was doing to you. Then one night you showed up here drunk. Lavi sent me the video of that. I was about ready to run over there and strangle them. But I stayed, in case you came here. In case you needed someplace to stay. Somewhere safe. I was relieved when you did, and I was happy. I was needed. I was still offering something even if I couldn’t get up the nerve to tell you what I thought of Jake. What I knew about him. Then I saw you weren’t in school that day and nobody else knew where you were. Your dad was worried sick, and I rushed home because I felt that I had to be there. That something happened. That you would show up there and I had to be there when you did. Then you were there. Bleeding. Broken. I felt that I have failed you. If Tewaku and Kiredori were not home, I probably would’ve gone on a murderous rampage.”

“When you asked me what I thought love was, I know I wasn’t the best person to answer it, but I answered it thinking about how I felt towards you and how we interacted. I’m not sure if it is love…like how other couples feel towards each other…but it’s something splendid and beautiful, indescribable so I supposed that it was fitting. After we performed, the way you looked at me when I held you in my arms was…well I believe that I fell in love. Or perhaps I already did and that just confirmed it for me. After the competition…I stood outside of his house. He was arrested long before this and I already knew of the videos. Though I didn’t see the content, I looked up and wondered why the hell someone like him would ever have the blessing to see, to touch, to know you in ways like that. When he was so undeserving. I wondered what he had and what I didn’t. I slammed a guy into a locker today, one of my classmates because he cat called you. I wanted to do more than that. The way they were talking about you made me feel things I didn’t think I was capable of. The thought of them touching you in that way…thinking of you in that way…when they didn’t have to see you after what Jake… it was disgusting. I should’ve told you about the videos. I’m sorry. I’ll try to be more truthful from now on,” Link finished and then the room was enveloped in more silence. Allen was staring at Link with wide, watery eyes, but Link wasn’t looking at him. He was very focused on the wall, like he was immersed in his thoughts. Like Allen wasn’t there and he was just speaking out loud to himself.

Wow…no one has ever said that about him before, Allen thought to himself. He never thought someone would ever think like that towards him before. Sure, anyone could say lovey dovey stuff like that, but Allen wasn’t reading a text. He was looking at the face saying those words and that face was one that he never seen Link make before. There was such softness there. Such love. Allen seen Link show love to his siblings, especially to Kiredori and the way his eyes would soften up. This loving look was deeper, and he looked almost in pain from it. Then slowly Link slowly
returned to reality, pulling away from his thoughts to look at Allen who was silently crying, looking confused, scared, shocked, loving.

“Those things that you said earlier…about being a charity project…asking me if I was lying to you. You’re not some charity project Allen. Sure, it’s morally right to be nice to everyone. To be hospitable, but there’s a difference between doing it because it is right and doing it because you want to. I do it because it is right, but also because I want to, because I care about you. I do it because I love you. There are still things you don’t know about me, but I try to express myself as genuinely as I possibly can to you. Whether or not you also have feelings for me will never change that.” Link said, his eyes showing such sincerity, such love that Allen had to look away. His chest hurt as he thought back to all the things he said to Link. All the things he assumed because he was so angry, so fed up with what happened. It made him feel a little better though to try and sabotage anything starting with Link by hurting him. If he made Link angry with him then he wouldn’t have to look at him anymore or deal with his confusing feelings towards him anymore that had been around for quite a long time. It never hit him head on until he realized just how unhappy he was with Jake. If Link was angry with him, then he didn’t run the risk of falling in love with him, of going through the possibility of all this shit again. He couldn’t bear the thought of being rejected by Link or being used by him.

Of course, he severely underestimated Link. He didn’t even know Link loved him in that way. Instead of getting angry with him and walking away, he stayed by his side looking concerned, shocked, and hurt. This was something he wasn’t quite used to. Usually if someone hurt you, you would fight back, get angry, or walk away. Link didn’t do those things. He didn’t know how to deal with this, so he continued to sit there and cry. Link got up for a few moments, returning with a box of tissues for Allen.

Link looked over at the clock. His siblings would be home soon, “I’ll be right back. I’m going to start dinner.”

Allen stayed behind and continued to cry, but Link wasn’t far off. He always had his eye on Allen. As much as he wanted to wrap his arms around him and comfort him, he also wanted to give Allen some space to let things soak in. The day has been overwhelming enough and he wasn’t sure if what Allen really needed right now was to be touched. Once he had dinner cooking, he returned to the table where Allen had finally calmed down.

The two sat in silence for a long moment before Allen broke it, his voice hoarse, “I’m sorry Link…for the things I said. It wasn’t fair of me. I was angry…and confused. I’m not sure how to deal with this. Even after Cross took me in and I made friends, even after Mana I still don’t quite know how to deal with people caring about me. I….I really like you. When I began to become unhappy with my relationship with Jake…I began to think of you. I would think of you after Jake passed out and I was left to clean up and finish what he started. I would think of you when he had his arms around me, and we were cuddling. I felt so guilty. I was scared when I walked here, drunk. Used. I wondered what you thought of me…or if you would be disgusted with me. If you’d send me away. Lecture me on how you knew Jake was a bad person. But you didn’t and that was confusing to me. When we shared your bed that night…it was warm…it felt very different from sharing a bed with Jake. Then when I stared into your eyes during the end of our performance…no one ever looked at me that way before. I don’t know…it was scary and suffocating but I liked it. I couldn’t do it anymore…I couldn’t deal with Jake anymore…I’m sorry.”

Allen placed his head on his knees, frustrated and haunted that he couldn’t find the words that he was looking for. Link seemed to understand though and grasped his hand in his.

“It’s okay. I forgive you. I understand.”
Allen nodded, the frustration and haunted feeling dissipated, “What are we then…? This thing between us…?”

“What do you want it to be?”

“I’m scared…but I don’t think I would be able to help myself anymore around you. Is it wrong to want someone so soon after you broke up with somebody?”

Link hummed thoughtfully, understandingly. Allen did just get out of an abusive relationship and that had to be taken into account, “We could take it slow…to see if this is something you want. It’s just a suggestion, no pressure.”

“…Okay…that sounds good,” Allen responded, feeling relieved and tired.

“Alright,” Link nodded, staring at Allen for a few moments, trying to see if Allen really was alright with this. Allen looked over at Link, a small blush on his cheeks. The two stared at each other for a while longer, only being interrupted when Kiredori threw open the door shouting, “Ma I’m home!”

“Oh. Did we ruin a moment?” Tewaku asked next, poking her head in through the entrance.

“Alleeennn!” Kiredori squealed, “Are you staying for dinner!?"

“Ugh Kiredori do you have to be so loud?” Tokusa complained.

“Ugh Tokusa, do you always have to bitch about something?” Kiredori shot back,” You’re such a kill joy!”

“Maybe I wouldn’t be such a kill joy if you didn’t put mayo in my shampoo bottle.”

“I was doing you a favor. It makes your hair soft and shiny. If you prefer, I could just go back to planting stink bombs in your room or putting a snake in your bed.”

“Yes. That would be very much preferred,” Tokusa responded sarcastically, “Or you could be a decent human being and not do any of those things.”

“Where’s the fun in that though?”

“Stop your bickering you two or I will give you something to bicker about,” Madarao growled.

Allen and Link broke away from each other as Link’s siblings filed in one by one. Link sighed in annoyance and began to lecture Kiredori on pranking her brother and why that wasn’t very nice. Kiredori ignored him in favor of looking to see what Link was making for dinner. Tewaku began to complain about the essay she had to do to Allen, interested in why his eyes were red and puffy but not ready to pop the question. Tokusa huffed off to his room while Madarao stayed to see if Link needed any help with dinner preparations. Goushi had graduated already and was off in the army which was why he wasn’t at home.

“So, are you staying for dinner?” Kiredori asked Allen again. She wanted to show him the new bug she had caught.

“I think you already know the answer to that Kiredori,” Tewaku sighed, a little annoyed that Kiredori interrupted her rant over some snobby girls in her class.

“Yeah, I’ll stay,” Allen confirmed anyways much to the younger’s delight.

“Cool! I got a beetle I wanna show you!” she chirped before she ran off to go get it. Tewaku
looked absolutely horrified at the idea.

“So. Did my brother make you upset before we showed up?” Tewaku asked, sending a glare Link’s way.

“N-No!” Allen responded.

“Are you sure? Because if you want, I can rip him a new one if you need me to.”

“N-No I’m fine! Everything is fine! It was just a rough day at school, and he was comforting me.”

“I am literally standing right here,” Link deadpanned.

“Good to see your locational skills are on par Link, but this isn’t about you,” Tewaku sing songed before returning her attention to Allen.

“Wait. Link made Allen cry?” Kiredori jumped back in, holding a jar, “Link why did you go and do that?”

“Why, did he chop onions too close to his face?” was Tokusa’s input from his room.

“God Link, you really are something,” Madarao said with a rare, joking smirk.

“You guys are hopeless. I didn’t do anything! I’m making you guys dinner and yet you still have the audacity to attack me,” Link facepalmed.

“We love you Mama Link,” Kiredori chirped in her best suck-up voice before shoving the jar under Allen’s nose, “Look at this beautiful sucker! I wonder if it’s poisonous!”

“Ewghh really Kiredori?” Tewaku whined.

“Yes really! It’s for science!”

“Wow that’s really cool,” Allen responded in amazement, ever the optimist when it came to supporting their hobbies. Link left to finish making dinner, leaving Allen to interact and keep his younger siblings out of trouble.

~

After dinner, it was getting late so Link drove Allen home after putting Madarao in charge of everyone else. Of course, Kiredori immediately started to complain because ‘why does he get to always be in charge. How come I can’t be in charge!?’ which started a massive bickering between all of his siblings. Link managed to get them both out of the door before they could also become a part of the bickering match, promising Madarao he’d be back soon and wished him the best of luck. The two sat in almost all silence until Allen brought up the question.

“What about your dad? Is he going to be okay with…well this? Us?” Allen asked, since Leverrier was one of their biggest sources of income.

“Leverrier? Probably not, but he doesn’t need to know about it. He knows about us dancing together and is leery about some of the routines we have done, especially with this recent one, but I managed to twist it around enough so that he’s ‘somewhat fine’ with it. For all he knows we’re just using your height and femininity to our advantage. Sort of like how sometimes if there are too many female cast members, they would make the females take on a masculine role in a play. When
it comes to me, as long as I am excelling and not tarnishing his reputation, he’s fine with it. Plus, we crush competition being put together and the man loves winning. When it comes to someone in his position a little femininity is a good thing. As long as I’m not making out with a man in public or holding hands, what he doesn’t know won’t hurt him,” Link explained. He sounded quite confident. Then again, Allen didn’t know just how often Leverrier checked up on Link and his siblings or just how secretive the siblings learned to be to make them seem like prestigious, normal, respectable children.

Still, it sounded stressful to Allen to have someone like that as a father. It must be stressful having someone lord money over your head and to take it away if they failed. Link was top of his class, an excellent dancer, but it came at the cost knowing that if he screwed up then he’d have Leverrier to face. In order to make sure his siblings had food to eat and a roof under his head he had to be excellent. They all had to be. No wonder Link had moments in time where he did nothing but bake or why Tewaku always seemed to fret over her schoolwork or how she looked. Kiredori was the youngest and was young enough to have some of her problems swept under the rug, but she also acted quite different in public than how she was at home. If she ever did a prank on someone other than her siblings, which wasn’t often, she thought through every loophole and made sure it was foolproof so she wouldn’t get caught. Due to the stress of living up to Leverrier’s expectations, Kiredori has been prone to rage fits that Allen had witnessed on only one occasion.

Allen was lucky he had someone like Cross who supported his hobbies and made the house a safe place for Allen to do it. He drew the line sometimes when it came to going out in public “because you don’t know what kind of perverted assholes are out there.” That was a story for a different day though.

“If you’re sure. Still we’re going to have to start being careful with our routines from now on and what we do. We’ll have to make sure we don’t get carried away. What if your siblings tell?”

“They won’t tell. We all have something that we don’t want Leverrier to find out about. We’ve agreed to keep each other’s secrets and to keep each other safe,” Link said with absolute confidence in his siblings.

“Yes,” Link responded as he pulled into Allen’s driveway.

“Uhhmm…so…yeah….thanks for today,” Allen responded awkwardly after sitting there with Link for a few minutes. Unsure of what he was supposed to do.

“Your welcome. I do hope tomorrow is better. I can drive you and Lavi to school tomorrow if you’d like,” Link offered.

“That would be nice…” Allen nodded, not liking the idea of walking to school and giving anyone the opportunity to mess with him again. It wasn’t that he couldn’t defend himself.

He could. It’s just that he was too uncomfortable in his own skin right now to do so…at least without royally landing himself into detention or suspension. Or worse. Plus, when it came to Allen, Lavi could also lose his shit and get himself into trouble. It was better to have someone more level headed like Link around.

“Alright then. I’ll text you to let you know when I’m on my way.”

“Alright…thanks…”
The two stared awkwardly at each other. Neither of them knowing what to do. Should they kiss? Was it too early for that? I mean Link wouldn’t have minded, but he didn’t want to push Allen into something he didn’t want.

“Well bye, see you tomorrow,” Allen settled.

“Bye.” Link also said as Allen got out of his car and walked away, mentally kicking himself because ‘oh my god he must think I don’t want to kiss him. Even though I do, but I don’t know if that would be okay right now.’

Link stayed there for a few moments, letting the engine of his car run. He wondered whether or not this would damage their existing relationship or strengthen it. Was this perhaps a bad decision considering everything Allen went through, or would it be healing? Link watched as Allen walked into his house, giving a small, soft smile to Link before walking inside. Cross, apparently hearing Link’s car outside continuing to run, moved a curtain aside at one of the windows of the house and gave Link a glare that said ‘Why the fuck are you still here? Stop being a creep’, effectively cutting off Link’s thoughts as he made his hurried departure.

Lavi smirked mischievously when he saw Allen walk through the front door, happy to see that Allen was in a lot better mood than he had been that morning. There was something a little different about him though. He just couldn’t put his finger on it. He seemed more…glowey and shy. Sort of how he was when he first began to date Jake. He wondered what Link did to him. Well whatever it was…it made Allen happy again, so it wasn’t that bad. Probably. He probably fed him a bunch of his favorite things and that’s why he was in such a good mood.

Cross wasn’t fooled though. He saw that look in Allen’s eye and his blushing. Allen never blushed around Twinkie. Guess he made his move. About fucking time. Well that was fine, but he still had to remember there was still Cross who would always be there to protect his son’s heart. It didn’t matter whether the guy was very nice friend of Allen’s or a complete stranger. Cross made sure that Link knew it by walking over to the window and drawing back the curtain to glare at Link. Link seemed a bit startled and embarrassed at being caught just sitting there, idle in his car, staring after Allen. Cross smirked, pleased with Link’s reaction as the young man went in reverse and pulled out of Cross’s driveway.

“So, should I get my gun ready?” Cross asked, his eyes shifting over to see Allen walking over to his room in a daze.

“What?” Allen asked, snapping back into reality.

“Don’t play dumb. Twinkie finally asked your ass out. I can see it in your eyes. That means I’m obligated to threaten to shoot him on the spot if he does something to break your heart right?”

“Oh my god!? Really!?” Allen yelped at Cross in outrage.

“Oh, now it makes sense!” Lavi chimed in with a knowing smirk, “Dude knowing Two Spots he’d probably gladly fall to his knees and accept a bullet to his head if he hurt you. Looks like I won the bet! Lenalee and Yuu are gonna be so pissed!”

“Wha-!? Bet!? Oh my god you guys are awful!” Allen shouted with a dark blush.

“So, did you two kiss,” Anita finally butted in.

“Oh my god you to!?” Allen yelped in embarrassment.

“No way! Link would never get that far so quickly. The most he probably did was kiss your hand
or something gross and romantic like that,” Lavi gagged, all in good nature though as Allen hid his blushing face and ran to his room.

“You guys are weird!” was his final remark before slamming his door, leaving the three alone.

“Welp pony up guys. I claimed those two would end up together since like…the end of 5th grade,” Lavi said with a cocky smirk, “God it feels good to win.”

“I don’t have to give you shit. I let you live here for free and you’re not even my kid,” Cross remarked.

“Hey that’s not my fault! I told Gramps I would be totally fine living out in the woods by myself, but he said no!”

“It’s never too late. What he doesn’t know won’t hurt him,” Cross suggested.


“What? I’m being supportive of his dreams. You said we have to be supportive of our children’s dreams!”

“Awww so you do think of me like a second son,” Lavi chirped.

“No, I think of you as my red-headed step child. Anita, thinks of you as a second son.”

“Well a few years ago you thought of me as a gremlin so that’s definitely a step up.”

“Careful brat. I may just demote you. Now go and play in traffic or the knife drawer or something. You’re too happy and I’m not all about that life,” Cross growled as he ruffled up Lavi’s already messed up hair.

Chapter End Notes

Here is the link to the 8tracks playlist for Lavi Bookman if you are interested: https://8tracks.com/alexstriker47/lavi-bookman-lyrical-songs. I'm really tired right now so I don't have a lot to say about this. Depression hit heavily. I will try to get more drabbles going. I've been silent for awhile and I'm sorry about that. I'm hoping to have one of my other drabbles done which will hopefully be fluffier and happier.
Visiting Mana's Grave

Chapter Notes

(This just happened out of the blue. Warning it is sad. I visited my grandparent’s graves, so I got inspired to write this. It’s usually a thing in my family to go down during Memorial Day and go look at my relatives graves. I know it’s supposed to be for veterans that have passed, but we also used it as an excuse to visit my other relatives that have not served in the army. Well, perhaps it’s not really an excuse since my grandfather was a veteran, but we would also visit my cousin’s grave because she was in the same cemetery, or my grandmother. Today we visited my other grandmother. We haven’t visited her grave site in a couple years because usually we see my grandfather’s. Trigger Warnings: Super sad, implied child abuse and car accident).

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Visiting Mana’s Grave

Today was Memorial Day. It was supposed to be a day to honor veterans that died, but some people also used the holiday to visit their loved one’s graves that were not even veterans. So, while the holiday was meant for veterans, Cross was using it as an excuse to drag his brat up to Mana’s grave. He felt guilty about it. He should really make the drive more often to let Allen visit Mana. It would probably be healthy for him, not to mention Mana didn’t have anyone looking after his grave site from what it seemed. Usually it was something that took an entire day. It wasn’t because the drive to get up there was long. It was quite short. They didn’t know what to do with Mana’s body when he passed because he never had a will. They ended up deciding to bury him in the town’s cemetery because many Noah family members lived in this area. He was also a childhood friend of Cross’s and even though Mana went under the name Walker, he was still apart of the Noah family. It’s just that Allen would crumble, and it took him awhile to pull himself back together whenever they did visit the grave. Cross had to be mentally and physically prepared to see Allen like that and he wanted to plan those visitations in such a way where Allen had time to grieve. He had time to express his emotions and time to pull himself together again.

If Allen really wanted to (and could remember the way there), he could visit Mana whenever he wanted to. Cross preferred taking him up there himself though. You know, for moral support. Allen also had a tendency to freeze up and Cross was afraid that if no one was there the kid would sit there forever. In a way Cross thought Allen chose not to go alone because it hurt too much as it was. Maybe he was afraid of going alone.

From his spot in the window Cross could see this time around that the sun was shining and there was a gentle spring breeze that shook the tree leaves outside. The other times Cross attempted to take Allen, it was always rainy or cold. It felt fitting. Mana always had a smile on his face. He was always bright and cheerful. He looked for the best in people. A sunny day was perfect kind of weather to go visit him.

“You ready to go kid?” Cross asked, turning around to face the small, timid, little boy who swung
his legs back and forth in the chair he sat in. His tone held a particular tenderness to it that he only uses on things pertaining Mana. Allen looked up slowly, as if coming out of a daze. This was quite natural for him and Cross learned to stay patient. The kid was hurting after all. He may not understand his feelings towards his adoptive father because his dad was a total asshole, but he lost people before. He knew how hard it was to adjust. Speaking of his dad. His father’s grave was also in the town’s cemetery. Right next to his mother’s. He never visited them though. He would visit his mother’s, but he really didn’t want to be near his father’s. He could give less of a fuck over what his grave site looked like.

“You ready to go?” Cross asked again at the kid’s blank look, walking over to ruffle up his hair. That seemed to lift some of the daze and the child nodded back before scooting off of his chair and following Cross.

As they approached the car Cross asked, “So, do you know what kind of flowers Mana liked? Or what his favorite color is?”

Allen looked up at him in confusion. What did he mean by flowers and stuff?

“Usually people leave flowers when they visit graves. It makes them look pretty. You don’t have to if you don’t want to. Sometimes people will leave little animal statues or solar lights,” Cross explained with a shrug as they got into the car.

“I don’t know,” Allen shrugged, feigning disinterest.

Cross was about to just accept Allen’s word and drive to the cemetery, but he decided against it. Allen was in a vulnerable state right now and hiding his emotions. While Allen was feigning disinterest, he could be actually really wanting to put something on Mana’s grave, but not willing to admit it.

“Well…we have time. I think we should check out and see what they have. Maybe something will jump out at you. Besides, you were his son and I doubt anyone else is putting anything nice on his grave,” Cross said as he started up the car and began to drive. He was being a hypocrite. He knew that. I mean it wasn’t like he was taking care of his own father’s grave so why the hell was he preaching to this kid? What right did he have? Mana was special though. He was a fucking nutcase, but he took care of Allen the best that he could. That’s saying a lot more than his own father ever did. Plus, he was a childhood friend of sorts, Cross felt it was his duty to make sure Mana got something. Or at least forced the kid into looking at putting something on his grave.

“Okay,” was Allen’s response.

~

Allen stared with deep concentration at the flower sheet, willing the complicated words to make sense. He could pick out familiar flower names like a Rose, Daisy, Lily, but there were a lot he couldn’t pronounce or remember what they were. Cross didn’t seem impatient though. He allowed Allen time to try and figure it out himself. Judging from the furrowed eyebrows and the way he looked like he was trying to mentally combust the paper he was looking at; he could see Allen was not getting very far.

Cross knelt down to peer at the paper in Allen’s hand, “Got any you’re interested in?”

“No…” Allen responded which he was technically being truthful. The ones he could read and understand were few and their meanings were even harder to understand. He didn’t know flowers had meanings to begin with. Well if that’s the case he didn’t want to choose the wrong one.
“Well...what about this flower?” Cross asked, pointing to the word Aster. It was one Allen could read but didn’t know what it looked like.

“It’s that bright purple flower with the yellow center,” Cross said, tapping Allen’s shoulder and pointing up at one of the flower vases, “It means patience, love, and wisdom. If I had to pick a flower for Mana, I think I would pick that one. We could also add some forget-me-nots which represent remembrance. It’s those little blue flowers up there. Maybe some zinnias, which are those colorful puffer flowers up there. It represents friendship, remembrance, and goodness.”

“Can we have that one to?” Allen asked, pointing at a sunflower. He thought it was very sunny and happy looking like Mana.

“Sure.”

“What does it mean?” Allen asked, wanting to make sure it would still fit with the arrangement.

“It means adoration and loyalty.”

“Mana liked to look at them a lot,” Allen stated. Cross nodded.

“Alright then. Anything else?” Cross asked. Allen was so invested in understanding the flower chart he didn’t see what other things the flower/gardening shop had. They had a lot of colorful garden decorations. There were sculptures of bears, mushrooms, garden gnomes, crosses, color changing lights, wind chimes, cats, and dogs. The dogs are what caught Allen’s eye. Allen strode over to the decorations, looking at one particular statue of a dog that looked almost exactly like Allen the dog. Of course, the statue didn’t include his clown costume. Without the costume though, it would’ve definitely been an exact replica of Allen. Cross looked over at Allen who seemed absolutely fixated on one specific statue of a dog that was sleeping with it’s head resting on it’s paws. It looked peaceful.

Allen wasn’t the type of kid to ask for stuff. Sometimes he’ll get ballysy and ask for something just to piss Cross off, but he never asked for much. It was mostly little things like candy or some shit. Bigger things like toys, the kid would stare a little bit too long, but move on.

“You want it?” Cross asked nonchalantly, “Go ahead and get it.”

Allen put his head down in shame, feeling guilty that Cross knew it. He couldn’t help it though. It felt like it was screaming at him to grab it. He knew Mana would love it.

“Come on. Don’t worry about it. Grab it,” Cross responded, taking Allen out of his guilty thoughts as he ruffled up his hair again. With a moment of hesitation, the little boy grabbed the dog statue and carefully carried it towards the cash register. Cross shot off what kind of flower arrangement they wanted and in just a few minutes Allen had the dog statue in his lap with a bouquet of flowers. It was quite the arrangement. A little bit crazy, but colorful, just like Mana.

“T-Thank you,” Allen stuttered out as Cross started up the car, petting the dog lightly with a fingertip.

“Don’t worry about it kid. Besides, Mana deserves it,” Cross said as he drove to the cemetery. The rest of the drive was spent in silence and it seemed like the closer they got to the grave site, the heavier the atmosphere got.

When Cross finally pulled up near the spot Mana was buried, he sighed. “Alright kid. Let’s go see Mana, shall we?”
Allen gave a slight nod, his body slouching as he got out of the car. Cross placed his hand against Allen’s back, pushing him gently forward as he guided the boy to Mana’s grave. It only took a couple minutes to find it and Cross was surprised with how well kept it was. The two stood awkwardly for a long time, staring down at the letters etched into the stone. Mana Walker.

“Do you want me to leave you alone for a bit?” Cross asked. I mean, it was sort of a private moment and he wanted to give Allen the option to be alone with his grief. He wouldn’t stay away for long, of course, but sometimes people just needed to be alone for a bit.

Allen nodded.

“Alright. I won’t be gone long. If you need something send Tim after me,” Cross said, rubbing Allen’s head affectionately before he wandered off. Allen felt the huge weight in his chest slowly pull him down to the grass in front of Mana’s grave.

“Hi Mana…I got you flowers…well Cross helped. He knows a lot about flowers. I forgot the name of some of them, but I got you a sunflower because we’d always see them on our travels. I also got you this dog. It looks like your dog. He doesn’t have a clown costume on though. I know you missed him a lot even though you wouldn’t admit it that day…that day we met,” Allen said softly as he placed each item against the gravestone, “I have… I have a lot of friends now. I also do dancing and singing. I’m pretty good at it…”

Then the words trailed off. It seemed meaningless to describe to Mana his day and what’s been going on. Words were harder to come by when grief threatened to pull him down, wrapping it’s way around his body, around his neck, covering his eyes. All that he could choke out was.

“I miss you…” and then he felt himself become sucked into the vortex. His mind blanked out.

~

Without meaning to, Cross stumbled upon his parent’s graves. To be honest, he actually forgot where they were. It’s been so long. His mother died earlier than his dad, when he was still in high school. He couldn’t remember much of the funeral services, other than the fact that Neah stood beside him, while Mana stood at the other. There were a few mourners, but nothing much. His father passed when he just got out of high school. There was no Neah. There was no Mana. There were no mourners. It was just him standing there, making sure that fucking bastard was finally dead. Cross was utterly alone with the meager belongings his parent’s left him. Most of it was his father’s so he ended up selling his possessions. He kept the few things his mother had, but most of it was sold off to support his dad’s drug habit. Later on, he did the same with his father’s possession. An eye for an eye.

Cross glowered down at his father’s grave for a good moment or two, his gaze softened a little bit when his eyes moved over to his mother’s.

“Long time no see,” Cross sighed, keeping his eyes trained on his mother’s grave. He refused to make stupid conversation with his old man…even if he was dead and couldn’t talk back.

“I managed to knock anyone up or die in a ditch. Though you’ve probably noticed that anyway. I also acquired a brat of my own. I think you would’ve liked him on your more lucid days. He taught me a lot. He’s also annoyed me a lot. He’s a weird little boy but very talented. Sorry Ma, I should stop by more. I haven’t been able to get over my shit with the old man yet. Still, that isn’t being fair to you. Maybe if the brat decides to want to see Mana a lot more, I’ll come by more. Introduce him to you.”
“As for you, you smarmy ass bastard. You can forget about it. You should be thankful the city gives enough of a shit about you to keep the grass around your gravestone mowed,” Cross spat, his attention shifting to his father’s grave, “I hope that in whatever circle of hell you are in you are watching me do a better job than you ever had at being a father. I hope it tears you up inside. I am thankful that you’ll never get the chance to see Allen. You’ve already done enough damage to one kid. So, keep watching me. I’ll show you how a real man is supposed to be.”

“See you Ma. Sorry you had to see that,” Cross growled as he finally stalked off to go check on his kid.

~

When Cross approached Mana’s resting place, the kid was frozen in place, staring off into space. That’s what he thought might happen during their visit today. Cross sighed and walked over to kneel beside the child.

“Allen? Hey kid? Kid?” Cross asked, smacking Allen’s face lightly. Allen jolted back in surprise and fear as he was brought back to reality. He blinked up at Cross, his eyes still looked dazed.

“You doing okay?” Cross asked, reaching up to move some hair out of the younger’s face. Allen shrugged. He didn’t trust himself to speak in fear he would start crying. Cross hummed, not believing Allen for a single moment but deciding not to push him into talking.

“Well…” Cross said, deciding to shift himself so he was sitting behind Allen. He continued to run his fingers through his hair to hopefully keep Allen comforted. Even if the brat wasn’t outright sobbing, he was still going through a lot of pain. He just wished he would let himself feel the emotions he was experiencing instead of stuffing them. It’s not like he had any room to talk since he did the same exact thing, but he wanted the kid to feel better instead of worse. He was an adult where it was normal to stuff one’s emotions (even if it wasn’t healthy. Allen was a child; he shouldn’t have to stuff his emotions and hopefully his generation will learn to continue not to do so as they grew older.

“You know it’s okay to cry,” Cross said after several moments of silence. Allen had his eyes closed, and had his head leaned back to enjoy Cross’s ministrations. He didn’t look content though. His eyebrows were furrowed, like he was seeing things behind his eyelids that he didn’t want to see. It was hard not to think of Mana or the tiny fragments that Allen could remember from the accident as he sat by his grave. It was harder to control the horrible memories that blossomed up behind his eyes without mercy. It was a struggle to try and keep his emotions in check.

Allen’s bottom lip trembled before putting his head down, “I don’t want to cry…”

“Why? You may feel a little better once you do.”

“Cuz it hurts…” Allen sniffled. He hated feeling his chest hurt or the headache afterwards. He hated spiraling down into such a hurtful kind of pain that made him feel like he was going to die from it. He hated Cross touching him. He hated being here. He hated seeing Mana’s dead corpse behind his eyes. He hated hearing the thunder in his head and see the painful flashes of lightning. He hated feeling so cold when it was a lovely, sunny, spring day out.

“Yeah, but it hurts more to bury it. It just gets worse and worse” Cross advised, deciding to push Allen a little bit. I mean the kid was teetering on the edge and he’d rather him get it out of his system now than later on. Cross grabbed Allen, setting him on his lap as he began to rock slowly. Allen’s sniffling grew louder. Allen gave a long whine before trying to hide himself in Cross’s armpit to try and make the icky feelings go away. With a choked sob the dam broke and Allen
became a quaking, wailing mess.

“There we go,” Cross said, rubbing Allen’s back and adjusting him so he would stop trying to suffocate himself against his body. The way the kid was wailing made Cross’s eyes sting a little with unshed tears, but he was determined to hold himself together. God, when the kid cried, he could really cry sometimes. The wails sounded like they were coming from someplace deep inside and it wasn’t often Cross heard such pain coming from the little boy’s throat. It was the type of crying that the movies always tried to make painfully beautiful, but in reality, it was ugly and painful to watch. It was the type of crying that left you purple in the face, that sounded like someone was suffocating on the pain that threatened to drown them alive. It both terrified and hurt Cross to hear it because no child should have to wail like that. No parent liked to hear their kid wailing in pain, even if it did them good to get rid of that pain.

“I know….I know….you’re okay…it’s okay,” Cross cooed, his own painful flashbacks trying to rear their ugly head. He remembered being a snot nosed brat and crying like this, but there wasn’t anybody there to hold him. There were only people there to hit him across the face, telling him to shut up before they gave him something to cry about. There was screaming that threatened to outmatch his own cries of rage and pain.

It felt like eons until Allen began to calm down instead of choking on his own sobs. His eyes were swollen and his little cheeks were a bright angry red. His throat was raw, his face felt sticky and disgusting. It felt a lot easier to breathe though. Well, aside from the stuffy nose and the pounding headache, his chest felt lighter, which made it feel easier to breathe. Meanwhile Cross kept rocking him, whispering to him and easing him back from the stormy waters in his head to calmer seas. Allen whined when Cross pulled him away to grab his shirt to try and clean off his face. He was exhausted. All he wanted to do was to bury his face into Cross’s chest and fall asleep.

“Do you feel better now that you got all that crap out of your system?” Cross asked after he cleaned up Allen’s face. Allen could only offer up a huge yawn in response as he leaned forward, back against Cross.

“Alright. We’ll head home. You should say bye to Mana though.”

Allen whined, not wanting to leave Mana. He was too tired to voice his thoughts though.

“We’ll come back to see him another day, okay? I think he’d like you to rest at home for now. Besides, he has the dog keeping watch on his grave now, so he’ll be okay until we come back.”

That made a little sense to Allen’s tired, child-like mind. He had Allen the dog to protect his grave now until Allen came back. Still, he was reluctant to say goodbye, managing a little wave and keeping his eyes open until he couldn’t see his grave anymore as Cross carried him back to the car.

Chapter End Notes

(Hahaha…I didn’t cry like a little bitch at all while making this…not at all…haha…heh. Anyways, upcoming drabbles, I still got one that is currently almost done, another bit of Linkllen that needs a lot more editing, the amusement park draft that is currently not done but started. I also have Krory and Miranda’s date on the back burner, Cross chaperoning a field trip as one drabble idea, another one where Cross takes Allen to his first concert. If you all have anymore suggestions or ideas to add, feel free to
comment them or message me!}

Allen's First Thunderstorm (Barba and Mother edition)

Chapter Summary

Basically this is a rendition of Cross comforting/rescuing Allen from a thunderstorm at Mother's house. This also goes more in depth of Allen warming up to Cross in the beginning and more in depth with Cross's drinking. Trigger warnings: may be anxiety inducing, child verbal abuse from drunk Cross.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was a hot humid day out and while Cross was pretty sure he was fucking dying, Allen was running around with Timcanpy, totally not bothered by the heat. It didn’t matter whether it was outside or inside, Cross was hot, and not in the good sexy kind of way. It didn’t matter if he put his hair in a pony tail, it ended up sagging anyways. Why oh why did he decide to have long hair?

Mother was no better off.

“Jeez, it just gets hotter and hotter every year. I can’t believe that little puffball is able to run around like that. You better make sure he stays hydrated,” Mother warned.

“Yeah yeah, I got it,” Cross said, calling out to Allen to come over. As Allen ran over Cross whipped out a water bottle and poured some cold water on his head before telling him to drink the rest of it. Instead of being insulted that water was poured on his head, Allen welcomed it. He chugged the water down, shoving the water bottle back to Cross once he drained it obediently. Once he thought Cross didn’t need him any longer, he tried to run off.

“Ah! Get your scrawny butt back here!” Cross called back, using Allen’s shirt to wipe off his dirt streaked face. He clucked his tongue and said, “Stop backing your face away, I’m just cleaning your face. God, you need a bath tonight. You attract dirt like a magnet.”

“Well he is a little boy. They tend to do that,” Mother commented as Allen growled in annoyance. What difference did it make washing his face off if he was going to get dirty again?

“If I did that and didn’t wash up before I went into the house, my ass would be grass- Don’t be growling at me you little brat. Alright, you’re free! Go on, scram! But stay where I can see you,” Cross growled as he fought with Allen before sending the brat off with an unceremonious wave of his hand. Allen stuck his tongue out at Cross who threatened to get up out of his chair, sending the brat racing away from him.

“Yeah, you better run before I yank your tongue out of your mouth, lil shit,” Cross called out.

“We’re supposed to get quite the storm tonight,” Mother sighed from her rocking chair watching the boy’s game of chase with her chickens. She laughed as the rooster came running after him. While he was great friends with the other chickens, the rooster didn’t quite like him all that much and managed to chase him up to the electric fence at the end of her property before calling it quits.
“Not a surprise, it’s humid as fuck out here,” Cross complained, watching Allen try and poke the electric fence in his curiosity for the millionth fucking time. Every time that boy was around that fence, he felt the need to mess with it or at least that’s what it felt like to Cross. Cross stood up from his chair before belting out, “Boy, how many times do I have to tell you not to fucking try and touch that! Did you not learn the first time!? It’s going to shock you-Oh Jesus Christ it’s too hot to yell at him.”

Timcanpy, aiding Cross in keeping the brat’s hands away from the fence, flew near the boy’s hand and threatened to bite his hand in warning. That seemed to get him preoccupied in something else.

“How do you think the boy is going to deal with it?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well his daddy died in a car wreck during a thunderstorm Cross. What if that has some repercussions.”

“He’ll be fine.”

Mother rolled her eyes at Cross totally writing the whole thing off, “Fine. Don’t come crying to me when the child has a breakdown.”

“With the amount of shit this brat is getting into he might not even be alive by the time the storm rolls around. He better hope something else takes him out before I decide to,” Cross growled, watching as Allen ran off towards the road. Jesus is this kid really this fucking stupid or was he testing Cross today? It felt like the latter. Maybe the heat made the brat act dumber than usual. Who knows.

“Get off of the road! We may be in the middle of fucking nowhere, but people still come down that road! If you’re that desperate to meet your fucking maker you should come over here so I can kick your ass,” Cross yelled at him, “Tim you’re slacking on the job!”

Timcanpy growled at Cross as if to tell him to fuck off before chasing the brat away from the road. Meanwhile Mother was laughing away on her rocking chair on the porch.

It took about three hours later for the clouds to begin rolling in, which helped in getting rid of the sun, but it sure didn’t help the heat none. The wind was beginning to pick up and it looked blacker than the pits of hell over in one direction of the house. This storm was going to be one fucking doozy, that was for sure. It’s been how many weeks without one, so this was quite overdue. After one of those three hours, Cross grew bored of yelling at his brat to stay out of shit and returned back inside to take a nap. As of right now he was standing outside, smoking a cigarette, pondering where the hell his brat went. He probably had a good fifteen minutes to find his brat and get him inside before the storm blew in. Plenty of time. That’s what he thought. He should’ve known that wouldn’t happen, this was Allen he was dealing with after all.

“Boy! Oi! Allen! Time to come inside! Hurry up brat, before the storm blows in!” Cross yelled out, looking around for his fluffy white head. The man frowned when Allen didn’t pop out of his hiding place the instant he called. Well shit.

“Alright! You better hope to God I don’t find you before you get your butt back into the house kid. I’m gonna roast your ass on an open fire for making me walk around in this sweltering heat!” Cross threatened as he stepped off the porch to begin looking for the brat. He kept his eyes trained on the front door of the house though in case the brat decided to sneak in to avoid his wrath.

After five minutes Cross got worried, especially when the storm was blowing in faster than he thought. Those clouds were not that close five minutes, earlier were they? Where in the fuck was
that kid at?

Allen meanwhile was napping under a tree and due to the wind blowing, did not hear Cross calling for him. It was until the wind began to pick up more in speed, rustling his hair rather violently, that he finally woke up. When he looked up, his stomach sank when he saw the dark, scary clouds move towards him, his eyes widened in fear. Allen whined, his bottom lip beginning to tremble as he heard thunder in the far-off distance. It was until the wind began to pick up more in speed, rustling his hair rather violently, that he finally woke up. When he looked up, his stomach sank when he saw the dark, scary clouds move towards him, his eyes widened in fear. Allen whined, his bottom lip beginning to tremble as he heard thunder in the far-off distance. He had run off further than he wanted to, thinking that he would be able to find his way back easily when he had Timcanpy. The only problem... where was Timcanpy? Good question. Timcanpy was currently chasing after some butterflies and left Allen behind. It would've been fine if Allen didn’t decide to try and run back to the house by himself. If he would’ve stayed where he was, Tim would have been able to find him and lead him back to the house before the storm clouds made their move.

Allen began to run faster when he felt the wind gusts begin to pick up even more, nearly blowing him off his feet. He nearly jumped a foot in the air when another bout of thunder shook the earth. Oh my god. He was going to die! He was going to die! He was going to fucking die! Sure, he wasn’t in a car, but if there was anything he knew about big scary clouds that made a lot of noise and flashed, it was that they were bad. They were really bad. They killed people. It was one of the things that took Mana away from him and they were back to finish the job.

“Help me! Help me! Please help me!” Allen shrieked, yelping when he felt rain begin to pour,”

Cross meanwhile was in full parental panic mode. Shit! Where the hell was his kid!? He thought he had more time, but apparently mother nature was dead set on being a dick. He didn’t expect the storm to show up now! It also didn’t help that when he glanced up at the oncoming storm clouds that he saw that some of the clouds were rotating and the sky was turning green. Cross felt his stomach drop. Oh, hell fucking no. That was not a good sign. This brat better show his face right fucking now before Cross lost his shit.

“Allen Walker you better fucking tell me where you are right fucking now! This isn’t funny brat! You need to come inside right now, play time is over!” Cross screamed, cursing when he felt rain begin to pelt down on his head.

“Allen!? Allen!?” Cross screamed as he started to practically run around the house in search of his brat.

“Marian where is Allen!?” Mother hollered from the porch, “The news said we are in a tornado watch!”

“Thanks! I can fucking see that! I don’t know where he’s at!” Cross yelled back, pissed that Mother had to go and confirm that the clouds swirling up ahead was definitely not some hallucination. He sure wished it fucking was.

“Dammit,” Mother cursed, “Barba! Can you help him find Allen!? He couldn’t have gone too far.”

“Yes mam!” Barba dutifully replied before he set off to go searching further out on the property.

Allen screamed when he saw lightning flash nearby follow by thunder that roared harshly into his little ears. It made his ears ring and hurt. He held his hands over his ears, wailing out in fear. Where was Barba? Or Cross? Or Mother!? Did they forget about him? Allen cried even harder at the thought of being forgotten. He hated thunderstorms. He absolutely hated them! He hated them ever since working at the circus because that meant he was going to get wet and it was going to be cold. He hated the cold. He hated thunderstorms even more now when he figured out just what
they could do. He looked up at the green sky. It sure didn’t look like the sky he saw that night with Mana, it looked a lot meaner and scarier.

Cross’s eye widened in fear when he looked up at the sky and saw one of the clouds forming a funnel cloud. Son of a bitch! He swore to God he was never going to let Allen out of his sight after this. He promised to whatever God was out there he would try harder to keep an eye on Allen if he could just find the brat!

“Marian!” Mother called out, no doubt to let Cross know the change in the storm.

“It’s fine! You guys go and get to safety! I’m gonna keep looking for him!” Cross shouted back. He was gonna find that brat or die trying. He didn’t go through all that shit of taking care of him and listening to him screaming his head off in agony to have him die in a thunderstorm! Well, that’s what Cross told himself. He didn’t want to admit he actually cared all that much about the stupid, snot nosed, thumb sucking, imp, that drove him up a fucking wall. That made him feel shit that he didn’t know he was fucking capable of. It wasn’t even his fucking kid. They shared no genetics and yet here he was cooking, cleaning up, attempting to comfort some other asshole’s spawn that he abandoned somewhere. Mana was the kindhearted one. He was the guy who would take some abandoned brat in and treat him like his own son. Cross was not. He was just doing what was right and taking care of the stupid brat Mana left behind. He wasn’t the greatest of friends to have, but he knew he’d be the hugest dick of the universe if he didn’t take care of Mana’s son. Or at least attempt it. He knew he was already a dick, but he didn’t want to be the universe’s biggest dick.

Just when he thought it was all hopeless and he was going to get his fucking ass killed in a thunderstorm, practically tornado, he thought he heard a squeaky wail past the trees, into the forest behind Mother’s house. Cross sprinted in that direction, ignoring the wind blowing rain into his face, threatening to blind him. He ignored looking back up at the sky to see the progress of the funnel cloud, if it had been progressing at all. He just ran to that noise as fast as he possible could, straining to pick it up over the wind that threatened to douse it out. It took longer than Cross wished to find Allen, although he thought the adrenaline was partly to blame. It probably didn’t take him all that long to find him. When he did find him though he was crouched down with his hands over his ears screaming until he was purple in the face and choking on the air, he sucked into his lungs to continue. Cross picked up Allen and sprinted back to the house like his life depended on it, because…well it did. The rain was pouring down so fast and so hard it felt like hail. Fuck, maybe it was. He didn’t know. Once he got to the house, he slammed the door and went straight to the basement.

“Oh, thank God you found him. Where was he!?” Mother cried, her face filled with relief. Barba was trying to get the radio to work downstairs.

“Out in the fucking forest doing God knows what. I don’t know where the fuck Tim is, but that thing is indestructible. He’ll be fine,” Cross complained, but he felt relieved that he was holding Allen in his arms. He was pleased he was wailing his stupid little head off because it meant he was breathing, and he was alive. That’s all that fucking mattered.

“Did you happen to see it touch down at all?” Mother asked, searching for a blanket or a towel so at least they’d have something to try and warm up and dry off.

“No fucking clue. The sky was pissing rain so hard I couldn’t see for shit,” Cross said, rocking the child in his arms as the storm raged on outside. Allen was inconsolable as he clung to Cross, shivering and trying to press himself harder to sap more of Cross’s body heat.

“Don’t you ever fucking do that again brat. You never ever go past the trees from now on. Ever. I
have half the mind to beat your ass,” Cross growled, petting back Allen’s soaked hair. Fuck, if he knew what he was even doing right now he’d probably be shocked that he was even capable of being comforting…and…dad-like. He was high on adrenaline to really give a shit though and his instincts had taken over instead. He didn’t know if he was being comforting or not considering his own father didn’t provide much to begin with. For all he knew he was doing more harm than good.

“I don’t think you have to worry about that. He looks scared to death,” Mother tsked as she found some blankets and draped them over the two of them.

“Scared to death? That kid killed me twice over. God, I thought we were screwed. I at least wanted to go out in a blaze of glory, not in a fucking storm,” Cross said, trying to hush the child that was still screaming and wailing away like he was trying to beat the storm over who could be the loudest. Then again, the brat was screaming into his ear which probably made him seem louder than he was. He tried to dry off the brat’s hair with one of the blankets and rub a little warmth into the pathetic, shivering, wailing thing that was his brat. Was it even possible for kids to shiver this bad? He wasn’t haven’t a seizure or some shit, was he?

“With all the shit you’ve pulled over the years Marian, I should’ve been dead ten years ago!” Mother shot back.

“Oh, and it is quite the shame you are not,” Cross shot back, unwilling to deal with Mother’s shit right not when there was a little boy screaming and crying in his ear. He was going to need some good fucking wine after this, that is if his car made it through the storm. Having the kid around had made Cross busier than usual so he didn’t have time to drink his sorrows away every night like he had done originally. They were also out of wine because Mother kept drinking it all. It was like she was trying to deplete that resource on purpose to keep Cross sober and available for Allen. It was both appreciated but highly annoying to Cross who was in desperate need for a good fix.

“It’s a good thing I haven’t or that boy would’ve been six feet under a long time ago!”

“I’m not that bad!”

“Oh, trust me honey, I’ve seen clueless fathers before, but you are a phenomenon Cross! You are truly something else!”

“Ughh whatever! We’ll talk about this later! You’re giving me a damn headache!” Cross yelled, wincing when Allen’s voice reached an octave louder. Fuck was that even possible? The kid was already choking on his own tears as it was. The man’s yelling only escalated his distress. Cross reeled back his anger a little bit, instead, focusing on Allen who hadn’t calmed down the slightest. The storm seemed to have calmed down a little bit though so he was hoping Allen would soon follow suit.

After a few minutes, Cross was disappointed to see that Allen had not calmed down. He was even more surprised that he even had the energy to keep up the hysterics, especially since he hadn’t had much practice. At least not for a while. The brat was as quiet as a field mouse. He was already surprised the brat didn’t sprint away from him after they got into the house. Actually, he was thankful because in weather like this one should be in the basement unless they had a death wish. This was the first time he was actually holding Allen. Allen who was functioning and not catatonic. The brat refused physical touch upon ‘waking up’. He already had a hard time talking or maintaining eye contact with Cross or anyone else. Now, he was in his arms, not even pulling away from Cross.

Just for the sake of experimentation (well sort of, Cross was getting sick of the screaming and wanted it to end), Cross attempted to pass Allen off on Barba. Compared to how Cross was doing
bonding with Allen, Barba was further ahead and bonded with him while working in Mother’s
garden. Cross wasn’t expecting much, in fact he expected Allen to willingly be passed over to
Barba who was distressed over Allen crying because he wanted to comfort his little friend.

It hurt to hear him crying like that. Especially when they’ve already heard the unholy, agonizing
sounds this brat was capable of producing. They all hated hearing him cry because it hurt. In all his
years within the force Cross has heard some of the worst screams and crying imaginable. He heard
a woman’s heart wrenching cries over the death of her child. The cries of a man wanting to end it
all by jumping off of a bridge or holding a gun to his head. The cries of fiery anger between
husband and wife or boyfriend and girlfriend. He knew the first quite well. He’d heard what a child
sounds like in pain and deemed it as annoying. When it came to Allen, those cries were more
painful and shook him to his core. He never could’ve imagined the type of sounds that could be
unleashed from a little body. Fuck, Cross could recount many times in Allen’s catatonic state
where he begged, almost near tears for him to stop making those sounds because it hurt. He didn’t
know why they did. When Allen would finally stop, he would find Barba crying off in some corner
(no surprise, it happened every time). Mother would be silent, but her cheeks would shine
sometimes as a sign of her own agony. Cross would be so drained sometimes that he found himself
thankful Mother hid the booze or he’d drown himself in it. He’d end up holing himself up in the
bathroom, crying, whether it was from feeling helpless or from pure exhaustion. He would never
admit that to the brat though, or Mother, or Barba. No one.

Maybe it was more potent because he actually formed a deep connection with Allen without
meaning to. Maybe this was what other people felt with their own offspring. That deep instinctive
drive that pulled you to do whatever it was in your power to make that noise stop, that made you
do weird shit that you normally wouldn’t do like rocking a kid to sleep or whisper sweet things in
their ear. If that was true, why didn’t his own parents have that? His mother seemed to have the
drive to a decent extent that kept him alive, but his father had none of it.

He wasn’t expecting Allen to threaten to tear his shirt off his body and unleash a piercing scream
when Cross pulled him away from his body. Least to say Cross immediately held Allen against his
body after that. For being totally withdrawn and shy around him most of the time, this brat clung to
him when his life was in danger, or when he thought his life was in danger.

That both made Cross relieved and terrified. Relieved, because when push comes to shove, the brat
trusted him enough to go to him when he felt his life was threatened or if he desperately needed
something. Terrified, because adding a child’s life on top of the one you currently had and was
failing at preserving half of the time, was a lot of responsibility that Cross still wasn’t sure he
wanted (or could) deal with. Another reason why he wanted booze more than ever.
He was thankful when Allen began to lose energy and began to die down along with the storm
raging outside.

“Alright you lil screamer, let us check the damage done,” Cross sighed after several moments
passed by. He deemed the storm to have blown over by now and with a strained groan (his joints
stiffened up while he sat on the basement floor), stood up with Allen clung to him. He slowly
made his way upstairs, squinting a little at how bright everything was. He knew the basement was
fucking dim, but that dim!? As his eyes adjusted to the light, he made his way to the kitchen
window where he could look out at Mother’s garden. Well, that garden has seen better days. That’s
for sure. He could see some of her crops were ruined, although from where he stood, he couldn’t
exactly assess the damage. Some big branches came down along with plenty of smaller ones were
scattered on the grass all around the house. There was a tree that was uprooted near the forest and
the chickens were wandering around, shaken up, but fine. The sunset over the horizon was a
brilliant, fiery red. A perfect image to how fucking terrifyingly beautiful nature could be.
Cross continued to walk around the house, bouncing Allen a little bit on his hip as he walked. He never understood that tactic, although he’s seen a lot of parents do it to calm their brats down. Next was the porch whose chairs were toppled over, but thankfully were undamaged. He would never hear the end of it if Mother’s chair was damaged. He nearly shit a brick when he saw the huge ass tree branch right in front of his car. Oh, that was quite fucking close. He wondered what would’ve happened if he didn’t find Allen when he did. Some of these tree branches would’ve easily probably killed the kid depending on where they landed.

“Mother Nature thou art a bitch…but thank you for sparing the shit that you did,” Cross sighed in relief, lighting up when he saw a very frazzled Tim flapping his way over to the house. The golem instantly went to Allen to make sure his little companion was alright who was hiding his face in Cross’s hair. He seemed to calm down quite a bit as he realized the storm was over, though he was still hiccupping and sucking on his thumb. Once Timcanpy approached him the golem whacked the child’s head lightly with one of his wings as if to say ‘Never run off again! You made me worry about you’ before nuzzling his face against Allen’s affectionately to show that he was happy that Allen was safe. Even if he did run off and made him worry.

Cross raised an eyebrow noting the whole ‘sucking on his thumb’ thing again. He’s noticed it quite a bit, whether it was in stressful situations like this one, or if he was sitting in the living room watching television. He wasn’t sure how often he did it out of his gaze, the kid hide around the house a lot. He knew kids his age shouldn’t be doing that, but he didn’t quite know how to go about getting him to quit it.

“What? Is that finger good to suck on?” Cross mentioned, moving his hand up to try and take his finger out of his mouth. The child whined and turned his face away from Cross, threatening to start to cry again.

“Alright alright, don’t start the water works again or I will drop you,” Cross threatened halfheartedly. He’d deal with the thumb sucking later. He sniffed in disgust, “You smell like a wet dog…except the child version of whatever that is. Ughh and you got snot all over the place. Go take a bath.”

Allen whined when Cross set him down, but his whining was soon cut off when Cross gave him the look that sent him scurrying off towards the bathroom with Tim flying behind him. When he was sure the brat was gone, Cross decided that it would be a good time to drink so he took a nice drive into town to get some booze.

By the time Allen took his bath and got into pajamas Cross was already drunk and slurring his speech as he watched the news. Allen padded up next to the chair he was sitting on, thinking that perhaps with the recent turn of events he could allow himself to be closer to the man. Allen quickly became disappointed though upon looking at the drunken man. He knew it upon looking at him. He was quite familiar with how drunk people acted. Cross was unapproachable now, the child thought as he looked at Cross in a mixture of curiosity and sadness. He wondered if it was his fault that he had a couple empty bottles of wine next to him, including a half full one out on the coffee table. He knew he didn’t heed his warning about staying near the house, or he ran out near the road when he wasn’t supposed to. Or he tried to play with the electric fence again when he knew he wasn’t supposed to. It didn’t help that he let fear control his mind and made it even harder to find him in the storm. Even after he was brought inside, he still had not managed to control the fear and threw a fit. Was he angry at him because he misbehaved? The smell of booze was almost unbearable, it sent Allen back to the days Cosimo beat him.

“The fuck do you want brat?” Cross slurred as he noticed Allen’s presence beside him, his speech a
Allen nearly jumped out of his skin at Cross’s voice but nodded quickly before the man could get angry. People who were drunk were also impatient. It was easy to anger them if one wasn’t careful. Sometimes it was better to just disappear until they stopped acting that way, although that never worked with Cosimo.

“Really? You’re still scared of me? After your mental breakdown? What the fuck kid. Lighten up,” Cross continued insensitively. Cross was a pretty rough spoken man, that was obvious to Allen, but when Cross was drunk his voice took on a whole lot meaner tone than what Allen was used to. It was easy for him to say! He was a giant. A scary giant at that! He could beat people up and squish people like Allen with the heel of his boot, like he was some kind of ant! Allen began to cower naturally, which only seemed to make Cross angrier. Oh, this wasn’t good. If Allen knew how drunk the man was, he wouldn’t have ventured so close to him. He thought after today Cross was a little more approachable. Sure, the man wiped his face off and dunked water on his head, but as far as their interactions went usually it was arm’s length. No hugging. No pats on the head. Hell, Cross was lucky that he didn’t sprint off when he dared to wipe his face off, he sure did flinch back a lot though. There were a couple of times Allen saw Cross when he was drunk, but he never was this close to him when he was drunk. He didn’t know what he could expect out of the man. All he knew was that when someone was drunk, then it meant that they could hurt you so what happened next was purely on Allen’s instinct. He didn’t intend to hurt anyone. Just as Allen was about to cower and step away, thinking perhaps this was not the best time to be around him, Cross reached out quickly and grabbed Allen’s arm.

“Uh-uh you’re not leaving that quickly ya lil runt. Why the fuck ya gotta look like you’re gonna piss yourself every time I look at you!? You’re a boy. Fucking act like one! Stop acting like a little girl! Little babies piss the bed, little babies suck on their fingers! Little babies cry during a thunderstorm and run away from stupid shit! Ya know my dad used to beat the shit out of kids who pissed the bed. He beat the shit out of kids who wouldn’t listen, who were dirty and loud! I could give you the same treatment, maybe then you’d stop crying like a little baby!-“Cross yelled, directly in Allen’s face. Allen’s blinked, his eyes widening in both fear and hurt. He felt his instincts take over in an instant. This man was angry. This man is going to hurt me. Is hurting me. This man can’t be trusted at all. The whole storm incident was an act. He had to get away from him. Now. Right now, before he hurt him anymore. Allen did the one thing he could do-

SMACK!

He smacked Cross across the face as hard as he possibly could. Enough that Cross released his grip on his arm in shock that the kid would have the balls to do that.

Allen didn’t like the way Cross yelled at him. He didn’t like how the man grabbed him. Sure, sober Cross called him a brat, but he never actually insulted him or his behaviors. Sure, he got irritated if Allen wet the bed again, he was disgusted when Allen got dirty, but he didn’t sit down and call him a baby. He didn’t yell directly in his face like he was doing now in such a voice that made Allen’s stomach clench tight in fear. He crossed a very delicate line with Allen and suddenly the trust he began to have with the man shattered in an instant when he grabbed him and began to yell at him.

There was a moment of absolute quiet as shock registered across Cross’s face. He had to run. Now. Before Cross got up and beat the shit out of him. So, Allen turned on his heel and ran as fast as he possibly could out of the house, his heartbeat roaring in his ear. Cross got one good glimpse of the look of pain and absolute terror on Allen’s face before he was gone.

Allen slapped him out of fear and was thankful that the man let his arm go in his surprise so Allen
could run off to find a hiding place until the Cross he liked came back. If he ever came back. He knew the older man couldn’t be trusted! It was just a matter of time before he would act like everyone else!

“Really Cross!? Way to fucking go! Drinking with the kid around is bad enough but now you’re yelling at him! Do you even know what you did!? Did you even see the look of terror across that child’s face!? He didn’t do anything to you and you just fucking did that!” Mother yelled at the man, her face red with anger. Barba had run over to the door in concern for Allen.

“Oh, like it’s my fault! The brat needs to grow a pair, he’s being doing this shit for more than a week now. He needs to grow the fuck up! Mana made him soft! He needs to fucking realize the man is dead, he is not coming back no matter how much he cries and carries on!”

“Marian he’s only a kid! He can’t help it! He lost everything and now has to start all over again! He was standing right next to you Cross! He let you clean his face off today! That’s something he didn’t do yesterday or the day before and you ruined it by yelling at him! If anyone needs to grow the fuck up, it’s you Cross Marian! You took the kid in without knowing what he had going on! You are the one who decided this and took it on! You are the fool who decided to try and be a parent! You have to be responsible! You have to be the bigger one and keep your emotions in check! You are the adult! You can’t drink yourself into a stupor, gamble, or party anymore! You have a child! Act like a parent you drunken bastard! Just because your father was an ass doesn’t mean you should repeat the cycle! You are all this little boy has now after he lost his daddy! What kind of example is this setting for the child!? If people find out you’re drinking around the kid is going to be taken away and sent only god knows where!”

“Good, then I don’t have to deal with him!”

“Cross! The kid can hear you!”

“Good! Let him hear me! Where the fuck did he go? I’m gonna whip his ass for what he did. Fucking brat,” Cross slurred loudly, but Allen was already out the door and didn’t stop until he was several feet away from the house. He could still hear the screaming and catch some bits of it. Once outside he began to climb up a tree. He found with his experiences with Cosimo that being up in a tree made it more difficult for a drunk person to get you, however, he couldn’t use the tactic often because he had only one functional arm. If he knew ahead of time that Cosimo would get drunk, this tactic worked well, and he had the time to climb a tree. However, now he had two thanks to the car accident smacking his brain around a bit. Or at least that was what he thought happened. Still, it was difficult to climb a tree and took a lot of time even with two hands, since his left arm was still difficult to move at times.

“Cross I swear to God you put one hand on that child I will beat you upside the head with my cane! You’ve done more than enough tonight! Why don’t you go to sleep you drunk! Don’t be doing stupid shit when you’re drunk!”

“Don’t tell me what to do woman!” Cross yelled back, his eye flashing dangerously.

“Mister Cross, I do believe it would be wise to go to bed. It’s been a long day,” Barba tried to reason, not wanting a fight to break out between Mother and Cross. They were both pretty wicked when they were angry.

“I can say whatever the hell I want in my house, Marian! You are just like your own damn father!”

It took several minutes for the yelling in the house to die down, but as far as Allen was concerned, he didn’t care to hear what the man had to say. He heard enough. Cross didn’t like him and didn’t
want him around. He was a burden. Even though it was nothing new to Allen’s ears, his chest still hurt thinking about it. It hurt even more because he was being rejected from someone who seemed sort of like him. Cross also had a deformity or an injury of some sort, or at least that’s what Allen guessed considering the man wore a mask to cover half of his face. If Allen couldn’t even seek acceptance from someone who also shared the pain of having something ugly to cover up, then where could he search for acceptance? Why did Mana have to die? Would there be anyone out there like Mana that would accept Allen? Or was Mana the only one? Maybe Mana was just someone who was a bit touched in the head and that’s why he accepted Allen. Maybe it was something he did wrong. Maybe he did something bad and that’s why Mana was taken from him. Maybe it was bad enough where, whatever higher being was up there, decided Allen would be unloved by everyone he came into contact with from now on.

Once the house grew silent, and everyone had gone to bed, Allen let his body relax and curled up to place his chin on his knees. Sure, sleeping in a tree wasn’t the most comfortable of things, but Allen slept on worse.

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Cross groaned, waking up to a massive headache and the room spinning. Wow. It’s been quite a while since he woke up sick like this on one of his binges. Granted, it was a given that he would get sick, he always did when he binged, but the kid’s total breakdown yesterday kind of triggered Cross into drinking more heavily this time around. It’s kind of like how one would feel witnessing one of their friend’s breakdown when you already are mentally fucked up. Sometimes it triggers you into your own breakdown. The breakdown also made the whole weight of having a kid to take care of that much heavier as well.

Oh god the kid. Shit he hoped he didn’t do anything too brutal last night. He couldn’t remember much of last night other than a lot of yelling and the side of his face stinging like a bitch. Fuck, he hoped he didn’t lose his shit. There were many times Cross got violent when he got drunk enough (which was pretty often when he binged) and if he completely lost it with the kid it would completely screw up all the progress, they’ve made over the two weeks. The uncertainty of it all and reality crashing down on Cross made his stomach lurch and effectively tore him up out of bed and to the bathroom to purge himself of last night’s bad decisions. This was the side of him he hated but he couldn’t control. No matter how hard he tried. This was the side of him that reminded him of his father. This was the side of him he wanted to hide from Allen.

Once he was done trying to repent his stupid decisions over the toilet, Cross got up to search for Allen. He hoped to God that what met his eyes wouldn’t be a bunch of bruises. That was what met his eyes every single damn time his father went off on him and that was not the shit he wanted to subject the kid to.

“Good morning,” Mother said, pretending like last night didn’t happen. That was one of the good things about Mother is that she knew Cross already felt like shit. Not just bodily, but also spiritually. He knew he fucked up and she didn’t rub it in even though he knew he deserved it (although she did bitch and yell at him while he was drunk). She didn’t mention anything unless Cross opened up the discussion of it.

“Where’s Allen?” Cross asked, giving her indirect permission to talk about what he did last night. He wanted to know. Needed to know.

“I have no idea. He stood next to you yesterday and he ran off after slapping you when you yelled at him. He didn’t come back inside so he’s probably still somewhere outside. You better hope he didn’t choose to run away,” Mother stated, watching a pained look flicker quickly across Cross’s face. Great. The brat had the guts to get close to him and he completely fucked that up. If he didn’t
feel as sick as he did, he would’ve drowned himself in alcohol again to block out how shitty that made him feel.

“Did I…” Cross started.

Mother looked over at him, her wise eyes easily picking out what Cross wanted to say, “No. You didn’t hit him. Although with what you yelled at him you can guarantee you’re all the way back at square one with him.”

“Well, I guess I better go hunt him down,” Cross sighed as he put on his shoes and walked outside, wincing at the bright sun stabbing at his eyes, making his head throb harder. He doubted the kid would even want to talk to him, but he at least wanted to know if he was okay or not. Well, okay as in alive. He doubted he would okay after the shit show of last night. Who would be after having a huge giant yell right in your face? He remembered the terrified look on his face. He couldn’t quite remember what he said, but if he was anything like his father, the kid was probably scared shitless.

It took almost an hour for Cross to find him and it would’ve taken longer if Tim didn’t fly down in greeting. Well okay, it wasn’t really a greeting since the golem decided to propel himself towards the man as hard as he could, using its little body to hit Cross upside the head. Ow. He deserved that. Once Tim took his anger out on Cross for his actions last night, he gladly helped Cross find Allen who was curled up in a tree sleeping. He had his face in his knees so Cross couldn’t see his face.

“Oi, Allen!” Cross shouted up at the child whose head snapped up, but his eyes stayed closed. God, he was tired. He forgot how uncomfortable it was sleeping outside. He really took sleeping in bed for granted. He whined, trying to shift himself so his back was towards Cross. He didn’t want to talk to that big ol’ jerk face right now. He was too tired and angry at him and he sure as hell didn’t feel like being yelled at some more.

“Allen, you can’t stay up there forever,” Cross called up.

The fuck he can’t! What did this man take him for? He may have thought he was a big baby, but this big baby could sleep outside for an entire night and more so if it called for it. He could go almost two days without food if circumstances called for it, although with his newly heightened metabolism, maybe that wouldn’t be possible anymore.

“Come on kid, that can’t be comfortable.”

Allen ignored him.

“Kid don’t make me come up there and get you,” Cross sighed, not looking forward to climbing up a tree. While he climbed up them in his youth, he really doubted he was as wily as he was when he was younger. Plus, he was hung over instead of hyperactive, looking for trouble. Allen still ignored him. Shit, this was really going to happen. Fuck it, Cross made his bed, now he was going to have to lay in it.

Cross sighed before approaching the tree before he began to climb up it. Allen resisted the urge to roll his eyes. No way is this big ol’ jerk face gonna be able to climb up here and get him. If he tried, he’d just give him a nice swift kick and send him right back down. Surely Mana would forgive him for this small act of violence. He was protecting himself after all. He didn’t trust the man to touch him without hurting him.

It took a bit of doing, but soon Cross climbed up the tree, surprised the brat hadn’t decided to get up and climb higher to get away from Cross. This brat must really think he can’t climb a simple
fucking tree. Well, sucks to be him then. Once Cross felt he had a good grip and was in reaching distance he grabbed Allen around the torso who immediately began to scream, struggle and hit out at Cross

"Whoa brat! Calm your shit! At least wait until we get on the ground before you decide to beat me up! Kid I’m going to drop you, stop!” Cross commented, descending the tree as quickly as he could before he dropped Allen. Once he got back on the ground Allen squirmed himself around so he could grab a fistful of Cross’s hair before yanking on it as viciously as he possibly could. He wanted to be put down right now! This man had betrayed his trust, how dare he think he could just waltz up here and grab him like nothing happened. He was a jerk! An asshole!

“Ow! Fuck! I deserve that,” Cross said through gritted teeth as his hair was pulled, but he didn’t let Allen go. Oh no. If he let him go then he was going to take off and try and climb somewhere else and Cross wasn’t in the mood to climb up more things to go grab him. Allen became frustrated that the hair pulling wasn’t enough to make Cross drop him. Why wasn’t he!? Why wasn’t he throwing him up against the tree in anger!? Why wasn’t he yelling at him!? Allen balled up one of his fists and began to hit him upside the head as hard as he could, trying with all his might to get this guy to drop him. He tried kicking, threatening to bite, trying to bite anything to get Cross to drop him but Cross just took the beatings. He knew where his anger was coming from and even though a little boy was not supposed to hit his guardian, Cross figured he’d let this one slide because Cross wasn’t being a good guardian last night. He fucked up big time and honestly, he was surprised that the kid was even beating the shit out of him instead of quivering in fear.

“Fuck! Ow! Ow! Ah fuck those teeth are sharp! Damn kid!” Cross cursed, waiting until the kid finally tired himself, realizing Cross wasn’t going to let go or hit him back. It kind of freaked him out. As a last-ditch effort Allen put both hands-on Cross’s face and pushed his face away from him while trying at the same time to climb out of his arms to no avail. Allen screamed in frustration, tears filling his eyes as he hit his head on Cross’s shoulder in frustration. Stupid Cross. Stupid, hard to read, hard to understand Cross!

Once Cross was sure the kid wasn’t attempting to beat him senseless anymore, the man made his way back to the house. The kid’s body was cold and even though Allen was so angry with Cross right now he couldn’t help but try and curl into Cross’s warm body. Cross grabbed a blanket and put it over Allen’s body who growled, letting Cross know he was still pissed off at him and he better tread carefully. Just because he was compliant now, it did not mean he would remain that way based on how tense his body was at the moment. He was ready to fight if needed.

“Yeah I know. I’m an asshole. I fucked up last night,” Cross sighed as he sat down with Allen on his lap. He kept his hands-off Allen, giving him the opportunity to make his escape if he wished to do so. Allen was cold though, so he stayed where he was, leaching off of Cross’s body heat and letting him know just how angry he was by crying louder. He was the one who initiated this contact and the contact was used to keep warm, not an act of affection. Cross winced, looking down at the ground in guilt.

“I’m sorry. I don’t know what I exactly said last night, but I’m sorry. I know it wasn’t cool. I…that wasn’t cool of me. A good man doesn’t yell at kids like that, especially over shit they have no control over. I’ll try harder,” Cross said awkwardly. He sucked at apologies, but he owed Allen one. He knew he did. He knew he had a problem, but he didn’t know how to go about it and he was afraid of getting help. He hated letting people in and having people pick his mind. Even if this were to repeat…which he was sure it would, Cross would make damn sure he wasn’t around Allen if he needed to drink. He knew that was just the coward’s way out. He knew he just should cut himself off completely, but he depended on alcohol. He needed it to help him cope with shit. His body needed it as much as he needed his cigarettes. Cross lifted up his hand up slowly and rested it
on Allen’s back, wincing when the child’s body jolted at the contact and arched his back away from his hand. Cross also got a good jab in the gut from the touch. Allen glared heatedly up at Cross much like an abused dog cowering away from someone’s hand. The little body pressed against him was so tense that Cross was almost afraid the kid was going hurt himself with the amount of stress he was going through. Stress was already an awful thing on an adult’s body for an extended period of time, it couldn’t be much better on a child's body.

Cross tried to initiate contact again, but went slow, making sure Allen knew exactly where his hand was and backing off if the kid flinched too hard or jolted away. He started with the hands, rubbing warmth into them, before moving up his arms and then his shoulders. Then Cross rubbed the younger’s back, slowly easing the tension out of him. He didn’t dare touch his head. He could feel almost all of his vertebrae which made him concerned. The kid ate a ton. A whole fuck ton, and yet he was still skinny? Then again long-term starvation messed with a lot of things.

Allen arched his back a little at Cross’s touch, the sensations causing him to cease his crying. Now that he wasn’t completely freaking out, he could really appreciate the feeling. He thought he wouldn’t ever feel this again when Mana died. It was warm and he hoped Cross wouldn’t stop. He didn’t know when he was going to feel this again and he was going to get the most out of it. He didn’t even care he was supposed to be angry with Cross, if he kept rubbing his back all was forgiven for now. Besides, Cross owed him.

Cross raised an eyebrow as he watched Allen’s eyes flutter closed. Seemed like an extreme reaction to one little act of affection. He sure didn’t act like this yesterday during the thunderstorm when he was attempting to comfort him. He guessed he didn’t have room to talk. He knew what it was like to be touch starved and found his solution through the mistresses he had. Just because he wanted to see what would happen, he stopped rubbing Allen’s back.

Allen’s face twisted up in disappointment and anger. Oh no, why did it stop? He didn’t want it to stop yet. It was too soon! Allen opened his eyes a little bit, unleashing up at Cross the crabbiest, pissed off look that turned deadlier when the man smirked down at him.

“What? Did that feel good?” Cross asked, pretending he didn’t know why the brat stared at him with a look that screamed ‘Why did you stop? Who said you could?’

“I thought you didn’t like me touching you or being near you. What happened to that?” Cross teased and Allen looked away to glare at the wall. Oh, so now he was going to make fun of him because he liked having his back rubbed? Cool. Well sorry but it’s a luxury Allen didn’t have very often. If he knew he’d get his back rubbed then he would’ve gotten closer to him sooner, but he didn’t know Cross was capable of such gentleness. Stupid man.

Just when Allen thought about leaving, deciding it was stupid to stick around if the man was going to tease him for such weakness, Cross asked, “Do you want me to continue?”

The brat slowly turned to look up at Cross curiously, no longer crabby or demanding, as if to say, ‘Will you?’. Cross shrugged and started to rub Allen’s back again, watching as the child instantly melted. Shit, this kid really was touch starved. Just out of more experimenting Cross brought his other hand up to slowly rub Allen’s head. Allen jerked instinctively at that, but once he felt the bliss of having his head rubbed, knowing he wasn’t getting hurt he completely went limp and laid down on Cross’s lap. A massive sigh escaped his lungs, one that sounded like it resonated deep within the core of his body.

Allen’s head buzzed happily at the affection. Usually he hated his head being touch out of all things, but he was too busy enjoying himself to really care at this point. He felt amazing. This felt so much better than the warmth of the dryer. It was like all the heaviness he’s been feeling so much lately lifted all at once and his head was now in a dizzying rush of happiness and
contentment. Cross got some enjoyment out of it to. He felt pretty shitty about yelling at the kid in a drunken rage so he felt happy that he could make up for it. In only a few moments Allen passed out, happily snoozing away like he wasn’t avoiding Cross like the plague ever since he woke up from his catatonic state.

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After that the brat still approached Cross warily the first few times when he sought out affectionate touch. He wasn’t sure if that was a one-time thing because Cross wanted to get in his good graces again or if it was a milestone within their relationship. Once he figured out Cross would willingly give him back rubs though (as long as he was in a good mood and was not drunk) he was more than willing to walk up to him whenever he wanted affection. Having head touches was still an iffy thing for him and he still backed his head away when Cross touched the top of his head. If he was up for it, he’d only back his head away for the first time or so he felt Cross’s hand on his head before he got used to it. If he wasn’t for it, he’d keep backing away from Cross and run off. If Cross didn’t move his hand slowly enough, Allen would also flinch back like Cross struck him.

Allen was still basically mute, but as far as Cross was concerned, the kid wanted to approach him and wanted to be touched by him, at least most times he approached him. He’d force the talking thing later. Right now, he just wanted him to get used to receiving nice touches instead of getting negative touches.

When it came to getting drunk, Cross tried to hole himself up in a separate room so he wouldn’t hurt Allen. He knew he should just quit altogether, but it was hard. Fuck it was so hard. Even the mornings after when Allen would patter up to him and pull his hair back as he puked his guts out wasn’t enough for him to quit. A kid shouldn’t be subjected to that. A kid shouldn’t have to play care taker because his guardian decided to get shit-faced the night before. It wasn’t enough. No, it would take until they were both back at his home that he would finally come to the realization that he had to quit.

Chapter End Notes

Hi it's been a long while. Sorry. I have about three fics for this going at the same time. I have some more earlier bonding stuff at Mother's house that I'm finishing up. The Amusement Park fic is about finished as well. I do have some more Linkllen fluff (getting to know each other) on the way. I wonder when the hell my inspiration to write that Krory and Miranda fic is gonna hit....-cue cricket noises-. I am also planning on a Father's Day fic. I may possibly make a few fic chapters over Anita surprisingly being pregnant (I headcanoned her as not being able to have kids) and Allen being thrilled about being a big brother, not sure yet. Other than that, if you guys have any suggestions or plot twists/plot points you'd like to see fleshed out more. Let me know. I'm always open to suggestions. I do not guarantee that I will write on it right away (like I said I usually wait until inspiration hits me like a semi truck which may take awhile). Hope you enjoy. I'll see you guys again soon. Lemme know what you think about those fic suggestions I need some motivation.
Allen's First Time At An Amusement Park

Chapter Summary

The long awaited amusement park fic chapter is finally here! It's what the title says. Cross being a supportive dad to his little brat on scary rides. Cross rides a unicorn. Lavi and Daisya get into a competition to see who can handle the scariest rides. Lavi and Allen nearly try to climb off the Ferris Wheel. Allen tries cotton candy for the first time. Who will ride the dreaded Slingshot ride? Will any of them ride? Who knows! Find out! (sorry this is super long, I could not find a good place to split up the entire thing so so sorry. I'll probably go through later and see if I can revamp it to make a better cut off.)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Oh my god this is going to be so super sweet!” Lavi yelled gleefully in the car, pumping the air with a fist.

Allen sat beside his friend, confused, but content to see his friend happy. He had no idea where it was that they were going, but he knew it was a park of some kind. Apparently, it had a lot of rides, games, and deep-fried food. Allen was hooked on the word food, especially deep fried. He was a little nervous, after all it sounded like there would be a bunch of people there. He wasn’t quite used to being around a huge crowd of people. Tiedoll decided to bring his kids along as well, which would’ve been fine, but he was also bringing Bakanda with him. Komui also decided to bring his sister Lenalee. Lavi and Allen were going up to the park in Cross’s car, Tiedoll was bringing his own, and Komui was bringing his own (he planned on taking some of his science-nerd friends with him like Reever and Johnny who would more than likely enjoy watching the rides in action rather than riding them. At least in Johnny’s case.). It was Tiedoll’s idea to round up the kids and go to the amusement park so they could get rid of some energy. Cross was a bit thrilled at the idea for he’s always been a thrill ride junkie, plus it would give Allen a new experience, hopefully positive.

The last time Cross tried to give Allen a positive experience had been when they attempted going to the circus. That…was not Cross’s smartest of moves. He was hoping he would be able to replace Allen’s memories of working in a circus by actually experiencing a positive circus experience. It was somewhat positive, but not as positive as Cross wanted it to be for the brat. There were many times Allen just simply hid his face into Cross, mostly around the times the ringleader showed up or the clowns. It reminded him too much of Mana and of the abuse he suffered at the hands of the ringleader and Cosimo. Either way, it was stories for another day.

The park was about two hours away, not a very long drive considering some other amusement parks out there, but it was going to be if Junior wouldn’t stop whooping and hollering in the back. Lavi was under his care for awhile as Bookman was off on another trip. During the week leading up to today Lavi has been telling Allen all about amusement parks and showing him video simulations of some of the rides. The kid was mostly interested in the food, but Cross worked out a deal with him that he could eat as much as he wanted, only after he had his fill of rides. Cross was not going to risk the kid puking on him on a ride, especially when he didn’t know what kind of rides were going to suit his fancy. Maybe he’d be a thrill seeker like Cross was as a kid, or how
Lavi was. Maybe he wouldn’t be able to stomach it and would have to deal with the easy-going rides. One thing was for sure, Allen was short so he probably wouldn’t be able to ride the more thrilling rides anyways, but he may be barely the right height for rides his friends would probably go on. Either way, Cross refused to let Allen ride on any rides by himself just by the simple fact of A) he’s tiny and B) this is his first time and he wasn’t sure how he was going to react to any of the stimuli.

It didn’t take long for Junior and Allen to bicker about something. Lavi was teasing Allen about the possibility of him chickening out on all of the rides and Allen was pouting, yelling that he wasn’t going to chicken out. Cross could see the hint of uncertainty in his eyes though. Courtesy of Lavi, Allen has watched some of those first-person videos of riding some of the rides at the park. It didn’t seem that bad watching it from behind a screen, but actually experiencing the ride might be a bit scarier.

“I betcha you’ll scream like a little girl the first ride you go on,” Lavi snickered before mocking in a shrill voice, “Oh no! Help me! I’m gonna die! I’m so scared!”

“Nu-uh! I can handle it stupid Lavi!” Allen retorted; his arms crossed over his chest defiantly.

“Can you though? Maybe you’ll end up flying out of one of the rides. It’s happened before for kids who didn’t hold on tight enough or were too small,” Lavi smirked.

“That didn’t happen,” Allen said with an eye roll, but he didn’t look too sure about his answer.

“It sure did happen! I’ve read articles on it!”

“Nu-uh! They were probably fake. No way they’d let people ride on rides that’ll kill people.”

“One time I found a screw loose in one of the rides. It made a bunch of weird thumping noises to. Besides, they barely clean up the rides when someone pukes on em anyways, what makes you think they wouldn’t do maintenance on their rides on top of that?”

“Eww…that’s disgusting. Shut up Lavi! You’re just e-exaggermacating!” Allen protested, pronouncing the word exaggerating wrong. He wanted to sound smart like Lavi though, so he tried to use it.

“It’s exaggerating.”

“That’s what I said!”

“No, you said exaggermacating which is not even a word.”

“Shut up Lavi!”

“No way, dude maybe you shouldn’t go on any of the rides. They may scramble up your brains too much to where you’ll never speak right again. That totally happened to somebody one time-“

“Shut up Lavi! I don’t care!”

“Both of you better shut your traps before I stop this car and give you something to holler and scream about,” Cross responded sternly as the yelling escalated between the two.

“It’s his fault! He started it,” Allen whined.

“Yeah? Well I’m finishing it,” Cross stated in annoyance. Lavi was grinning ear to ear at Allen’s
irritation. He knew Allen was a little bit nervous about this new experience and he couldn’t help but to make fun of him…at least a little bit.

“I wonder if we’ll hear Yuu scream like a girl. Wouldn’t that be funny? I think that would be funny. I’ve never seen him on a ride before, so I don’t know what he’d do. Maybe he’ll just be a buzz kill and stare straight ahead in annoyance,” Lavi continued to blabber hyperactively after a few moments of silence.

“That would be funny…I could record it and use it to blackmail him,” Allen said with an evil smirk.

“You know for someone talking so big, whose to say you won’t scream like a little girl Junior?” Cross asked with a smirk.

“Whose to say you won’t die from a heart attack?” Lavi shot back.

“Heart attack my ass, I live on thrill rides. What do you think I used to get a high before I discovered drugs?”

“Makes sense…” Lavi nodded before returning his attention to Allen, “Don’t worry though Al, if you get scared you can hold my hand. I’ll protect you from the evil, scary rides.”

Allen rolled his eyes, “I doubt they’re that scary…”

“Then I guess you wouldn’t mind going on the slingshot ride first?” Lavi asked with a cheeky grin.

“First!? Are you nuts!? No way!”

“I betcha you won’t even set foot on that ride.”

“I will so!”

“Betcha you won’t. It’s super duper scary. People have passed out on that ride before because it’s so scary.”

“No, they didn’t!”

“Actually, they did. It’s wild,” Cross said, vouching for Lavi for once.

“There’s no way you’ll do it,” Lavi said, egging Allen on.

“I-I can handle it,” Allen stammered, not sounding so confident.

“I don’t know. That ride isn’t for beansprouts or babies…” Lavi continued, enjoying the frustrated pout Allen was giving him.

“I’m not a beansprout! I can totally handle that ride!”

“Alright Junior that’s enough. We’re gonna take it slow. You can’t just hop on the wildest ride right away. Ya gotta build up to it,” Cross said with an eye roll, although he mostly said this for Allen’s sake. He didn’t want to scar the kid for life.

Junior still continued to keep blabbering away, but he did finally stop bothering Allen in favor of describing all the possible rides they may encounter for the billionth time. Junior continued his long stream of mostly one-sided conversation for a good hour until they approached the
amusement park. Once the kids got a look at the rides, they were dead silent in anticipation (mostly on Lavi’s side) and fear (Allen’s side). Allen’s eyes were as wide as saucers when he saw the ferris wheel and a couple of the big rollercoasters in action. Oh wow, they were really huge. Really really huge. It was both absolutely terrifying and intriguing. Lavi meanwhile looked like he was about to start drooling as he stared at the rides with such a manic gleam in his eye.

“Oh my god dude that’s the slingshot ride! See!?” Lavi yelped excitedly as he nearly smacked Allen in his excitement to point as two passengers were catapulted into the sky, “We gotta so ride that before we leave!”

Yeah…Allen didn’t know about that. Cross looked back in the rearview mirror, smirking when he saw the wide, fearful, but child-like wonder that came across Allen’s face as he pulled into the parking lot.

“So, what do you think brat? Pretty gnarly huh? Definitely not like the carnival rides that they had back home. Did you ever see some of them when you traveled around in the circus?” Cross asked, smirking at Allen’s reaction.

“Sometimes, but never any rollercoasters and big stuff like that. They had the one ride with the animals that spun around, some other little rides, food vendors and game vendors, but it wasn’t as big as this,” Allen stated. He remembered looking at those rides and vendors from afar, envious of the children’s screams and laughter. Envious of those families and their happy faces. But now he could also ride those rides and experience what they were experiencing. He didn’t know if he was excited or scared.

“Alright kiddos. Get the fuck out of my car,” Cross responded as he shut his car off, watching as Lavi bolted out of the car in excitement. Allen was a bit slower because he was continually staring at the rides. The brat nearly tripped and fell on his face because he was so distracted. It was quite intimidating to look up at those huge machines whirling people around and around in the air. It was a lot faster than when he spun himself around on purpose. That intrigued him and terrified him. The rollercoasters were also a whole lot bigger than Cross’s shoulder’s or Tiedoll’s oldest son Marie’s shoulders (who was about three feet taller than Cross). They were a lot taller than the ceiling fan in Cross’s house or the roof of the house. They were a lot taller than the trees he had climbed as well.

“Sometimes, but never any rollercoasters and big stuff like that. They had the one ride with the animals that spun around, some other little rides, food vendors and game vendors, but it wasn’t as big as this,” Allen stated. He remembered looking at those rides and vendors from afar, envious of the children’s screams and laughter. Envious of those families and their happy faces. But now he could also ride those rides and experience what they were experiencing. He didn’t know if he was excited or scared.

“You brats better stay close, ya got it? I’m looking at you Junior. I don’t want your grandpa to yell at me because you decided to go and be stupid,” Cross warned before turning his attention on his youngest brat who was the exact opposite of the red-headed child who was already several feet ahead of them, excited and hyper. “You don’t go on any rides by yourself, got it brat-? Oi Junior get your ass back here before I put my foot up your ass! I will do it! I have full permission from your grandpa to beat your ass if you’re out of line!”

“You guys are so slow!” Lavi whined but waited for the two to catch up. Allen, whether on purpose or not, grabbed Cross’s hand with his two small hands, looking up at the amusement park in curiosity and fear.

“We got here before everyone else! You can stand to wait another few minutes,” Cross growled at him, while checking his phone to confirm that everyone else didn’t get lost and they would arrive shortly. As they waited for the rest of the group to arrive, Cross watched his youngest brat’s reactions. He looked a little distressed, but that was normal considering this was a whole new experience for him. He’d jump sometimes at a particularly shrill scream but seemed to be holding up okay.

“Lavi! Which ride are you gonna go on first!??” a squeal came from behind them, revealing Alma
dashing up ahead of Tiedoll, his other two kids Daisya and Kanda. Komui, Lenalee and his gang of science nerds were also with Tiedoll’s group.

“I don’t know yet! I wanted to go on the slingshot ride first, but I’m not sure yet! There are so many rides to choose from!” Lavi responded excitedly.

“I wonder if they have The Tunnel of Love. If they do Yuu has to ride it with me!” Alma squealed excitedly.

“I’m not riding on anything. This is all stupid,” was Kanda’s bland response.

“Don’t say that. You always end up riding on rides in the end,” came Daisya’s response with an eye roll as they went into the admissions booth to get their bracelets to signify that they could ride on the rides. Tiedoll immediately went into mother hen mode reminding his children that they need to stay in groups and to call if they got lost in case they split up. Cross just stared point blank at both Allen and Lavi and threatened to kick their ass if they ran off. He had no doubts Allen would stay by him. It was Lavi he was worried about, and if Lavi happened to wander off there may be a good chance Allen will try and follow him. He didn’t care if Lavi ran off with Tiedoll’s kids, he was confident Tiedoll would take special care to watch over all the kids. Cross’s attention was put more on Allen because Allen got lost easily (whether or not he was with his friend group or with adults, the kid still managed to wander off or get distracted) and in such a new place, that could be quite disastrous. He didn’t want to take the kid away from enjoying shit with his friends, but he didn’t trust Allen being with his friends without an adult either. Cross’s preference was to have all the kids in the same area, but he knew that may not be possible all the time. Especially with hyperactive children and hyperactive adults (we’re looking at you Komui, we see that manic glint in your eye).

Besides, Cross wanted to ease Allen into this. He felt better having him beside him in case something happened, and he needed him. He also didn’t want Allen to feel pressured into riding something too intense, freak out, and write this off as another bad experience. Judging from the way Allen clung to him, he had also felt too nervous to wander too far. The group stuck together for the most part, deciding they would scope out potential rides. While Lavi, Alma, and Daisya chattered excitedly about which rides they were planning on going on, Kanda, Lenalee, and Allen stayed more withdrawn. Kanda would probably go where Alma went with Lenalee following suit. Lenalee chattered here and there over the rides she was interested in but seemed more apt in easing into it. Allen meanwhile stayed dead silent, checking things out, getting a feel for everything. There was quite a bit of stimuli going on around him. Though he clung to Cross’s hand, he was the slowest and clumsiest of the group because he kept whipping his head around if there was a shrill scream or if one of the machines zoomed by too fast (mostly the rollercoasters that went past).

Any other time Cross would be annoyed, but he understood why the kid was looking around. This was a pretty strange place for a kid whose never exactly been around these huge machines before, only watching from afar. It was strange to hear people screaming around you out of entertainment rather than fear (well okay a little bit of fear I guess), especially blood curdling, piercing screams. So Cross was patient and moved slow so Allen wouldn’t end up falling on his face because he had to look at something. He couldn’t say that for the rest of the kiddos, but the day was still young and maybe once Allen got used to it, he’ll be running on ahead with Cross yelling at him to stay close.

“Any rides that look interesting to you?” Cross asked the little boy who was craning his neck to watch one of the drop tower rides slowly bring their victims up, up, up to the sky, pause momentarily, and send them plummeting back to the ground. He looked a little fearful of that one. Once the ride was over Allen turned his attention towards Cross and shrugged. He honestly had no idea which ride looked good to him. He couldn’t recognize a lot of them from his days in the
It wasn’t often that they would set down near a festival/carnival, but when they did, they didn’t offer a whole lot of rides to begin with. It wasn’t like they were the best circus out there to begin with, so honestly that wasn’t surprising to Allen. Allen didn’t have a whole lot of time to even see them in action because he couldn’t be caught slacking off.

Cross hummed, straightening out as he looked at the rides around them. Which would be a good first ride for the brat? Definitely not that drop tower. Tilt A Whirl. Maybe. Probably not a rollercoaster at the moment…

“Hey brat, what about that one? It sounds like the ride you talked about while being at the circus,” Cross pointed out at the carousel ride a little way from them. That would be a perfect ride to get the kid warmed up, little kids went on those suckers all the time.

Allen nodded his head slowly. Okay. It was familiar. It looked tame. Plus, Allen would be lying if he said he wasn’t at least a little curious to figure out what it was like to ride a carousel ride after all those years of watching it. The ride didn’t look like an exact replica of the ones he’s seen but they still had the colorful little animals lined up with a pole pierced through their bodies. This one had mythical creatures like unicorns and dragons in it alongside the usual horses he saw. It was also a whole lot shinier than the ones he saw. It looked elegant with it’s pointed, circus-like top, it’s golden trimmings and pastel colors of bright blue, yellows, purples, and pinks. He would love to see it lit up at night. He saw the rides lit up before while at the circus and it was always so dazzling to watch the lights blur and whirl in the night sky. He always loved this ride the best though.

“You’re going on the carousel? That’s for babies!” Daisya teased.

“Daisya enough,” Tiedoll scolded his son lightly. Cross whipped his head around and glared at the little imp. Even though Allen didn’t seem affected by Daisya’s comment, he could tell it still made him feel stupid. Cross didn’t want Allen to feel self-conscious. This was a whole new experience for him, and everyone started somewhere. Most kids rode kiddie rides before and as they grew older, some went for more scarier rides while others stuck to the more kid-friendly rides. Allen didn’t get that experience before and he didn’t know what to expect so a kiddie ride seemed more appropriate.

“The carousel!? I loved this ride when I was younger! I’ll ride it to,” Lenalee squealed happily as she ran up to the ride.

“Me to! Kanda let’s ride this together!” Alma agreed as he went after Lenalee, dragging a reluctant Kanda with him. Lavi soon joined, wanting to share in the experience of Allen’s first ride. Daisya decided to stand back and wait, deeming himself as ‘too cool for kiddie rides’ (he was getting to that age). Alma managed to reel in Tiedoll and Cross decided he’d ride it to, to prove a god damn point and to make sure his brat would be okay. Johnny ended up being reeled in as well, taking a lovely white horse.

“I call the dragon!” Lavi yelped happily.

Lenalee being the awesome girl that she is, went for the ferocious wolf rather than the unicorn because “wolves are bad ass”. Alma went for the giraffe. Tiedoll the rooster. Kanda chose a black horse (he would’ve gone for the wolf but Lenalee was there so…). Allen chose the Zebra, he didn’t have a preference, he was just honestly interested in the experience. Cross chose the unicorn that was next to Allen’s and was determined to look like a total bad ass riding it. Cross helped Allen onto his trusty steed before taking his place on his own.

“You know I never would’ve thought pink and purple would look good on you Cross,” Tiedoll teased his old friend, all in good nature.
“I never thought I’d see you riding a cock Tiedoll,” Cross shot back, proud of his dirty innuendo.

“Cross, there are children present!”

“What? I didn’t say anything wrong. A rooster is called a cock,” Cross said, feigning innocence. Everyone knew that he was anything but innocent.

“Everyone knows you are quite the horndog Cross. What you said wasn’t innocent in the least,” was Tiedoll’s response.

“Oh my god really? Are we really having a pun off right now?” Lavi complained.

“Don’t mind him Seraphina he is just jealous because he can’t ever dream of making this look cool like me,” Cross responded dramatically while stroking the unicorn’s horn. Allen would’ve given Cross a suffering look, but he was more entranced with looking around at the lights up above and the intricate details of the Zebra he was on to care. Then with a little jolt, the ride started, spooking Allen a little bit as he was taken out of his thoughts.

“You named it Seraphina? How do you know it’s not a boy unicorn?” Tiedoll asked.

“I know a female when I see a female. You should be focusing more on not having a heart attack old man instead of questioning my logic,” was Cross’s response as his eyes flitted over to check on Allen as the ride started. Other than a small scare with the ride beginning to move, the brat looked fine and content with the ride. It was an easy-going ride, a pleasant one. He could see why people liked it. He could probably fall asleep on this ride…maybe. He wasn’t exactly a fan of the circus music that played on the ride. Especially since it was pretty loud. On the one hand it reminded him of Mana, which was a positive thing, but there were a whole lot of more negative memories from the circus associated with the music.

Meanwhile Lavi was pretending to freak out to get a reaction out of Allen.

“Oh my god! This is so scary! Allen if I die you can have my Pokémon card collection!” Lavi screamed.

“Shut up baka usagi! You’re ruining the ride with your pathetic screaming!” Kanda shouted while Alma was giggling pleasantly.

Allen decided to ignore Lavi in favor of savoring the ride. He wondered if Mana would’ve enjoyed it to. If they had enough money, perhaps Mana would’ve gotten them tickets or wristbands for the carnival rides at the towns they visited. Allen never asked though because he knew Mana would indulge him if he did. He knew they were tight on money and Mana was a little irresponsible at times, though he didn’t mean to. He was thankful for anything Mana gave him and it seemed too much to ask him if they could ride a couple carnie rides.

“So, what do you think brat? Is it what you expected it to be?” Cross asked as they went around and around, he used the gentle breeze the ride gave them to tie back his long red-hair into a ponytail (after all he didn’t want it to get caught in one of the machines later on or worse).

“It’s pretty,” was the only thing Allen could come up with. He had that sort of faraway look in his eyes which wasn’t uncommon when he encountered something to do with his past that was particularly vivid. This could be a good or bad thing, so Cross thought he should check in.

“Prettier than the ones you saw?” Cross asked.

“Yeah. Most of them had chipped paint. They were still pretty at night though.”
Cross nodded. It didn’t seem like the brat was on the verge of panic and as long as he seemed to be enjoying the ride Cross was content. Soon, the ride came to a stop, which came to be quite disappointing to Allen. There was just something about the ride that was so calming to him, maybe it was the gentle breeze against his face, gently tousling his hair. Maybe it was the repetitive up and down motion while going around and around. He didn’t quite know. Aggressive spinning (mostly from the playground merry-go-round) was a little much, but gently spinning helped him think better. He liked to look up at the sky and spin lazily until he fell over.

“Glad to see you survived the ride Lavi,” Lenalee giggled at Lavi’s over dramatics. Lavi had a hand placed over his chest and was breathing heavily as if he had the worst scare of his life.

“Yeah. This was a pretty scary ride; I don’t think I’d be able to go on it again.”

“Idiot,” Kanda mumbled at Lavi.

“What ride should we go on next!?” Alma asked, already excitedly running off the ride and towards the next one.

“What about the scrambler!?” Lavi suggested.

“Yeah, I’ll go on that one! Let’s go Yuu!” Alma yelped excitedly as they grabbed Kanda’s hand and made a mad dash towards the ride. Kanda looked entirely pissed off, but everyone knew he had a soft spot for Alma so some of that prissiness was probably for show.

Allen still stayed by Cross’s side, still unsure of what he thought about the whole thing. It was quite noisy with all the music blaring through the speakers, the sound of steam being released when the big machines finally moved and the screams from their latest victims. He only rode on one ride though, so he couldn’t just say he outright hated amusement parks.

“What do you say brat? Do you want to go on the ride?” Cross asked, pointing a little way ahead of them towards a ride that sort of reminded Allen of a mixer, except more mobile. The ride had four arms sprouting from the middle and each arm had a group of four separate compartments/buggies the riders would sit in. Each compartment could hold about two people. Each little group of those four compartments would spin in a circle while the entire machine itself would also spin in a huge circle. Overall, the ride was sort of confusing to watch and Allen could see why they called it the scrambler. If he was being honest, it was quite intimidating. However, he couldn’t say he hated it without trying it…and it was now or never so…

“Okay…but I want to go with you,” Allen said, warily looking at the ride.

“Alright, fine by me,” Cross responded as they got in line. Allen kept warily watching the ride as it spun around and around, wondering how safe this ride truly was. It looked a lot safer than that Drop Tower one, or that huge pendulum ride that was right next to them. It had two long arms, each with two compartments seating two people each. It went around and around in a huge circle and compartment also rotated so sometimes someone was stuck upside down while several feet in the air. Allen knew he would definitely not go on that one. Oh no.

They had to wait a little bit before the ride started. While they waited, his friends tried to find partners to sit with.

“Allen wanna sit with me!?” Lavi chirped excitedly, his excitement giving way to confusion as Allen tightened his grip on Cross’s arm and shamefully looked up at him. It didn’t take long for the red head to figure out that Allen was still a little nervous with this whole new experience and though he was a little disappointed, he didn’t pressure his buddy into sitting with him.
“That’s okay! But I wanna sit with you sometime, okay? We’ll go on a ride that you wanna go on to!” Lavi said in understanding. His teasing from earlier dissipated, but it was plain to see Daisya’s didn’t as he went off and called this ride ‘another baby ride’. However, Lavi wanted to sit by someone he knew so he managed to convince Daisya to go with him. No matter, the kid will soon lose his cool guy attitude. They just had to find the right ride to knock him down a few pegs.

It didn’t take too much longer for the ride to be over and the line to start moving up and with each time they moved up, the more Allen could feel the heavy weight of fear settling in his gut. It wasn’t too bad though. It wasn’t like he was being shot up into the air or anything. He’d be near the ground where it was safe…well…I guess ‘safer’. Plus, he had Cross to cling to, so it wasn’t all bad. Cross walked them over to one of the compartments, getting in first (mostly so he wouldn’t crush Allen when the ride started to move because their weight would be pushed to one side), before helping Allen inside. Allen curled up against Cross, eyeing the machine warily as Cross pulled the bar down over them.

“You don’t have to give the machine the stink eye kid, you’ll be fine. You got me to hold on to if you’re scared,” Cross laughed as he put his arm around the smaller’s body.

Allen looked up and glared at him as if to say, ‘shut up’, but his glare was quickly directed at Lavi who proceeded to scream like a little girl before the ride even started.

“Oh my god Lavi shut up!” Daisya screamed in annoyance before punching him in the arm. Lavi cackled before waving at Allen who had turned around to glare him.

“God I really hope you get all that damn energy out of you kid. I am not going to put up with that bull shit on the way home,” Cross responded, shaking his head before mumbling, “Damn kid reminds me of me when I was young and stupid.”

After the workers ran around to make sure everyone was strapped in there a few moments before the ride began to move. Allen instantly tensed up as they began to spin slowly and instinctively his hands clung to Cross’s shirt. Then the ride began to go faster, and he whimpered. He was uncertain if he liked this ride or not. It was a little bit scary at first to be zooming around at a lot faster rate than the carousel and he wasn’t quite sure if he liked being jarred around as badly as he was. The force of the ride had him nearly pinned against Cross, which wasn’t a bad thing (it wasn’t like he smelled awful), but he was thankful that Cross got in first otherwise he’d definitely be squished into a pancake.

Once he got used to the motions of the ride, he began to have a little fun. He could see Alma forcing Kanda to put his hands up, laughing cheerfully during the ride, though he couldn’t see their faces at the moment. He could hear Lavi hollering happily and Lenalee laughing somewhere off in the distance. She was riding with her brother who deemed the rest of the boys as ‘not being good enough’ to sit with Lenalee and make sure she doesn’t get scared. However, Komui wasn’t the type of guy who could handle a whole lot of rides either, so nobody was sure how long he’d be able to stomach riding every single ride with Lenalee.

“How are you doing brat? It’s not so bad once you get used to it, see?” Cross said after a few moments of holding onto Allen and rubbing the tension away. Allen giggled at a particularly loud, girlish scream from Lavi, but still held onto Cross during the ride. He enjoyed the ride, but he wasn’t quite ready to totally cut loose and scream like a banshee like the dipstick behind them was doing. Honestly with having only one eye functioning, it was incredible how much of a thrill seeker Lavi was. Although Cross wasn’t one to talk.

Allen didn’t fully cut loose until they found a ride where more people could sit together. It was a pirate ship ride that spun around and slid up and down like you were riding waves in a storm. Once
Lavi caught sight of the pirate ship, it was over.

“Allen! It’s our ship! We have to ride it together! Let’s go sail the seven seas!” the red head jumped up and down excitedly. They loved pretending to be pirates at home so Cross was not surprised when Lavi freaked when he caught sight of the ride. Allen still wasn’t ready to venture away from Cross and ride on rides without him so Cross was reeled into being a pirate with the two brats as they sailed the seven seas. Or at least that’s what Lavi blabbered about as they climbed on board. Least to say when the ride started, Lavi was not pleased by the lack of screaming his first mate was producing next to him. Allen was more into looking around and whimpering occasionally than screaming.

So, Lavi grabbed Allen’s hand and decided to show him how it’s done.

“All, it’s a ride! You gotta scream your head off, that’s what the amusement park gods want!” Lavi shouted as he pulled Allen’s hand up with his own and screamed as the ride spun around and went up and down. Allen looked at Lavi a little unsure about the whole entire thing, but tried to scream alongside Lavi, though his was a piss poor version of Lavi’s banshee scream.

“Dude that was awful! We are on stormy seas and might not make it out alive! Scream again but with feeling, you to you scallywag!” Lavi commanded at both Cross and Allen. Cross gave Lavi a look that said ‘you must be fucking kidding me if you think I’m joining you in your weird fantasy’. However, as they went down again, Allen unleashed a piercing shriek, sticking his hands in the air as Lavi commanded.

“Way to go Allen!” Lavi shouted happily as they both began to scream like maniacs, Cross slowly joined in although his were more sarcastically like “Oh god we’re going to drown Captain whatever will we do” in a dead inside voice. Although he did let loose a girlish shriek just to see what reaction he’d get out of the brats. Least to say the brats lost their shit at that. He damn there killed Lavi who proceeded to die with laughter. Allen was soon following Lavi.

“Jesus kid, breathe! I’m just doing what you asked!” was Cross’s response as he saw Lavi’s face turn a dark red and tears form in his eye from how hard he was laughing. It got so bad Cross had to drag both kids off the ride because they were laughing too hard to move.

“Jeez Cross what’d you do to them?” Komui asked as he stared at the now crying and laughing boys on the ground.

“I screamed and I think I broke them,” Cross noted as he bent over their forms, staring at them with only minor concern.

“Why’d you scream?”

“I was following the Captain’s orders. He told me to do it.”

“I-I-I can’t b-b-breathe!” Lavi yelled in a shrill voice and he continued to laugh like a total nut job.

“M-M-My s-stomach h-hurts,” Allen gasped as he tried to compose himself.

It took a few minutes for the boys to relax, but once Lavi gained composure he was off running to the next ride. Allen meanwhile took a while longer to recover but was soon off to the next ride as well. They found out quickly Allen could not handle rides that spun way too fast. They decided to go on a ride called The Tornado where four riders face towards a wheel where they could spin it to make themselves spin faster as the ride itself moved in a big circle. It was a big mistake to ride with
Lavi and Daisya who spun that sucker as fast as they possibly could with poor Allen in the mix.

“Oh, hey Daisya we should slow down,” Lavi warned after looking over at Allen who looked a little green. Not at all enjoying himself. Cross looked up and noticed his brat looked on the verge of throwing up. Yeah, okay, that was enough spinning.

“Awwhhh come on, don’t tell me you’re scared!” Daisya responded, continuing to spin the wheel.

“I’m not scared! Dude! Stop being a jerk! Al looks like he’s getting sick from it!” Lavi snapped back, trying to slow the spinning down.

“Pfft wuss,” Daisya said, glaring at Allen.

“Dude, it’s his first time on one of these! Cut him some slack!”

“He’s a baby! He shouldn’t even be on these rides if he can’t handle them!” Daisya retorted.

Cross opened his mouth, about ready to split the two boys up and to shut Daisya’s trap, before Lavi went off on Daisya.

“Oh, you’re all talk Daisya! Not everyone can handle the same rides you can! I bet ya you can’t even stomach the Slingshot or that huge ride over there,” Lavi screamed, pointing at the huge pendulum like ride that Allen was scared of earlier while they waited to get on The Scrambler.

“I can so! You’d probably pee yourself Lavi!” Daisya screamed back.

“Is that a challenge?” Lavi asked, his green eye gleaming in determination to beat Daisya at his own game.

“Yeah. Are you up for it you, big baby?”

“I eat babies for breakfast,” Lavi growled back.

“Okay that’s enough you two. Ride is over. Junior, that was good spirit but not a good come back in the least, work on that. Sharkboy, you went too far. It’s the kid’s first time on these things and you need to control yourself or go ride this ride with someone else that can take it,” Cross advised as he unbuckled himself from the ride to go help Allen who was barely holding it together. He would’ve full on yelled at the kids to shut the fuck up, but he was more concerned with his brat. The poor boy’s eyes were moving rapidly as they fought to keep up with the fact they weren’t spinning anymore. Cross didn’t even know if the kid registered that he had to get up off the ride he was so messed up.

“Allright kid try not to puke on me until we can get you to a trash can or something,” Cross said, helping the boy get out of the ride. He carried him off, trying to locate the nearest garbage can in case the kid decided to erupt. Lavi was trailing after Cross, profusely apologizing to Allen.

“I’m sorry Al, we should’ve paid more attention to how fast we were spinning the ride! We didn’t mean to go that fast! We got carried away! I understand if you don’t like me anymore—”

“Junior, relax. He just got a little sick from the ride. He’ll be fine once his body catches up again,” Cross sighed as he set Allen down on a bench and made him stick his head between his legs. Allen couldn’t remember a time where he was so dizzy. That was probably the dizziest he’s ever been in his life, excluding the time he had the flu and could hardly move without collapsing.

It took several moments for the world to stop spinning all around Allen, but once he felt better, he
was back up and running like nothing happened. Another thing they realized when it came to Allen and rides is that he loathed Drop Towers. Lavi and Lenalee managed to convince him to go on, but he absolutely refused to without Cross.

When the ride slowly went up, up, up, the fear on Allen’s face became more and more apparent. As the ground became further and further away Allen realized that this ride surely didn’t look as big from far away. Allen became more certain that perhaps being a beansprout wasn’t all that bad. He was a lot closer to the ground than most kids his age, which meant he had less of a height to fall.

“You okay kiddo?” Cross asked, watching as his brat’s face went from happily chatting with his friends before the ride started to absolute fear.

“It’s a long way down…” Allen whimpered.

“It’s okay Al! We’ll be just fine,” Lavi encouraged, grabbing onto Allen’s handlebars so his hand was covering his. He was already doing the same with Lenalee who looked a little scared as well. Allen looked totally unconvinced.

“You’ll be fine brat. I’m right here with ya,” Cross also encouraged, taking Allen’s other hand.

“Ooo damn he was right. That was quite a long way down for a little beansprout.”

“We’re gonna die…” Allen whimpered.

“We’re not gonna die,” Cross said.

“We are so going to freaking die…”

“Allen, we’re not going to die,” Cross tried to soothe as they finally made it to the top where they had a long pause.

“Oh my god are we freaking stuck up here!?-“Allen shouted in fear before the ride finally dropped them and a blood curdling screech left his lips as he felt his balls rise into his throat. His grip on the handlebars were so tight the joints in his fingers hurt and he swore he peed a little upon reuniting with the ground.

“Land sweet land! Oh, how I missed you upon my feet!” Lavi screamed dramatically when they returned to Earth and collapsed upon it on his hands and knees.

“Breathe kid, we’re still alive,” Cross laughed. He couldn’t help it, the kid looked like his soul had almost ascended with the way he was shaking and breathing erratically, “We don’t have to ride this ever again, okay? You gave it a shot which is better than knocking it before you tried it.”

Lenalee didn’t look so happy with the ride either and seemed shaky upon her feet when she exited, “Ughh I’m never riding that again. I prefer rollercoasters, it’s less sudden than those things.”

“I think my nuts retreated inside of me,” Allen whimpered.

“Really? I didn’t think you had them to begin with. Why didn’t tell me you were a boy?” Cross laughed as he helped Allen off the ride. The kid could barely walk by himself because he was shaking so bad.

“S-Shut up,” was Allen’s faint reply.

One of the other mishaps that happened dealt with the Ferris Wheel ride. It wasn’t entirely scary to
begin with and was a lot more kid friendly than other rides, but it had a tendency to stop while people were at the top so they could let passengers off and get new passengers on. Least to say if Cross would’ve known both Lavi and Allen would try to climb off the Ferris Wheel ride in fear that they were stuck, he would’ve ridden with them. If he would’ve known there would be an altercation between passengers getting up on the ride, making it feel like they were truly stuck on the ride, Cross would’ve ridden with them to make sure they didn’t do something stupid. Sadly, that was not that case…

“Whoa, you can see everything from up here,” Allen gasped, excitedly as he looked at all the food vendors, people, and rides down below.

“Yeah! I can see Alma trying to kiss Yuu from up here haha! Hi Yuu!!!” Lavi screeched and waved at their two friends below. Kanda glare up at him and proceeded to give him the bird, making Lavi laugh harder.

“So, Al? Did you like coming here? It isn’t all bad, right?” Lavi asked.

“Yeah, I guess not. I’m super starving right now though,“ Allen whined, his stomach growling in response. They didn’t eat anything all day. Lavi mostly out of excitement, while Allen mostly to keep from getting sick on any rides he encountered.

“Don’t worry, we can gorge ourselves silly soon!” Lavi laughed at his friend’s growling stomach. They continued to look down below, the ride stopping momentarily to let more passengers on. Lavi already explained this to Allen so he wouldn’t freak out about being stuck, however, with their vantage point they couldn’t get a good luck at the passengers climbing aboard below them.

Apparently, there was a little child having a melt down because he didn’t want to get off the ride, which caused the ride to stay put longer than it should be. A good minute or so passed before Lavi felt the fear settling in his gut. Last time he checked the pauses never lasted this long...

“Uhhh…Al, don’t freak out or anything but we might be stuck.”

“Oh hahaha Lavi that’s so funny,” Allen turned to laugh at his friend, but stopped when Lavi looked dead serious, “Are you serious…?

“Uhhh yeah, usually it doesn’t take this long for people to get on or off. I think we are definitely stuck,” Lavi gulped.

“B-But that’s impossible. Right? I mean you were only kidding about those things happening, right? Right Lavi?” Allen asked as fear slowly crept into his voice.

“Not entirely…it can still happen. It’s rare. Well, pretty rare,” Lavi stated as he looked over the edge of their seats warily, trying to figure out what was going on. He saw an upset mother arguing with someone, which seemed to be a staff worker. He didn’t know it was an entitled mom trying to get the staff worker to let her bratty kid ride another round. From Lavi’s vantage point, it looks like an upset mother freaking out that her child was stuck on the ride which only made his fear worse. Allen squeezed himself over, nearly on Lavi’s lap to also see the upset mother.

“Lavi, I’m freaking out,” Allen commented, beginning to hyperventilate. He didn’t want to starve up here!? What if they never got down! What if they forgot about them!? He wanted to see Timcanpy again (they didn’t bring him because they were worried he was going to get hurt whipping around on the rides. They tried to convince Cross that they could pretend Tim was a huge stuffed animal from the vendors or something, but Cross was not convinced.)
“Don’t freak out Al. It’s going to be okay,” Lavi said, but didn’t sound convincing. He was trying to be the protective older brother comforting his smaller brother, but that wasn’t happening. It didn’t help that Allen was spouting off bad scenarios and freaking Lavi out or the fact the other passengers were beginning to get nervous. He could hear a small child’s cries as they begged to be let down. Lavi may be a thrill seeker, but that didn’t mean he wanted to die today. He wanted to see Gramps again and to hear the stories he had about his trip!

“We could climb down…” Allen mentioned, slowly standing up on the ride, his eyes wild in both fear and determination. He could do it. I mean he was a circus kid; he was used to doing crazy shit like this. Well okay…maybe not to this extent, but you got what he meant.

“I mean…we could-“

“Allen sit your ass down! You’re going to fall!” Cross hollered up at his brat who looked freaked out beyond belief.

“But we’re stuck!” Lavi hollered back down, kneeling on the seat as he got more convinced that maybe they should try and climb down. Allen wasn’t listening to Cross in his fear stricken mental state.

“You’re not stuck! Sit the fuck down-! Boys if you think about climbing down from there, I will personally climb up there and kick your asses so hard you won’t be able to sit for a month! Stay put! The ride will move again!”

“Are you sure!?” Lavi shouted back, gasping when Allen wobbled and just about lost his footing. He decided to grab Allen and pull him back against him. Yeah no, let’s not climb out of here. He didn’t feel like becoming an ugly splat on the pavement below or watching Allen become one. Allen didn’t like that and began to wail against Lavi.

“I hate this ride! It’s not fun anymore! I wanna go down!”

“It’s okay! It’s just some mother and her kid being a brat! That’s all!” Cross yelled back. Usually he didn’t yell at women, but God this woman was beginning to piss him off. Instead of trying to convince the staff worker to let your kid ride again, you should just grab the brat off and tell him that if he wanted to ride it again, he would have to wait in line like everyone else. It’s not that hard of a concept.

“Are you sure!??” Lavi shouted back, gasping when Allen wobbled and just about lost his footing. He decided to grab Allen and pull him back against him. Yeah no, let’s not climb out of here. He didn’t feel like becoming an ugly splat on the pavement below or watching Allen become one. Allen didn’t like that and began to wail against Lavi.

“I hate this ride! It’s not fun anymore! I wanna go down!”

“It’s okay! It’s just some mother and her kid being a brat! That’s all!” Cross yelled back up.

“Hey! Excuse me!?” said woman shouted at Cross.

“What!? It’s true! Everyone else is freaking out, thinking this ride is stuck all because your bratty child doesn’t want to get off!” Cross shouted back. Usually he didn’t yell at women, but God this woman was beginning to piss him off. Instead of trying to convince the staff worker to let your kid ride again, you should just grab the brat off and tell him that if he wanted to ride it again, he would have to wait in line like everyone else. It’s not that hard of a concept.

“You have no right to yell at me or call my son a brat!” the woman yelled back, outraged that Cross would ever call her sweet baby angel a brat.

Too bad Cross was too busy focusing on his two brats not doing something stupid to give a single shit about giving this woman the fight she desired. He knew how these kinds of parents worked and loathed every single one of them. The woman looked like she’d be the type to ask to speak to your manager and Cross almost laughed when she actually asked the staff worker that exact question. Fucking knew it.

Meanwhile Lavi was trying his hardest not to start crying because he wanted to stay strong for Allen who bawling against him. He was afraid, but less now that he knew the current situation. However, if Allen started to cry, Lavi soon followed him like clockwork. There were many times where Allen would start crying and Cross would go to comfort him and then suddenly Lavi is
crying and now he had two brats to comfort. It also happened in reverse only Allen started crying at the drop of a hat without hesitation. Lavi at least tried to keep it in. It was intriguing, annoying, and a little concerning. Anita thought it was adorable. Lavi began to sniffle, his eyes stinging and his bottom lip trembling. He wanted to at least wait until they were safely on the ground before he started to cry. At least then he could hide his embarrassment in Cross’s shirt as he cried.

It took seven minutes for them to get let off because the entitled mother was putting up a fight. The manager actually had to be called down to handle the situation which pissed off a bunch of people for the amount of emotional turmoil this woman was putting everyone through. Once the two brats got off, they both ran over to Cross bawling their heads off. Cross rolled his eyes but picked up both of them, one in each arm. He went off to go find a bench to sit on to wait for the two brats to settle down.

“Alright you two. Enough. It’s fine. It’s over. Ugh your faces are disgusting please don’t touch your faces to me—ugh fine,” Cross complained as he had two snotty faced brats nuzzling into his shirt regardless of his complaints. Gross. Cross could see Tiedoll trying not to laugh at him from the corner of his eye. Asshole.

The rides weren’t all that bad though. Allen loved the ones that would flip you around and rides with little drops instead of huge ones that sent you plummeting back to Earth at god forsaken speeds. He hated the dropping feeling in his stomach and the feeling that he was truly falling from high in the air. He had a love hate relationship with rollercoasters because he hated the huge, first drops they usually had. Afterwards he tended to love the rest of the rollercoaster ride. Cross could’ve sworn he had some scratch marks with the way Allen clung at his arm.

Even Kanda and Allen found common ground with similar tastes in rides and actually rode on a couple together (One of the them was similar to the RipTide). Once Kanda got warmed up to the amusement park he began to ride on ones by himself, with or without Alma (Alma didn’t like the ones that flipped you around too much because they gave him a headache, while Kanda liked them because they made him feel like a ninja…or at least that was Allen’s reasoning.). Allen tagged along with him on a couple and was surprised to find Kanda laughing and screaming just like any other kid on an amusement park ride. On the ride, Kanda and Allen were cackling and screaming alongside each other. Off of the ride they were back to hating each other’s guts again, like nothing happened.

The two of them loved riding on the Chairlift (which was like the carousel only higher up off the ground they sat in what looked to be swing chairs. Kanda liked it because he could look at all the scenery without being spun around like crazy. Allen also loved to see the scenery, although he didn’t quite like how high up it was and instinctively latched onto Kanda’s hand for moral support. Kanda shot him a weird look, but he didn’t pull back in disgust like he usually would have.

Cross slowly relinquished his hold on Allen, allowing him to ride on rides he felt comfortable with alongside his friends. While his brat rode on the rides he wanted to, Cross chose the more hardcore rides and was glad to see he had a tiny comrade that was psychotic enough to join him, a.k.a. Lavi. One of the rides they were seeking out was the very ride Allen decided to never ever go on. Daisya also had his eye on that ride and smirked over at Lavi challengingly. The air between the two was still thick from that incident with Allen on The Tornado.

“Hey, ya wanna ride on that one with me?” Lavi asked, tugging on Cross’s arm and pointing at the ride Cross had his eyes on. The brat was currently in line for the second time around on the Chairlift with Kanda, so they had time to ride this thing and meet up with them again.
“Awhhh are you too scared to ride alone Lavi?” Daisya crowed with a shit eating grin.

“Nah, I just like to ride with people I know because it makes it more fun. Not like you’d know that because you don’t have any friends Daisya,” Lavi shot back.

“I do to have friends!”

“Your brothers don’t stupid!”

“Enough you two,” Cross growled before shrugging and accepting Lavi’s offer, “Yeah Junior I’ll ride with you.”

“You sure you won’t have a heart attack old man?”

“Kid I was riding on shit like this with screws falling out of them when you were shitting yellow. Of course, I can handle it so hold your tongue. It looks like the Vomitron I rode a few years back, this is a piece of fucking cake,” Cross growled back at the little twerp. Damn this kid was beginning to piss him off. Not like he could blame the kid though. Cross had a phase when he was young where he thought he was hot shit. He soon came to the realization that there was always going to be someone who can knock your ass down a few pegs. There was always someone better than you out there somewhere.

So, Daisya, thinking he was hot shit, rode by himself while Cross and Lavi rode together. The ride itself was quite the high in Cross’s opinion, Lavi must’ve thought so too because he screamed his head off as they were flung sky high, turning around and around, both upside down and right side up. He was always the adrenaline junkie and craved danger. That’s one reason why he accepted the idea of being a cop, although in the little shit dip town they were in the most dangerous thing one could run into was the occasional idiot on PCP. The brat was laughing like a freaking maniac as they were forced to stay upside down so the people below them could get off. Cross wondered if there was anything that truly scared Lavi, or perhaps he was super scared and showed it through nervous laughter. Either way, when they finally made it back to the ground, Daisya looked a little scared. Upon seeing them though, he quickly masked his fear behind a teasing smile.

“You didn’t pee yourself, did you?”

“Nah, but you look a little pale. Are you sure you didn’t pee yourself?” Lavi shot back.

“No way! I’ve always looked like this!”

“No matter, we’ll see whose laughing after the Slingshot.”

“Alright, you’re on. Right here. Right now.” Daisya responded

“Alright then. Let’s go. I’m not afraid of it. I was born to ride that ride.”

“What are you two idiots yelling about now?” Kanda asked, as him and Allen walked up to the small group. The two kids were glaring daggers at each other.

“Just the Slingshot ride again,” Cross said in explanation, rolling his eyes at the two idiots.

“Are you gonna ride it?” Allen asked, fear in his eyes.

“Yeah! We’re gonna do it right now! Let’s go!” Lavi said, stomping off in determination.
“Now this I gotta see,” Kanda said with a smirk as he followed the two boys. Allen followed behind them, a little wary about how the situation was going to play out but also curious to see this ride in action.

“Why do I feel like something bad is gonna happen?” Cross mumbled to himself as he followed the boys towards the ride both out of curiosity and because of the gut feeling he had that was usually right.

It was quite a bit of a walk but when they got there Allen felt his knees go weak just looking at the ride. When they got there two people were shot mercilessly into the air by bungee cords, flipping around as they went up and down. It was one of the more daring rides and Allen could recall watching some videos with Lavi of people actually passing out on this ride because of the G-force. Another added factor was that you would be taped on the ride so that all your friends can laugh and humiliate you if you look stupid on it. The set up was pretty cool. Rider’s were pulled back into a hole in what looked to be like the top of a volcano, then were tilted upwards towards the sky before being launched into the air (about 390 feet). Lavi didn’t look afraid at all, in fact he was jumping up and down, excited to meet his impending doom. Daisya looked quite pale though as he looked up at the death trap above them.

“Having second thoughts Daisya?” Lavi asked with a sadistic smirk as he looked over at his friend who looked up at the ride, gulping in fear.

“No way ya eye patched idiot! I’m just excited!”

“Yeah…sure you are…ladies first,” Lavi teased as he pushed Daisya in line.

“10 bucks Daisya is going to lose his shit,” Kanda said as he watched them go through the line.

“I’m not betting! There’s nothing to bet! Look how pale he is! He looks like a ghost!” Allen said. He was always willing to gamble, but not when it was very clear what the odds would be.

“Oh my that is quite the ride isn’t it?” Tiedoll commented, curious as to why his son and Lavi were marching as if they were going straight to battle.

“I feel it calling my name,” Cross murmured, his eyes taking on a dazed look as his inner adrenaline junkie was frolicking around happily at this new find.

“Wow you couldn’t pay me to ride that,” Reever murmured in awe.

“What an interesting machine,” Johnny said, nerding out as he looked at the mechanics.

“Looks dangerous,” was Komui’s comment with a sage nod.

“I wonder what it would be like to climax on that ride,” Cross commented. Everyone whipped their heads to look at him, both out of shock and concern. Cross continued to stare up at the ride, his eyebrows furrowed. Nobody wanted to know what was going on inside his head, except Allen who was genuinely concerned that this ride would kill Cross. People have passed out on this ride! It was clearly dangerous!

Allen walked up to Cross and grabbed his hand, looking both at him and at the ride warily, “You can’t go up there! What if you pass out and die!?”

“No one has died on this ride…at least as far as I know,” Cross said, looking down at Allen who was pouting up at him.
“That doesn’t mean it can’t happen!”

“If you’re that afraid of me dying on this ride, why don’t you ride with me and make sure I don’t?” Cross teased with his eyebrow raised, watching the look of horror flash across Allen’s face. It did make sense though. If he rode on it, he could make sure Cross didn’t pass out or worse. But he was terrified. Absolutely afraid. Just looking up at the ride made him want to pee himself. He had to protect Cross and in order to do so he had to ride with him! He had to face his fears!

“You don’t have to if it’s too scary brat-“ Cross started, not wanting to pressure Allen.

“I-I’ll do it!” Allen yelped.

“You sure? This is a pretty scary ride kiddo,” Cross laughed.

“Yeah! I’ll do it!” Allen said with a determined little pout as he glared daggers at the ride to try and intimidate it.

“Okay, if you’re sure,” Cross chuckled and shrugged. He knew Allen was probably gonna freak out when they got on the ride, but he also didn’t want to baby him. If the kid felt brave enough to go on it, then he’ll let him go. At least he’d be there to calm the kid down if he decides he hates the ride. The two of them watched as Lavi got on the ride cackling like a psycho while Daisya shakily got in next to him.

“Yeahhh! We’re gonna die! This is gonna be so fun! I’m gonna pee myself in joy!” Lavi squealed happily. The workers looked at Lavi both in amusement and concern, although Allen didn’t know if they were more concerned about the kid’s mental state or the fact he might actually pee on their ride.

“You can hold my hand if you get scared Daisya,” Lavi added snarkily as they were pulled back into the volcanic crater.

“Shut up you nut case!” Daisya snapped at him.

“Pfft okay whatever, thought I’d offer before we got shot up into SPACE but be a jerk I guess,” Lavi sassed back.

“Oh my god do you ever shut up!”

“Oi, you guys want a countdown?” One of the workers asked.

“Nah, I don’t want to prepare for my death, I wanna face it head on and go out in a blaze of glory!” Lavi cackled.

The staff member shrugged, “Alright, it’s your funeral kid. See you later!”

And with that, the staff member unceremoniously launched both Daisya and the cackling Lavi up into the air. Allen covered his ears as he heard the loudest, girliest scream come from the pair launched up into space. That was probably Daisya because from the ground they could hear Lavi’s psychotic laughter as he met his maker.

“Wow…I didn’t know Daisya could sound like a bunch of kittens in a blender…” Kanda mumbled, squinting up at the sky.

“Wow…I both respect Lavi and fear him…” Alma said in awe as he stood next to Kanda, both of them staring up at the ride.
“When the hell did you get here!?” Kanda yelped, jumping a foot in the air.

“I sensed you were here! We’re so in love that we can do that! Or at least I can! I always know where my Yuu is!” Alma squealed happily as they grabbed onto Kanda’s arm and snuggled him close.

“That’s creepy!” Kanda complained.

“Jesus that kid is a hyperactive little shit…sounds like a deranged lunatic from down here,” Cross murmured before looking down at Allen, “You ready to go little brat?”

Allen gulped but tried to put on a brave face as Cross walked up to the ride, his little brat clinging to his arm in fear.

“Oh no way Allen! You’re actually gonna go!?” Alma squeaked in amazement.

“Yeah, he needs to make sure it doesn’t kill me! Right brat?” Cross said, smirking down at the fearful little one beside him. Allen huffed but nodded in determination. He could do this! He could do this! He could do this!

“Holy crap you guys! Daisya passed out!” Lavi squealed joyously as their slow descent brought them back, close enough where they could be heard.

“Shut the h-h-hell up dumb eye p-patch,” Daisya stuttered, looking a sickly pale.

“No way! Admit it! You were scared! See? You’re not as tough as you look!” Lavi teased. He was beyond tickled that Daisya finally got what was coming to him. That’s what he got for constantly calling their friends ‘babies’ because they couldn’t handle the big kid rides. Lavi was a good sport about it though and helped Daisya off the ride since he was too shaky to stand by himself. Once Tiedoll ran to his son’s aid, Lavi let go in favor of watching Cross and Allen.

“Dude!? Al! You’re gonna ride it to! Oh my god dude! I am so proud of you! It’s so great dude, the view is beautiful up there!” Lavi yelped, jumping up and down excitedly for his best friend who looked scared out of his wits. Allen felt dread sit heavy in his stomach as he hesitantly sat down on one of the seats, his hands were shaking so hard it took a couple of tries to make sure he was buckled in.

“Remember to breathe kid. Don’t hold your breath or you’ll pass out before the ride even begins,” Cross chuckled, ruffling up Allen’s hair before buckling himself in. Allen was not aware how hard he was breathing until Cross pointed it out. Oh god he was so scared. He really should’ve gone to the bathroom before getting on this ride. His heart was going a thousand miles a minute and his heart was in his throat. Oh Jesus he was going to die. He was going to fucking die today. What on Earth was he thinking!? He should’ve just let Cross die alone instead of letting him take him down with him. God damn it. He couldn’t even appreciate the cool decorations the sling shot had he was so nervous.

“Oi Moyashi! You better not die on this or I’ll kill you, ya got it!?” Kanda screamed, a little concerned that he was going to give himself a heart attack with how pale he looked. Cross was trying hard not to laugh at the kid’s reaction. His brave face was totally gone. Cross couldn’t help but to feel a little bad though. Allen looked like he was on the verge of crying.

“FUCK!” Allen screamed, his eyes shooting impossibly wider when they were tilted back, and Cross let out a harsh coughing sound to try and cover up his laughter.

“Kid, we’re okay. It’s okay. Just chill out and breathe. Breathe.” Cross coaxed as he maneuvered
his arm, so it went across Allen’s body under the straps, “Look, I gotcha. It’s gonna be alright.”

“We’re so bloody dead. We’re so bloody dead. We’re gonna bloody die, oh god we’re gonna die,” Allen whimpered, his accent showing through in his fearful state as he grasped the bar tightly with one hand while using his other to grab onto Cross’s arm like his life depended on it. Cross could feel Allen’s erratic heartbeat against his arm.

“Why is it smoking? Why is there smoke!? Oh my god we’re gonna bloody die! Oh my bloody hell we’re gonna die!” Allen yelped, wriggling around in fear.

“We’re not going to die. It’s an effect. We’re okay. We’re okay. Trust me. Just breathe and lean your head back,” Cross soothed. Allen whimpered, his whole body tensing up in anticipation to be shot into outer space.

“Ready? After all those times I threatened to kick your butt to the moon we’re finally going there.”

“I don’t wanna go to the moon,” Allen whimpered. Cross chuckled. Then without warning they were shot into the air at a speed Allen thought was not even possible. He thought his face might get ripped off because of the force. He found it extremely hard to breathe as well, although he’d find out part of the reason was because he was screaming an extremely filthy, long string of curse words.

“Oh shit!” Cross screamed, both laughing and screaming because he could hear the filthy words streaming out of his brat’s mouth at rapid fire speed. He knew his brat had a filthy mouth, but never could he imagine it was this filthy.

“Allen breathe! It’s okay!” Cross laughed, genuinely concerned the kid was going to run out of air with how hard he was screaming and cussing.

“Fuck no! Bloody fuck no! Oh my bloody hell stop bloody fucking flipping oh my god get me the fuck down! Daddy I wanna go down! I don’t like this! Stop fucking doing that! Oh my bloody hell fucking hell!” Allen screamed relentlessly as they flipped around high in the air. Oh god it was so far down! Oh dear god they were so high up! They were going to fall and this constant flipping around wasn’t helping matters.

“Allen! Oh dear God kid,” Cross cackled as they flipped around a couple more times with Allen shrieking his little head off. Then the ride began to slow down, although that didn’t stop Allen screaming.

“Allen! Brat! Kid we’re okay! Look, it’s slowing down,” Cross chuckled. Lavi sure didn’t lie. You could see everything from up here. It looked even more dazzling since the sun was beginning to set. As a means to try and distract Allen and calm his erratic heartbeat and breathing Cross tried to redirect him, “Oi brat, look. Look at the sun setting.”

Allen whined, beginning to cry. He just wanted to get the hell off of this death trap. Although the man had a point. It was gorgeous up here. He just wished he wasn’t too scared out of his wits so he could actually enjoy it.

“Awww kid don’t cry. There’s nothing to cry about. You did it. It’s over with. I’m proud of you even if you screamed like a little girl with the mouth of a sailor,” Cross cooed at the watery pout Allen gave him as he sniffled loudly. The poor brat was shaking like a leaf and looked like someone put the fear of God into him.

“I wanna go down Daddy. I don’t like this,” Allen whined tearfully. Oof, he had to say the d word.
Combined with the tears and petrified look, Cross melted and went into ‘protective and comforting
daddy mode’.

“We’re going down bud. Ya wanna get something to eat after we get off?” Cross asked, pulling out his
power move.

“Yeah,” Allen said with a huge snuffle as they made their slow descent back to the ground. Once
they got to the ground, Allen calmed down some. He became whiny and needy though so Cross
ended up carrying him off the ride, which was probably a good thing because the kid was still
shaking quite violently.

“Yeah Allen!” Lavi cheered, happy to see his friend survived and conquered the Slingshot. Daisya
had no comment over Allen’s shakiness or the soft little hicups that left him as he began to stop
crying. Looks like he finally got put back into his place. That was good because Cross swore if that
brat made a single comment about Allen being a wuss, he was going to whoop his ass regardless of
Tiedoll standing right next to him.

“You are both psychos,” Kanda commented, giving a weird look to both Lavi and Allen.

“I think you would like it Yuu. The view is amazing up there,” Lavi laughed as they walked around
in search of food, he was a little teary eyed though because he saw that Allen was crying. He saw
the threatening look Cross gave him though that told him he better not start bawling to, however
Lavi couldn’t help the few tears that did squeeze through.

“Don’t call me that! I don’t care. It’s not worth being tossed around like a stupid rag doll,” Kanda
growled out.

Meanwhile Lenalee and Alma were squealing about the huge stuffed animals at one of the colorful
game vendors.

“Oh my gosh Lena, those penguins are so cuuutee!” Alma squealed before looking over at Kanda,
“Yuu! You should win me something! That would be so romantic!”

“No way! Those things are rigged to make you lose!” Kanda shouted in annoyance.

“It’s a shooting game it seems…” Komui murmured, pushing his glasses up as he scrutinized the
game. The participant would be given a gun and the goal was to shoot the red star out of the center
of a piece of paper, “Hey Cross, you’ve always had luck with these, right?”

“Yeah. I had women swarming around me. I also pissed off a lot of game vendors,” Cross smirked
at the memory, “If you know all their little tricks you can win rigged or not rigged. Although some
games are impossible to win because they are not physically possible to begin with, so it’s better to
just avoid them. That’s why the police force entrusts me to figure out which vendors are rigging
their games during the carnival every year.”

“Yeah, and then we had to learn how to disguise you because they kept trying to fix it when they
knew you were playing,” Tiedoll laughed.

“Doesn’t matter. I practically lived at carnivals when I was young. I can tell when people are
getting played or not based on the things they give you to take down the targets or how they set
their game up. You don’t require a disguise when you have a keen eye for detail,” Cross explained
his eyes flashing dangerously. He remembered watching a ring toss game from afar and noting that
the rings they gave the participants were cut in such a way that they wouldn’t be able to fit on any
on their targets. Or the Milk Bottle game where they stacked the bottles in such a way so that one
bottle is heavier than the other, making it harder to knock all of them down. Depending on how they were stacked determined whether or not someone would win the game.

Allen, who had finished crying and resting his head on Cross’s shoulder, looked over at the game vendor. His blue gray eyes were piercing. They were fully attentive like they usually were when it came to anything dealing with gambling. It was one of Cross’s bad influences on the kid.

“You want a penguin Smiles? Tell your daddy to pay up,” Cross smirked demonically.

Tiedoll sighed but gave the man some cash in his expectant hand, “You’re a showoff Cross. You better not try to lose on purpose just to make me waste money.”

“Then don’t put any ideas into my head. Besides, this game isn’t rigged. It’ll be a piece of cake.”

“How can you tell?” Tiedoll asked.

“If I told you, then I would have to kill you,” Cross smiled as he walked up to the game vendor and handed the money over to the man running it. This game was difficult to be rigged to begin with. Most people failed at it because of the paper target working against them. Allen crawled his way around Cross’s body, so he was perched on his back to watch, his eyes wide and focused. Ready to learn.

“Good luck, it’s a hard game,” the game vendor said with a smirk, ready to take another sucker’s money.

Luck? Hah. Cross didn’t need luck. The game vendor loaded up the gun before handing it to Cross who took it and looked it over carefully. It didn’t seem to be tampered with. The game vendor must think he’s some hot shot beginner who didn’t know how to properly aim a gun. The fool. Cross may not be the smartest guy around, but when it came to guns, he knew his shit and he had fantastic aim. However, aiming at the star was not the objective. If he aimed solely at the star the paper would end up working against him. In order to win the game, you aimed around the star and tried to cut out a circle with the star inside of it. You still needed to aim and take care to not waste any bullets. Each bullet still counted.

Cross shrugged nonchalantly and aimed carefully his red eye focused like a predator on the piece of paper in front of him. Nothing else mattered around him as he zeroed in his target. The only sound he could hear was his own heartbeat and breathing. Then with rapid fire shots, Cross easily shot a clean, almost perfect circle out of the piece of paper containing the red star. All without batting an eye. He handed the gun back to the game vendor, looking quite bored with his achievement. Meanwhile Allen was bouncing a little bit in joy.

“Lucky shot,” the game vendor commented, looking a little skeptical.

“I suppose so,” Cross said, playing it cool as Alma accepted his prize.

“Thanks Mr. Cross,” Alma yelped happily.

“Can you get me one to?” Lenalee chirped excitedly.

“Well Komui you heard your little sister, pay up,” Cross smirked.

“Fine fine, but it’s for my sister. Not for you to show off,” Komui grumbled as he slapped a bill into Cross’s waiting hand, unable to resist his sister. Cross gave the bill to the game vendor and waited for him to set up the gun and target once again. Meanwhile Allen was looking up at all the stuffed toys with mild interest. He remembered a long time ago that Mana once gave him a raggedy
stuffed bear when they were traveling together. Allen thought he was mocking him and retaliated that he wasn’t a baby. Mana said every child should have a stuffed toy. Sadly, that bear was lost, possibly destroyed in the car crash. The only items that could be recovered were some of Mana’s circus things, like a rubber ball with a star in the middle, a clown nose, and some of his make-up. That’s okay though, Timcanpy became sort of like a comfort item for Allen anyways. Allen was more interested in eating and watching Cross win another stuffed penguin for Lenalee.

Then something caught his eye. It was a stuffed toy that had the uncanny appearance of Mana’s dog Allen. It had a round hat on top of its head and a star shaped collar. For a moment Allen thought someone actually taxidermized Mana’s dog. There’s no way a stuffed toy like that existed…although Mana was a wonderful clown, perhaps someone thought his dog was so adorable that there should be a stuffed toy made of him. Cross caught the way Allen perked up suddenly.

“You see something you like kid?” Cross asked, raising an eyebrow as he tried to direct his own gaze at what Allen was staring at.

“No…” Allen lied, ducking his head shamefully. Cross wasn’t fooled though. The brat always acted like that when he wanted something but didn’t want to say it out loud or beg for it like most kids his age would do. Allen was not the type to bitch and whine for something. Occasionally he would when it came to food, but it was usually small shit. The brat would usually stare very long at something he wanted or double take. There was one thing the brat wanted that Cross was secretly saving up for, and Cross went past that store on purpose numerous times to see the brat’s reaction. If there was anything the brat wanted more, it was that grand piano at the instrument store in the mall. The brat was always so enamored with it and couldn’t keep his eyes off of it. There were a couple of times he’d have to tug the brat away from the store window or call his name a couple of times.

It was that dog toy that got his attention huh? Of course the brat would be interested in something like that. Now that Cross thought about it, the brat didn’t have any stuffed toys like other children had. I mean sure, there was Tim who acted like Allen’s comfort item. He was originally just something Cross created because he was bored and wanted to see if he could do it. The kid carried him around like he was his own teddy bear. When it came to the public eye, however, (away from their friends) Tim had to stay home because it was weird to see a flying gold thing with sharp teeth that could growl. A stuffed toy would be something more normal for Allen to carry around as a comfort item. Plus, Cross was skilled enough with a gun where it wasn’t a hassle at all to win another round to get it. Also, this was the kid’s first amusement park experience, it would be a downright shame if Cross didn’t get him some souvenir for it.

So, Cross pulled out his own wallet and slapped some money into the vendor’s hand who seemed thoroughly blown away by Cross’s skill. The vendor gave him another gun and Cross took aim, deciding he’d fuck around with a few bullets to make it look like he was going to actually lose the round, but ultimately winning in the end. Cross pointed to the stuffed toy Allen wanted, the brat was still hiding his face in shame. He was fine with his friends getting toys, but he was afraid if he’d stare at the stuffed toy any longer, he’d want it more and more. It was wrong to want things or at least that’s what he learned in his experience. He should be thankful for what he already had.

“Here brat. Take it,” Cross said, pushing the stuffed toy at Allen’s face. Allen looked up, taken aback that the stuffed toy he had been looking at was now right in front of his face. Instead of gladly accepting it, Allen put his face into Cross’s hair, feeling very ashamed and embarrassed. Cross knew he wanted it and he felt bad for indirectly begging for it.

“Alright, I’ll hold on to it for you,” Cross responded, rolling his eyes. The kid shouldn’t feel
ashamed over wanting something, especially when he barely asked for shit to begin with. He’d get this kid to accept it one way or another by the end of the day. Cross did a few more rounds, sufficiently winning whatever the brats wanted before Allen stomach unleashed an unholy growl that scared most of the group. Alright, time to end this little tea party and go find him something to eat before his stomach threatened to eat them all.

“All right brat, what are you hungry for?” Cross asked, totally prepared for his brat to eat the sustenance of an entire village. Lavi and himself ordered first and the rest of the wad of cash Cross brought was to be used on Allen’s enormous appetite.

Allen did not disappoint as he proceeded to launch out a huge list of all that he wanted. The looks on the food vendors faces were priceless to everyone else, but Cross was already used to it.

“Are you sure you can eat all of that little man?” one of the workers said, thinking that Allen just had bigger eyes than his stomach.

“I assure you he can and has many times,” Cross stated, giving a rather haunted look.

“…..” the man stared back at him in disbelief.

“…..” Cross stared back.

“Well, alright then. We’ll get that for you.” The man said, looking quite haunted.

While they waited for Allen’s food order to be done, Cross decided he’d test Allen’s taste buds. It was a strange hobby of Cross’s to feed Allen foods he knew he never had before or thought he never had before. He wanted to see if there was anything Allen would not eat. He already knew that anything that tasted like liquor was something he’d dislike due to a certain incident that involved him eating his chocolate liquor candies. Plus, Cross wasn’t willing to feed the kid alcohol. Period. He already fed him a sour Warhead candy once after seeing people post videos of their own kid’s reactions. Allen’s face was priceless. He never knew the kid’s face could twist up that much. The brat liked the candy though and asked for more.

So Cross bought some cotton candy, deciding he’d test it out on Allen. Of course, seeing Cross with food, Allen decided to hang around the man rather than his friends. He recognized the blue fluffy stuff in his hand, but never actually tried it. He’s seen children and adults with it before during his circus days and it would be a huge lie to say he wasn’t curious about it.

“Curious much you little imp?” Cross teased, watching as Allen eyed the bag of cotton candy he was opening, “You ever had cotton candy before brat?”

“That’s cotton candy? Isn’t it supposed to be on a stick?”

“It can be. Sometimes it might be in bags or little tubs,” Cross explained, “I’ll give you some but you have to let me video tape you eating it because I want to show Anita.”

“Is it hot?” Allen asked, wondering if this is going to have negative consequences. Usually if Cross wanted to video tape his reaction to something it had some negative consequences to it. Although it wasn’t like every time was something super bad.

“No. It’s not hot, I swear.”

After setting up his phone Cross tore off a little piece and held it out to Allen. Allen poked at the piece in Cross’s hand, recoiling a little at the weird texture.
“Oh my god kid. Don’t poke at it. Eat it. Here,” Cross said, shoving it in the boy’s mouth before he could continue probing it hesitantly. Allen face immediately scrunched adorably at the weird texture. It tasted…well like cotton. Allen was a little repulsed by the feeling of cotton in his mouth, but like the taste as the sugar melted in his mouth. He felt confused and enamored by this treat. It was kind of like the time Cross bought some pop rocks to try out on the kid. He had Allen tilt his head up and poured some of the candy into his mouth. Allen’s absolute confused; scrunched face look had Cross cackling.

“Damn that’s a look. Do you like it?” Cross chuckled. Allen didn’t look outright disgusted by it, but he sure looked confused as all hell.

“I don’t know…” Allen responded.

Cross tore off a piece for Lavi who was beginning to giggle at Allen’s expression. Then he tore off another piece and handed it to Allen.

Allen grabbed the piece and licked at it. The weird expression never left his face. It tasted good…he just didn’t understand why anyone would want to eat something of this texture. He had no idea what to make of it. Cross cackled when the brat looked up at him with a look that screamed ‘what the hell is this shit?’

“If you keep your face like that, it’s going to stay that way,” Cross warned.

“Is that why your face looks as weird as it does?” Allen shot back, holding his hand out for more.

“You think I’m going to give you more after that comment brat?” Cross asked but tore off another piece and handed it to him anyways, “So do you like it or do you not like it.”

“It tastes fine. The texture is just weird. Who’d wanna eat cotton?”

“People who like to put weird things in their mouths I guess. You shouldn’t be talking, you stuck squid in your mouth once,” Cross stated, sending the video to Anita.

“Squid is food!”

“Pfft not in my country.” Cross scoffed.

“Your country is sad,” Allen protested, shutting up when Cross shoved more food into his mouth.

“Shut it and feed your black hole you little runt.”

That kept Allen quiet for a good ten minutes. Usually he’d be right back to talking his stupid head off after eating but apparently the amusement park wore him out too much. When Cross looked over at Allen, the kid still had a hot dog in his hand but was dozing off. Adorable, but Cross did not need the kid choking because he decided to sleep while he was still eating.

“Yo kid. Wake up. Finish your food and then you can nap,” Cross said, sadly tearing Allen out of his dozing. Allen glared at him crabbily, but Cross couldn’t take him seriously with his face messy with food. God this kid was a messy eater. Once Allen finished his food, which only took a minute or two, he crawled up onto Cross’s lap, dead set on taking a nap. That would’ve been fine and dandy if the kid washed his fucking face before he nuzzled into his shirt (ahhh the joys of parenthood). Least to say, Cross pulled Allen’s face mercilessly away from his shoulder so he could attack his face with a napkin, even though it was too late.

“Alright, alright, go to bed crabby ass,” Cross groused the whiny child who sighed in contentment
now that he could finally fall asleep on Cross.

After cleaning up the mass amounts of plates Allen had, the group finally decided to head home. Cross was both concerned and happy that Junior still seemed to have a lot of energy to go running back to the car. It meant one less brat to carry to carry to the car, but it also meant he would have to listen to his blabbering all the way home. For two hours. Alone. Fuck. So, after warning Junior that his ass would be grass if he woke up Allen, Cross prepared for the annoying two-hour drive home. He buckled up Allen as best as he could since the brat turned into a limp, snoring noodle. He was surprised that the moment Junior got into the car and curled up next to Allen, he was out at the drop of a hat. Wow. Talk about a hell of a sugar crash.

In the end, Cross deemed today to be a win if two passed out kids in the back had anything to say about it.

Chapter End Notes

(Hiii! So, I did have a bit more planned for this fic, but it was running super super long. I mean we’re at 15k now, congrats you read a fucking novel [sorry] *dab*. Bruh. I know. Hope you enjoyed it, nonetheless. I was thinking of writing snippets of teen Link and Allen riding the slingshot, or Alma and Kanda together, the Noah twins, etc. Things got long though, so I decided I’d add it onto some other chapter as a random drabble at the end. I know some things may seem a little weird, I tried to research amusement park ride names as best as I could, but they fall under so many different names. Trust me, I did a lot of research for the rides. I may do another amusement park fic of when they’re older because I didn’t have a whole lot of opportunity to fit in the science nerds as much as I wanted to. I don’t know yet. Lemme know what you guys think. I am thinking of going back through all my chapters so far to pick up plot ideas that probably could be explained more, but if you guys have anything you’d like to see more about, just let me know! See you next time!)
The Day Cross Knew He Had To Quit

Chapter Summary

Not exactly what I thought I would finish first with all my drafts currently. It’s the chocolate liquor candy incident and Cross finally decides to quit drinking! Warnings for emetophobia (pretty good deal of that), suicidal ideation, drinking, blood, gore, depression. Please send in more fluffy ideas, I’m in dire need of them because I can't stop with this angsty stuff. I also need some teen rebellious Allen ideas that are not super angsty.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Finally, after what felt like months (only two and a half. The first month dedicated to getting Allen to snap out of it, the rest dedicated to Cross trying to bond and get Allen to trust him) It was quite an adventure getting the brat to sit down in a car for two hours, which was the longest he had ever been in a car after the car accident. Cross took Allen out many times before the two-hour journey in his car to get him used to riding in one all over again. Over time he became more accepting of it, but he still absolutely hated semi-trucks passing or coming near the car. He also hated people revving their cars at stoplights or also passing because they were over-compensating for something. Of course, people were assholes behind the wheel so there was a couple of times Cross got honked at because he didn’t get his piece of shit car moving fast enough when the light turned green. Well Cross was also filled with generosity today because he gave them all the finger for riling his already anxious brat up. Fuckers should see how fast they go if they had a child who was scared of moving vehicles.

If being honked at or having big ass trucks pass them or make loud noises were not bad enough, Allen’s car door decided to pop open randomly when Cross was going sixty miles an hour on one of the highways. Apparently, Allen didn’t slam it hard enough and it popped right open. That was definitely not something Allen needed, nor another heart attack Cross wanted. It made him shiver to think about the blood curdling scream that left Allen’s throat or the fact that he nearly dislocated the kid’s shoulder with how fast and how hard he grabbed his arm and yanked him back over towards him. It took a full hour for Cross to calm him down so they could continue on the road. Least to say, Allen was not allowed to close his car door anymore. Cross had to do it for him, both because Allen needed him to and Cross wanted to (because that sure as hell will not be happening again). At least they made it back home in one piece. Well almost.

They stopped at a restaurant before they got home. Cross watched as Allen shoved spoonful after spoonful of food down his throat like it was going to be the last meal he ever had in his life. In Allen’s circumstance, he probably lived like that for most of his young life and after what happened just recently with the car…yeah he probably thought it would be. That didn’t mean Cross didn’t nag him for it. Before you say anything, no, Cross was not shaming him for acting like a gluttonous pig. The kid sorely needed the weight. No matter how much he ate, he just couldn’t gain it.

Cross was trying to get him from getting himself sick. There were many times when they were staying at Mother’s that Allen stomach wouldn’t be able to handle the abuse he put on it and ended up falling ill. This resulted in an annoyed Cross because he had to deal with a sick brat crying and
writhing in pain because he had no self-control when it came to food.

Most parents would fight with their kids on eating their food, especially vegetables. Cross was having the opposite of that problem. He had to literally take food away from Allen in order to prevent him from getting himself sick. This resulted in a lot of whining from the tiny white terror and growling (which slightly scared Cross because A. he didn’t want to get bitten and B. he didn’t realize the brat could show such a side to him. Well at least in the beginning). It actually surprised Cross how whiny and (surprisingly) bratty Allen could get when it came to being hungry or having food taken away from him. It was a moment where the kid actually acted like a kid.

There were a few times where Allen actually sort of threw a temper tantrum and though he knew he shouldn’t feel this way, he actually was kind of proud of Allen throwing a fit. Even more so, because Mana’s mask lifted a little bit and he could see the real Allen shine through. Although when it did, it looked more like hellfire than rainbows and happiness.

There were times, like all parents, where he would give into Allen’s whining for food. He would give the brat some leeway and sometimes he’d be able to handle the extra food, sometimes he won’t. As Cross neared the home, he realized that it was a mistake to do so this time around when they ate at the restaurant. That or the added stress of being in a car for so long did something because the kid looked quite ill. No way. Cross was not going to take the chance of this brat exploding in his car. He didn’t know which way the explosion was going to come from, but he knew from the way Allen looked that it was going to happen soon. He was not going to take the chance. So, once they started to pull into town, a few blocks from his house, Cross pulled to the side of the road in a hopefully secluded area with some lovely bushes.

Cross reached over to pull open Allen’s door, “Alright kid if you gotta do something do it out there.”

As if Cross said a magical word or spell, the child immediately began to violently purge everything his stomach had within it like a god damn exorcism was taking place. It reminded Cross of his days when he couldn’t hold his liquor…ahhh the good ol’ days.

As Cross hung around the driver’s seat beside the vomiting Allen, said neighbor walked to their window and gave Cross a dirty look at the kid vomiting in their bushes. Cross smirked and waved back at them like this was just an ordinary day in the neighborhood. I mean it wasn’t by any means, because Cross has a kid now. When the hell did he even give a shit about snotty children? There’s some good ol’ neighborhood gossip right there! No doubt he would be getting some nosy people wondering if they should call CPS on his ass because who in their right mind would put Cross in charge of a kid!?  

“Alright. You got everything out of your system?” Cross asked after several minutes. He was thankful that he was used to people getting sick around him from his days where he drank socially. Once he could handle his liquor, he was usually the guy in the friend group that hung around the one purging himself of last night’s bad decisions over the toilet. If you could even call them friends. He was also the guy who made sure the ones in his friend group wasn’t killing themselves from alcohol poisoning (he didn’t give two shits if he went down by poisoning, but god forbid someone died around him because of it.) This slowly became less of an occurrence as Cross preferred to get as wasted as he wanted, alone, in his house.

The brat whimpered and curled up once again in his seat. Cross took that as a yes and closed the car door before continuing the rest of the drive back to the house. Once there, Allen refused to move from his curled-up position so Cross grabbed him and walked up to his house. His house wasn’t necessarily a piece of shit, but you could tell compared to the other neighbors Cross didn’t
give much of a shit in making his yard or house look pretty. That wasn’t to say Cross didn’t have good things. Cross did have quite a few lavish furnishings and clothes. He was just too lazy to make his house reflect the things he had. The paint on the outside of the white house was chipped in some areas and the wooden floors squeaked as verbal confirmation that this house was decently old. It was home though and as much as Cross would like to upgrade; his college debt was simply too much. He would run away from these debts, but with his position as a law enforcement officer, he couldn’t exactly run and hide (though he tried to as much as he could.)

Once one walked inside, there was a staircase right in front with two hallways on each side. On the left there was an open kitchen, down the left hallway (left side of the staircase) there were a couple rooms that were mostly storage. The bathroom was the door at the very end of the hallway. On the right as you walked in, was an open living room, so you could see from the kitchen directly into the living room. On the right hallway was the laundry room. Upstairs there was a master bedroom and another couple storage rooms, one of which was going to be turned into Allen’s bedroom. There was also a bathroom between the master bedroom and what would be Allen’s bedroom. In other words, Cross has a lot of storage rooms. (*might make a sims house look-a-like of this if anyone is truly interested in see what this would actually look like).

Cross wandered into the bathroom down the left hallway with the sickly child in his arms to grab a bucket in case Allen felt like he was going to get sick again. He then laid the exhausted Allen on the couch, so he could keep an eye on him. Well, at least that was the game plan, before Cross saw his stash of alcohol and…well you can guess what happened.

After a few hours of rest, the brat seemed to have recovered and began to explore his new surroundings. Sadly, in just those few hours Cross had a few drinks in him, so he wasn’t paying attention to where the kid was wandering to. It’s not like Cross child proofed the house either. He sure wasn’t expecting to become a parent overnight when he was originally planning on going to Mother’s house. He didn’t see the old hag for a while. Then he got called upon an awful car accident and found Allen. Allen wandered for a good hour around the house. Just checking it out, figuring out where everything was but not really touching anything. His sense of direction was never really good, so it took a couple of times wandering around the house for him to figure out where everything was at. There was a bedroom and what looked like several storage rooms, then there were the laundry fixtures in the back. A closet door near the entrance. Most of the first level of the house was an open area, not a whole lot of doors except for the bathroom and storage areas. The kitchen and dining room were together in one area with a small table a couple of chairs against one wall. The living room held a small couch with a coffee table near it, a couple bookshelves, a Lazy boy chair, and a decent T.V. Nothing spectacular.

The house in itself was better than Allen ever lived in, but Mother’s house was a lot more decorated and prettier, though it was smaller than this house. Mother’s house seemed more cluttered but in a homey way. This house, while decent, was not so well decorated. It felt like a mixture of decorative tastes mixed into one. No room had a concise decorative theme. The appliances and furniture functioned well, but it could definitely some TLC as they looked quite old. The weird knick knacks and things Cross got from his lovers in the past were what made the house interesting though, even if those things never really worked decoration wise. It was a huge reason why the house looked like a mix of everything.

There was a huge dreamcatcher hung up on one wall with a couple of wolves on it that caught Allen’s interest and a very lavish vase that had flames decorated on it. Cross even had a white kitsune mask and a Japanese demon mask. The demon mask made Allen terrified and he hated to walk near it (sadly he would later walk near it every day to get to his room). Other parts the house contained paintings, some of them depicted many different landscapes from different countries,
others were darker and depicted human suffering. Famine. War. Blood. Death. Allen also shied away from those paintings and questioned his new guardian’s mental health. He liked the landscape ones better.

All in all, it was new and confusing to the little boy, but he felt like it was a home he could get used to. As he continued his wandering, he went into Cross’s room (the master bedroom) which was an entirely different thing. There were bottles strewn across the floor and more diverse decorations and knick knacks. Cross was currently drinking himself into a stupor in the living room on the Lazy boy, ignoring the fact this brat was running around his house without much supervision. I mean, the brat was walking around just fine now, he wasn’t acting sick anymore. So, Cross was fine to drink himself stupid, right? Right? So, Allen had free reign to wander where he wanted. He was going to use this opportunity to look around Cross’s room while he still had it and boy did Cross had some strange things in his room!

There were weird toys that vibrated and looked strange and weird bottles that Allen couldn’t read the name of in the man’s drawers. Why would the man have these things? The man also had a whip and hand cuffs. Huh. Okay. Weird. He also had magazines of women with barely any clothes on, big breasts that almost looked ready to pop out of their bras. Okay. Allen wasn’t interested in that. There was a cool, silky, dark red shirt that Allen decided to steal because it’s been long since he felt that texture and he loved it. He would return it…eventually…maybe. Okay no, he wouldn’t. It was his now.

Once Allen got bored of rummaging through Cross’s drawers, he wandered to his closet and began to climb in through there. There was a huge black guitar case, many fancy, silky shirts of many different colors that smelled heavily of cigarettes and cologne. A scent he got used to and found strange comfort in as long as Cross didn’t blow his smoke directly in his face. Allen was thankful the man seemed to try to not smoke closely around him. There were couple hats that looked like Cross’s usual hat but in different colors like there was a dark red, even a steampunk hat with gears on the side. There was a box of fancy silver cutlery and jewelry with jewels of many different colors. More than Allen ever seen in his life. There was blue, green, yellow, white, and boy were they shiny. So pretty. Sure, he’s seen jewelry before, but never up close like this before. There were cross necklaces, the ends of one was super sharp, other glittered or had strange designs and stones.

Allen was surprised to find chocolate candies and after purging all the contents of his stomach from earlier, he was quite famished. Surely Cross wouldn’t care if he had a few, right? However, he didn’t realize that these chocolates were for adults because they contained alcohol.

Least to say Allen ate a couple and a couple turned into several...then a whole box...and he felt a little...well strange. It wasn’t like he had sugar very often, so he figured it was just him having a sugar high, but he was still hungry. So, he ate another box. Now, it was very difficult for an adult to get drunk off of liquor candies, most of the time the chocolate would be enough to do you in, especially if one was talking about a man Cross’s size. Allen was small. Very small. Smaller than other boys his age by about a foot. He didn’t have much tolerance at all, so it became quite easy for the little boy to get drunk off of these candies. Cross meanwhile noticed the lack of Allen around the house. While he was drunk enough to not care all that much that the kid was wandering, he wasn’t drunk enough to note that there was a large passage of time that went by since he last saw the brat. He was still aware of his surroundings and shit. So, Cross walked around the house in search of the little one. Was he on top of the dryer (a usual place he loved to sleep on). No. Not there. Was he messing around in the kitchen in search of food? No. Was he outside (he better not be at this hour or Cross will kick his ass.)? No. Bathroom? No.

His bedroom. Shit, what did the brat get into in there!? He hoped he was just on his bed asleep, but of course Cross wouldn’t have that luck because as he walked into his room he froze. Stunned.
There were boxes all around the child and candy wrappers. Oh shit, I forgot I had that stash of chocolate liquor candy. It was what was in Allen’s hand and the red that bracelet his tiny, pale arms, trickling onto the floor that made Cross know that ‘oh fuck I am definitely sober now and this is happening’. Allen was holding Cross’s cross necklace, the one with the sharp ends, with such a blank, dead look in his eyes that it haunted Cross. There were scratches on his face as well, but near the scar on his eye. There was a disturbing amount of slashes on his left, deformed arm.

Allen didn’t mean to do it. There was a point where Allen was admiring Cross’s shiny jewelry again as he snacked on the candies and his eyes went back to that sharp cross necklace. During this time Allen was having thoughts of Mana and of being a bad child. Of being a demon. He began having some pretty convincing thoughts going on in his head of him killing Mana because God thought he was bad. He sent the storm that night to kill Mana because Allen was bad. That symbol was a good symbol. A holy symbol. Allen wondered what would happen if his touched it directly. Would he burst into flames like the demon child he was? He touched Cross’s necklace that he wore, and he didn’t burst into flames. He figured it was because Cross was also demon-like, so that particular necklace didn’t burn demons. So, he picked it up, his fingers running over the sharp edges. No burning.

For some strange reason he felt the need to hurt himself with this cross. He wondered if it would make his body good or pure if he did with such a holy symbol. Allen wasn’t sure what made that thought appear or any of these thoughts appear but soon one cut became many. He began to admire the red, sticky blood that flowed from his arms. It hurt a little bit…but not a whole lot. It all felt very dream-like.

“Allen, what the fuck are you doing!?” Cross exclaimed, quickly walking over and taking the necklace out of Allen’s hand. The child didn’t seem perturbed by this though and decided to instead squeeze at the lacerations on his arms, drawing more blood out of his body. “Allen stop that! Why the hell are you doing that!? Did you get into my liquor candies kid!? How many did you eat!? Why the fuck did you come in here without my permission!?”

Cross grabbed Allen’s hand and forced him to stop harming himself before he tilted his face up to look at him. The brat’s eyes were glazed over and blank, a flush covered his cheeks and Cross could tell the child was drunk. I mean, if the candy wrappers weren’t enough evidence or empty boxes. Oh, he was quite drunk and bleeding profusely and Cross felt a ton of guilt crashing down on him.

“Why were you cutting yourself?” Cross demanded.

“I have to. I’m bad. I killed Mana,” Allen stated in a monotone voice, his eyes unblinking as he stared at Cross, “I have to do it to make it better. I’m cursed.”

“Alright come here we’re going to get you patched up-“ Cross said as he tried to grab Allen. That got him to react.

“No! I have to do it! I have to do it! I have to die!” Allen screamed, trying to struggle out of Cross’s grip. Cross wasn’t going to let go though. Even though he didn’t want to exacerbate Allen’s wounds further, he was not going to let this kid go in the state he was in. For one, if someone saw, Allen would be handed over to CPS in a heartbeat. Two, anyone with this bad of a reaction to alcohol had to be supervised until the alcohol left their body, if they weren’t, they may end up killing themselves or worsening their wounds.

“Allen, it was an accident. It was a horrible accident and sometimes those things just happen. You had nothing to do with Mana dying and you are not cursed either. God dammit! We’re going to get you patched up and you are going to stay with me until the alcohol gets out of your system,
understand?” Cross explained as he picked up Allen and took him to the bathroom nearby, even though he was struggling and wailing about wanting to die. Cross has seen suicidal kids before in his life with his line of work, some pretty young, but Allen was by far the youngest child he ever heard utter about wanting to die. Cross was the cause of it, or at least part of the cause. If he was watching Allen closer, if he wasn’t busy drinking himself stupid; if he thought to child proof the house and told him where he could and couldn’t go maybe he wouldn’t have gotten into those stupid candies. He wouldn’t be like this. He wouldn’t be screaming this shit. He wouldn’t be bleeding like this. Cross wouldn’t have to see just how severely damaged this kid’s mental health was. It made Cross sick to his stomach, but he didn’t have time to focus on himself. Allen needed him and he wasn’t going to let himself act like a damn coward when this was his fault to begin with.

“Let go of me! I want to die!” Allen wailed, striking out at Cross, “Let me die! I hate you!” Cross ignored his wailing in favor of grabbing the first aid kit. He scooped up the brat, sat on the toilet, restrained his kicking legs between his own and set to work on his arms which was easier said than done because that kid struggled. Hard. The kid was clawing and screaming and wailing incoherently, basically having a total meltdown. Timcanpy tried to assist in any way possible to minimize damages to Cross and Allen, but it was mostly futile. He kept mostly in Allen’s face to try and keep him from biting Cross. Cross didn’t care that his arms burned with Allen’s scratches or that his ears were ringing with his screaming. Cross wondered if this was the feelings Allen was pushing deep down inside of him or if it was the effect of the alcohol on his mind. Either way Cross never sobered up so fast and reality hit him once again like a speeding bullet train.

After several minutes of fighting Allen, Cross managed to dress his wounds. Allen meanwhile calmed down and became the blank faced doll again. Instead of scratching at himself though he preoccupied himself by fingering Cross’s cross necklace which was a great alternative to the one he had earlier. This one was nice and smooth and wouldn’t be able to hurt him.

Apparently, the moment of psychosis blew over, that or Allen tired himself out, but Cross was still shaken badly. Should he talk to Allen about this? Would he even remember what he did when the alcohol ran its course? Were his wounds going to be okay? Would his left arm still function or was everything done to it just too traumatic? His left arm was always a special case because he’s never been able to move it until after the car accident. When it came to any other part of his body, Allen preoccupied his concerns with his left and Cross ended up doing the same. Cross seemed to stop bleeding but some of those wounds were really deep. What if this ruined all the progress he made? Allen’s psychological wounds were really deep. Cross already knew they were deep, but he didn’t expect that they would be this deep. He could barely deal with his own shit. How the fuck was he supposed to deal with Allen’s psychological trauma on top of it?

“You getting sleepy?” Cross asked his voice softer than he’s ever heard it, fuck it almost sounded like it was a different person. It sounded like Tiedoll’s when he first got his two youngest boys Kanda and Alma. They were really small children back then and Tiedoll had a habit of rocking them to sleep. Alma loved it. Kanda never admitted that he liked it (this is also a story for another day). Cross watched Allen’s eyes lower and his movements slow. He still fingered the cross on his chest. He walked over to the chair and began to rock slowly, hoping to entice him to fall asleep. At least when he was asleep, he’d be at peace. Hopefully. He’d stay in one place and Cross could watch him to make sure the alcohol passed through his system safely as he figured out his next plan of action.

“You really have a thing for my necklace…maybe I should give you one of mine. Preferably not the sharp one,” Cross murmured, watching the brat fight with sleep.
“We’re going to have a grand time tomorrow. This was not how I imagined going through your first hangover…” Cross sighed, although he made a mental note to absolutely forbid Allen from touching another drop of alcohol again. If this was the way he reacted with liquor candies he’d hate to see how he reacted with straight up alcohol. As Allen finally fell asleep Cross was left with his eyebrows furrowed in concern. He didn’t sleep at all that night.

When Allen woke up, he was in Cross’s bed, yesterday’s carnage was cleaned up and he had a killer headache. His stomach was some pretty hardcore flip flops. Last thing he remembered was that he was eating candy, then things got hazy. Why did his arms hurt so bad? He looked down at his aching arms to find them wrapped all up in bandages. Oh wow. Seriously? What happened last night?!

“Well well well. Good morning sweetheart,” came Cross’s sarcastic voice and suddenly light was stabbing into his eyes, making his head throb sickening. Cross walked into the room and turned on the lights. Even with the cuts on his arms, even though Allen didn’t know what exactly he got into, Cross was going to make damn sure to make this a hellish experience that this kid would remember. Always. So, he’d never ever do this again. As much as Cross wanted to inwardly baby Allen through this experience after the shit, he saw last night, he decided he’d do the tough love approach. The very tough love approach.

Allen groaned and tried to curl himself under the blankets to get away from the light. Leave me alone, please just leave me alone, he begged inside his head. Cross had other plans.

“Nope. You decided to get into my shit. Now you get to pay the price. Get up. Get dressed. Now,” Cross growled, grabbing the covers and yanking them off of Allen who looked like absolute shit. The child wasn’t protesting though and slowly sat up. The world spinning and his stomach threatening to purge itself of all the chocolate he ingested last night. Slowly, Allen got up and got dressed, willing his queasy stomach to cooperate. Once Allen got dressed, Cross commanded him to go outside where the hot afternoon sun was beating down on him. It was the kind of hot day that made anyone feel sick to their stomachs after only a few minutes being out there. It was absolutely humid. The sun was so bright, so hot, and there was barely any wind today to offer relief to anyone who dared set foot outside. Allen could feel his head throb painfully in time with his heart. The unbearable heat made it even worse.

“Alright brat. You’re going to pull weeds around the house as punishment. Get to it. No slacking,” Cross growled as sternly as possible. Allen shuffled off to do just that, with no complaint, even though he was pretty sure he was not going to make it even five minutes out here. Even though Cross’s goal was to make this as awful as possible for Allen, he knew just by looking at the brat that he wasn’t going to last long at all. He wasn’t going to make the kid work himself to death, just enough to really make him feel sick and remember how awful alcohol is. What better way to do this then send him out in a hot, summer day, with no cloud in the sky, nursing an awful hangover, with aching arms. He wanted this memory to stick as much as possible, even though he was such a major hypocrite himself.

That morning he came to a final decision. A decision that made him feel really scared and really uncomfortable. He had to stop drinking. Period. He had to. He had no choice. He’s tried in the past to no avail but this time he had to stop for good. What he saw last night was something he didn’t want to see ever again. He didn’t want Allen to follow in his own footsteps or get into any of that nasty shit again. No drugs. No alcohol.

Cross had many good reasons for drinking. He had an abusive father and a mother who was crazy as shit. He was neglected. He was bullied at school because he was poor and he barely managed to get the bare necessities. If he didn’t have the bare necessities, people laughed at him. Teachers
looked at him in scorn. There were days where he wore shirts and pants with holes to school. He only had a light jacket for the winter and ratty shoes that barely managed to cover his feet in the first damn place. He got to where he was because he got lucky enough for someone to see his potential. Even then, he was a drinker and a fucking mess. Alcohol was very prevalent around the house and became his means of coping with everything. In order for Allen to stay away from alcohol and in order for Cross to be able to be there for Allen, he had to stop drinking. Alcohol had to be out of the house.

Once he was sure Allen would be fine sleeping by himself for a little while, Cross grabbed every single bottle and threw it out with much reluctance into the garbage can outside. He watched as the garbage truck came by this morning and take the garbage away and Cross began a calendar to keep track of how many days he was sober. He was scared shitless and he didn’t know if this was going to end in an awful failure like the many previous times or not. He called an addictions counselor for himself and a therapist for the brat and they were going to have their first sessions in just a couple days. He was not ready to break the news to the kid either.

Cross watched Allen from inside the house, a mug of coffee in his hands. The brat’s face was a sickly white color with a tinge of green and he had dark circles under his eyes. He always had those dark circles, but they were more pronounced in his hung-over state. He worked slowly, pulling out weeds around the house. A good ten minutes passed before Allen finally broke. He lasted a lot longer than Cross thought he would. He was surprised the brat didn’t even complain or question anything.

The way the sun beat down on him mercilessly, the sweat clinging to his face, the stabbing headache, the way his stomach was doing somersaults, and trying to remember what happened last night became too much. All it took was remembering the chocolates he ate and the way they tasted for his stomach to give one violent lurch and projectile vomit everything out of his stomach. That was enough for Cross. The man set his coffee aside, walked out of the house, before settling himself behind the convulsing Allen and rubbed his back until his stomach settled after several moments.

“Betcha that felt nice huh?” Cross questioned, all sarcasm and fun out of his voice.

“Nghhh…n-no,” Allen croaked out, tears streaming down his face and his body shaking violently.

“So, you think going through my things and eating just some random ass chocolate you found is fun?”

“N-No,” Allen whimpered.

“You’re not going to do that again are you brat. No alcohol chocolates. No alcohol in general. No drugs. Right?” Cross stated, more than questioned.

“Y-Yes.”

“I want to hear it. Repeat after me. I, Allen Walker-“


“Will not consume ANY alcohol-“

“Will not consume any alcohol.”

“Or drugs of any kind unless I give them to you or you are prescribed them from a doctor.”
“Or drugs of any kind unless you give them to me or I am prescribed them from a doctor,” Allen sniffled, just wanting to lay down and sleep.

“Alright then. I think that’s enough today, let’s go,” Cross said picking up Allen to help him back into the house. Allen emitted a little hiccup, making Cross glare down at him, “Don’t throw up on me.”

Once the tough love part of the day was over, Cross became quite a lovable parent (although a big chunk of it was out of guilt for last night). He helped Allen get into pajamas, coaxed some fluid and pain medication in him, before they decided they’d spend the day doing absolutely nothing. After almost two days of a shit show, it was something sorely needed. Allen slept most of the day away, which was fine by Cross who spent most of the day watching T.V. with the brat curled up on his torso.

Chapter End Notes

(I need suggestions/feedback: This was actually not the drabble/writing piece I was hoping to get done today. I was hoping to get more early bonding between Cross and Allen done today because it’s more fluffy and less…sad and shit like this was. I’m sorry. Truly I am. I know I need to write more fluffy shit but I am kind of low on fluffy material. The concert writing piece is slowly working it’s way in my head, so there’s that to look forward to that will be all fluffy. I swear to God I will perform all the rituals to make sure it is so fluffy to make up for the shit I’ve been writing. The Anita Being Pregnant writing piece is also slowly forming in my head. I thought about doing a marriage snippet for Cross and Anita because I think Allen would be fucking cute in a tux. Dunno about that yet.

I was thinking of more rebellious teen Allen snippets but I don’t have a lot of ideas with that one [so if you have suggestions, please send them]. As for the Linkllen stuff, I may actually put them in a separate area on Ao3, I kind of bounced that idea around in my head for awhile because Cross is going to have a huge part with Link sometime in the future. That being said, I didn’t know if I wanted to include the writing pieces in here still or not, but I guess when that time comes that piece will go in this one and the Linkllen chapters. The ones I have on here already will stay on here and I’ll add more of Cross’s POV during that time to balance things out. Anything else will be in it’s separate thing.

Also, I am now starting on Cross’s past, although it’s going to be a more, hopefully basic run down of it (unless I end up producing more snippets, in which case, his snippets will be put into it’s own separate fic area to). My question is, is there anything you guys are really curious about? I’ve alluded to his past a lot of times but never went in depth with it. I’m kind of stuck on where to start.)
Earlier Bonding

Chapter Summary

Just some more drabbles and stuff of little Allen getting comfortable with his new life after Mana and Cross learning how to bond with the kid. Warning there is a triggering part at the end of the chapter but do not fear, I will make the warning very clear before it starts.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

(Yay for not doing shit chronologically cuz that shit! Anyways I didn’t have enough of Cross and Allen trying to figure each other out and how to bond so here’s more shit on the fly!)

Cross huffed, sitting cross legged on the floor in front of a huge Timcanpy that was hiding the little monster that had recently come under his care. His little monster was cowering behind Timcanpy because apparently Cross got up too fast and spooked the little boy. The kid was easy to scare apparently. Which came to be of great annoyance to Cross. Sure, the brat might’ve talked when he finally snapped out of it but when he actually began to move by himself once again; he avoided interacting with Cross, Mother, or Barba. He wouldn’t let any one of them touch him. This proved to be difficult when the brat had nightmares at night. No one could comfort him because he wouldn’t allow them to get close enough to. The kid also hadn’t said much of a word ever since the first day he snapped out of his catatonic state. Cross didn’t care personally because it meant less whining from the brat, but Mother was very insistent about the two of them bonding.

Cross could hear the old hag’s words ringing the back of his skull ‘The child is in a very delicate state Cross. He needs someone he can trust and since you have taken it upon yourself to be his caretaker, he needs to know he can trust you.’ In other words, Cross had to bond with him and get to know him, which Cross already sucked at when the kid was catatonic. Now he had to do so with a skittish brat that threatened to piss himself if even so much as a fly flew too close to him without him being aware of its presence. Thinking about it though, if he was as small as Allen was, a lot of things would scare him to. As a means of figuring out ways to reach out to the kid and get him to relax around him, Cross had done a little research on children and trauma. It said that a child could heal easier when there was a supportive and caring adult they could trust. The resources he had didn’t exactly give him a step by step way of how he could get the brat to trust him. Besides, Cross knew he was not exactly the most ‘supportive’ or ‘caring’ adult out there. He didn’t know jack shit about kids. Maybe if this one wasn’t so fucking cute, he would’ve ignored his ass, but nooo, Cross had to grow a fucking heart overnight and now this brat was his brat now.

“Really kid? Come on. C’mere you little pipsqueak. Look what I got,” Cross said, holding out a cookie towards the brat. Cross smirked when he saw a little, white, fluffy, bedhead of hair poke up over on top of Tim’s head. Two wide, silvery eyes peered at Cross in curiosity at the treat in the man’s hand, but also suspicion. His little eyes narrowed as Cross wagged his hand with the cookie in it from side to side to entice the kid.

“Come on. I’m not going to come to you. I’ve been doing too much of that for you lately. This time you gotta come to me,” Cross mentioned. Allen immediately pouted and returned to his huddled
position behind Timcanpy. He didn’t need a cookie. Even if it did look super yummy. This guy probably poisoned it anyways.

“Come on brat-I mean kid. It’s a cookie. Kids love these things and I know you love it to. I fed you, I changed your clothes, bathed you and changed your bedding when you soiled them. Don’t you remember? Well maybe not, you were pretty out of commission at that time, but still. Not just anyone would do that, let alone someone like me,” Cross sighed, giving Timcanpy a look that begged him to help him out a little bit here. The kid needed to be pushed a bit more.

Allen was determined to stay away from Cross. Sure, the man took care of him, but why? Was he planning on making him work for his keep like the Ringleader? Was he going to beat him up and threaten to take away food or threaten to kick him out? Or was he…was he one of ‘those’ type of men? Sure, he was a little boy, therefore he should not know of such things or worry about them but when it came to perverted men, they didn’t have a preference. Not only that, but Allen was not like most kids. Most kids didn’t have an ugly arm. If they found something cute and small like Allen, they’d take him in a heartbeat. That is, after they covered up his deformed, ugly hand of course. Allen knew they would because it happened. It happened before he met Mana and once after he began traveling with Mana. Maybe the man drugged up the cookie so he would fall unconscious, so he could let his friends have his way with him.

Allen felt Timcanpy shift from behind him and his eyes widened in alarm as the golem shuffled to the side, exposing the huddled Allen. Allen gave Tim a look of betrayal. What a traitor! Now he was forced to look at the tempting treat Cross had in his hand.

“Come on Allen,” Cross said, his voice softening as he raised an eyebrow, “I didn’t make them so that means they’re completely edible and not burned to a crisp.”

Allen looked unconvinced.

Cross’s shoulders deflated at the kid’s stubbornness. This kid really thought he poisoned this fucking cookie! After everything he did, he still did not trust him handling his food unless he watched him make it (which the first time unnerved him until he realized the kid was doing it out of what he deemed an understandable reason).

“So, you don’t believe me? Well fine. Watch,” Cross responded as he tore off a tiny piece of cookie with his fingers and popped it in his mouth before chewing it and swallowing it, “See. I didn’t drop dead and thanks to you I am one step closer to diabetes. Here, now you eat it.”

Allen wrinkled his nose a little. What was diabetes? Would he get it from eating this? Was it a poison? He watched the man carefully, scrutinizing him for symptoms of discomfort or pain from ingesting the tiny part of cookie he had. Hmm…he didn’t look like he was on the verge of death… guess the cookie is safe. That didn’t mean Allen felt more inclined to draw closer to the man. What if he was trying to lure him closer so he could strike out at him or grab him?

“Kid, my arm is getting tired and I can’t stretch it out any farther,” Cross complained. Allen stared at his hand, contemplating the situation carefully. He liked cookies and anything that was food. He didn’t like being grabbed, hit, sudden movements, or being screamed at. Although to be fair Cross has yet to hit him or literally scream at him. Cross was rough around the edges and cursed like a sailor but other than making some sudden movements and somewhat hurtful comments on his behavior, he didn’t do anything super bad. After a few more moments of hesitation, Allen drew closer before taking the cookie into his mouth. He decided he wouldn’t grab it with his hand in fear of Cross grabbing it and yanking his body towards him. Though to be fair he could’ve grabbed his hair and yanked him towards him that way. Allen just wanted as much as his body to be as far from
him as possible because it’s less to grab and more chance to break free… at least he hoped.

“Alright. Well I guess that’s a start,” Cross said, a little weirded out that Allen chose that method of taking the cookie. He watched afterward as Allen scooted about a foot back and munched on his treat. After he was done, they sat in silence for a minute at least, a few feet apart. That was the closest the brat had ever gotten to Cross so far. The moment was short lived however as the child ran off in a flash of white when Barba noisily opened the front door, coming in from working out in the garden.

“Good going. You scared him again. I was hoping to at least get him to sit here with me for a good five minutes if possible,” Cross bitched as he was left sitting on the floor. He was surprised he didn’t see a small dust cloud settling in the space Allen left since the brat moved so fast.

“Sorry. I forgot how noisy I can be sometimes,” Barba said sheepishly.

“Whatever. I got him to take a cookie from me without watching me make it first. I guess that can count for something.”

“It’s progress,” Barba agreed.

~Allen exploring his surroundings

For the first few days of beginning to function by himself, as in walking, feeding himself, etc, Allen explored his surroundings out of curiosity and fear. He had never lived in an actual house before in his life. He was sure when he did when he was a baby, but he couldn’t remember that far back. Sometimes if the Ringleader was feeling generous, he would sleep in a tent, but most times he slept outside. He slept in alleyways before, abandoned buildings, which I guess could be considered sort of like a house minus the proper furnishings and utilities (he avoided churches because he thought he would start on fire due to his arm). When he traveled with Mana, they mostly slept in his car but if they could afford it, they slept in a motel, which wasn’t very often. In a way that could be considered like a home. A temporary home.

Allen was familiar with using a toilet, though he preferred going outside because that’s what they did when there was no gas station in sight and traveling in Mana’s car. It was also something he did while working at the circus because plumbing was not guaranteed, and he would never trust a Port-A-Potty. Those things were gross.

He also found going outside to be easier because he wouldn’t have to worry about falling into the toilet (he was quite small and though it only happened once when he was younger it was very unpleasant, and he didn’t want to re-live that). He was also quite phobic about bathrooms in general, mostly public bathrooms though. Public bathrooms were places where older men liked to prey on little boys alongside any other private area. A public bathroom wasn’t the only area Allen had experienced an older man groping him or having his way with him, but it stood out the most because it happened when he traveled with Mana and it went further than any other encounters went (***explanation snippet will be at the end of this drabble and you will be warned of it so you can skip to the next chapter when it approaches or read it***)

He realized that going to the bathroom outside was something Cross did not approve of the first couple of times he tried to do so. Cross also came to the realization that yelling at the brat was probably not his best idea in these types of situations.

Cross was just observing the brat running around outside like he usually did since the brat began to function by himself. Studying him. Figuring out what he did to entertain himself. What he disliked. How he interacted with the world around him. It was probably a little creepy, but how else could you learn about someone when they wouldn’t talk to you or would only be around you if deemed
absolutely necessary? When the brat finally woke up, Cross thought he’d be dealing with a fairly normal kid. One that was talking, one that didn’t bolt away at every loud noise, one that could eat anything Cross put in front of him without having to watch it being made first. Knowing this was Mana’s kid though, Cross knew he wouldn’t be totally normal. He just didn’t think it would be like this.

The original game plan was to bond enough with Allen to the point where Cross could give him his basic needs with ease. Cross thought that would be easy. They would be able to go home in a few days a week and a half tops. It became clear that this goal was not going to be met and that there was so serious work to be done with this kid. The type of work that Cross didn’t know where to start and required Mother teaching him how to be more of an understanding and tactful person. Over time Cross also realized with inner disgust, surprise, and a little bit of fear that he was actually desiring for the kid to be closer to him. It stung a little bit every time Allen ran off, would stare at him with those baby gray, skeptical eyes, or would refuse any sort of comfort after a nightmare. So, while there was a logical motivation to get the brat to trust him there was also an inner desire deep within him that wanted to be approachable to the kid.

Well, after awhile of observing him Cross slowly migrated to the front porch. He noticed the brat walking off to one of Mother’s trees, his hands on the hem of his pants. Oh, Cross had a inkling of what the brat was thinking of doing-

“Oi brat! You better not think of pissing on one of Mother’s trees!” the man snapped at Allen who had his pants halfway down to do just that. Allen’s practically jumped a foot in the air at Cross’s unexpected yell and whipped his head around to look at Cross his eyes snapped open to the size of bowls in his fear.

Okay, so the brat stopped what he was doing. That was a good thing. That was the goal of Cross’s yelling. What Cross didn’t aim for was the brat to be so terrified that he stood there and proceeded to piss his pants in front of Cross. Oops. Probably should’ve seen that one coming, Cross thought to himself as he looked down at the growing wet spot that spread down Allen’s legs. Fuck.

“Shit,” Cross cussed. Before Cross had a chance to explain why he yelled or to even help the kid get dry clothes, Allen’s eyes filled with tears and he took off running. Apparently, the kid thought Cross was cussing because he was angry at him for pissing himself. In actuality Cross was cussing at his own stupidity. Either way, the kid ran off in fear before Cross had a chance to explain himself.

“God fucking damnit!” Cross growled. He could see the progress he had made completely go to the crapper. Well, now Cross was left with trying to go find the brat because he couldn’t just let the brat sit in soaked clothing. Well, he could actually. The brat was old enough to clean himself up, but the kid was now probably too terrified to even set foot in the house because of the yelling red-headed giant. Cross also knew that if Mother saw the child was soiled, with him doing nothing about it, she would beat him with her cane mercilessly. Even if he begged for it.

“Tim, I’m gonna need your assistance,” Cross called out as he reluctantly ventured off of Mother’s front porch to begin the search for Allen. The golden golem wasted no time in gracefully flying towards Cross, landing himself on Cross’s head, ready to help his master.

“Think you can lead me to where the brat ran off to?” Cross asked the little golem who made a strange chirping noise and began to fly slowly forward, expecting Cross to follow. Cross followed obediently, his eyes sharp and alert, looking for any sign of the brat.

“Allen! Oi Allen! Come on out kid! I’m not angry at you!” Cross called out, hoping that by being loud and announcing his presence there would be less chance of scarifying the kid a
second time. “Let’s go kid! You can’t be comfortable wearing wet pants like that! Let’s get you some dry ones on at least!”

Timcanpy kept flying forward until they reached a hay bale near the chicken coop which was up in the far-right corner of Mother’s land, a pretty good walk away from the house. There Cross could hear sobbing that quieted the moment he approached the hay bale, the little brat hiding behind it in his shame. Cross stayed on the other side of the hay bale, deciding that the last thing Allen wanted to see was a huge guy looming over him, even if said guy promised to not give any harm. Fat chance the kid would believe it. If Cross was a little squirt like Allen, he would turn tail and run the moment he heard a man’s voice approaching him.

“So, are you going to run off again or are you going to let me explain myself?” Cross asked, resting his arms on the hay bale as Tim flew over the hay bale to check on his upset little human. Cross waited a few moments, happy to see that there was no flash of white indicating that Allen was making another run for it.

“Alright brat, look, I didn’t mean to scare you. I was just trying to get your attention because you can’t be doing your business outside where I live, so you should get in the habit of not doing that. I know you probably don’t see it as a big deal and usually out in the middle of nowhere, like here, it’s not. But where I live it is. It’s in town and there’s other people who would probably see it and raise a fuss. So, if you’re done crying, let’s go inside and get you cleaned up. I’ll give you some cookies to. Alright?” Cross huffed. He knew that was a shit apology, but who cared, the kid was getting cookies so that was probably more than enough of an apology.

After a couple moments of consideration, Cross saw the familiar little white head poke out from its hiding place, scrutinizing Cross to see if he actually meant what he said.

“Take a picture brat, it’ll last longer,” Cross said, ignoring the urge to pick out the pieces of hay that stuck up in the brat’s hair. They were not even close to that stage yet and Cross was not going to push it. To help ignore the pieces sticking up in Allen’s hair, Cross led the way back to the house, the little squirt following after him like a baby duck.

~

Allen was familiar with using some bathtub fixtures, but never took a shower before unless washing oneself in the rain was considered a shower (which he’d done so when he was working at the circus). Allen has seen a stove before to, although the stoves they had in the circus were smaller and looked a lot older school than the one Mother had or others he’s seen. One thing that enamored the small child was the fridge. The first day he was exploring his surroundings the child wouldn’t stop opening and closing the door. He knew of coolers, which were mostly used in the traveling circus, but they didn’t have lights on inside. Did the light stay on even when the door was closed? Allen tried to find out by trying to keep the door open at the tiniest slit possible, but he couldn’t tell. No matter how many times he tried. Another thing that fascinated him about this huge ice box was that there was a lever you held down to get ice or water from it.

Allen found this out the hard way when he stood up on his tip toes and carefully pressed the lever, wondering what it did. Ice poured out on top of his head and he took off in a flash out of fear. He heard Cross chuckle at his antics as he ran off. Once he got over the panic of the ice machine on the fridge, Allen explored other areas like the washer and dryer. They were noisy white monsters and Allen wouldn’t dare set foot in the laundry room. He only watched them from afar, scrutinizing them, hoping that they never move away from the wall. One had a little window in the middle of it where Allen could see clothes spinning around and around. The other was just loud, and it shook violently. They each played a little tune before they stopped shaking, waiting for one
of the adults to collect the clothes inside.

“What’s up kid? Want me to throw you in with the wash to?” Cross asked one day, watching as Allen yelped and bolted for the dryer. Cross resisted the urge to laugh. The brat was trying to hide behind it.

Cross sighed at the brat’s skittishness but moved towards the dryer to change out loads. He had a basket of laundry propped on his hip. Allen backed away from Cross as he approached the dryer, but he also stayed close to try and figure out how this monster worked. He watched the man fold the clothes in the dryer before moving on and throwing the wet clothes from the washer into the dryer. He then turned a knob and he monster turned back on, causing Allen to jump a foot in the air. Well…it felt like a foot anyways. Allen slowly approached the dryer like a wary kitten and placed his hand against the side of it. The machine was warm and felt strangely comforting up against Allen’s body. Allen moved so he could watch Cross operate the washing machine. He was curious as to what the blue, sweet smelling liquid was that he was pouring inside of it. Was it like that gas that Mana put in his car to make it run? It didn’t smell like it. Was it edible?

“Don’t get into trouble, alright kid? This house isn’t child-proofed,” Cross warned as he left the room with the empty basket in his hand. Allen made sure he left before he went up to the washing machine in curiosity. He hesitatingly pressed his hands against the machine, recoiling at how cold it felt. He didn’t like this machine. He liked the one with the swirling clothes that threatened to hypnotize him into sleep. It was nice and warm. The dryer became one of his favorite spots in the house to hang out and sleep on. It became a nice substitute for the warmth of human touch.

Next came the power outlets which Allen had seen before in some of the motel rooms, but never thought to investigate. Mana didn’t carry a cell phone with him, so he never needed to use a power outlet. Sure, they watched television sometimes in the motel rooms, but Allen never paid much attention to the outlets. It was still weird to see things turn on just by being plugged into an outlet. He wondered why these things were plugged into such strange looking holes. They looked a little like faces when they weren’t plugged in. Being curious, the little boy held out his index finger, dead set on putting his finger into one of the holes. He wondered what it would do to him. Would it give him magical powers? Would he light up like a television screen did when it was plugged in?

However, Cross felt that something was off in the force. It was just that gut feeling that happened sometimes when you knew something bad was going to happen, but you didn’t know what. He looked up from the book he was reading just in time to catch Allen in the act.

“Oi! You get your finger away from that power outlet right now boy! You’re going to get your ass electrocuted!” Cross yelled. Like literally yelled. Allen heard Cross speak before and his voice sounded gruff and angry most times, but this tone of voice was different from the ones he heard before. This voice was the same voice adults used when they were about to hit you. Allen let out a pitiful whine and ran off, tears welling in his eyes in fear that the man was going to hit him.

Allen hid away from Cross for a really long time that day. That made Cross feel bad, but he also didn’t want the brat to hurt himself. He knew brats were stupid, but he didn’t think Allen would be stupid enough to try and stick in fingers into a power outlet. That was something babies did. Not children Allen’s age. Well, usually Allen’s age, there were probably a few out there that got dropped on their heads a few too many times. It was important he knew that was a bad thing to touch and if Cross had to put a bit of fear in him than that’s what he was going to do. At this point in time, it was hard to explain anything to the kid since he ran off so damn much. Fuck, he’d run off if you so much as looked at him funny. Either way, the brat soon came back around after several hours once he figured Cross wouldn’t hurt him. He didn’t stick his fingers anywhere near
Next was the blender. It was a hot summer day out and Cross thought smoothies sounded good and it might get the kid to get closer to him. He doubted the kid ever had a smoothie before and if he ever did it was probably rarely. It was also a fantastic opportunity to figure out what foods the kid especially liked. He found quickly the brat wasn’t picky, but as far as favorite foods went, Cross had no idea. Allen, being ever curious crawled under Mother’s little table to watch the man in the kitchen. He wondered what he was making. Anytime the man was in the kitchen, Allen tended to follow because it meant possibly getting food and he could watch him to make sure said food wasn’t poisoned. Plus, after looking around all around the house and outside, the only thing left that made Allen curious was Cross Marian.

Cross Marian was no Mana. His voice wasn’t soft. It was gruff. He swore a lot to. Mana never swore. He always looked to be either in deep thought or angry at something. While Mana always had a smile on his face. He never struck out at Allen yet, although he did yell at him from time to time if he was about to do something stupid or dangerous. The power outlet was just one of those reasons. Another reason was when he attempted to drink the laundry detergent. He thought it would taste good because it smelled good. For the most part Cross’s actions didn’t match up with his face or his voice. That confused Allen. He didn’t know how to read Cross because he didn’t match up what he knew about people. People who were angry all the time and sounded angry all the time hit little boys and yelled at them. But Cross wasn’t doing that. It confused him because no one treated him like that before who wore a face like Cross’s.

“Just warning you brat. This is going to be loud,” Cross said aloud. He knew Allen was there, which also unnerved Allen. He always knew for the most part where Allen was. He may not know the exact location at times, but the man knew the general area. He had eyes in the back of his head. He knew when something was awry. He had special demon powers, or at least that’s what Allen thought. How else would he have known Allen was about to ingest laundry detergent that one time?

Allen watched as the man cut up some fruit and put it into a weird cylindrical machine. He then poured some milk, and ice before closing the lid and pressing the button. A loud grating noise filled the air making the boy gasp and shove his hands over his ears. He cowered under the table and closed his eyes tightly, waiting for the awful noise to be over.

“All right. Loud noise is over,” Cross announced before turning the machine off, not sure if Allen heard or not. Allen looked up slowly, his hands still over his ears as he stared at the red-head warily. That sounded like a chainsaw out of one of the horror films Mother had a habit of watching. He poured the strange mixture into two big cups before setting the blender back on its’ stand.

“You ever had a smoothie kid? It’s like ice cream but healthier. Well I guess depending on what you use. It’s nice on days where Satan feels like he’s trying to burn you alive,” Cross explained as he walked over to the kid with the two cups. The man set himself down on the floor, with a groan and Allen heard one of his joints pop. Allen winced visibly and wondered if Cross broke something. That sounded painful, “Ughh I’m getting too old for this shit.”

The man took a swig of his smoothie before holding the other cup out to Allen, giving him a look that said “Well? Take it and drink it.”

Allen looked from the cup in his hands and then back up to Cross, slowly dropping his hands from his ears and hesitantly taking the cup in his own hands. He felt the cold seep into his hands. It looked chunky but smelled fruity and not poisonous. A good start. He took a little sip of the liquid, cooling his tongue and down his throat as he swallowed the pleasant mixture. A little shiver ran
through him and he took a much larger sip of the liquid. It was really good. A lot better than most of the things Cross concocted.

“Good shit huh? Don’t drink it too fast though you’re going to get a brainfreeze—Nevermind,” Cross responded, watching the brat’s face twist up and his whole body shake complete with little shivering noises. Okay, that was fucking adorable. Cross didn’t just think that. Nope.

“What did I tell ya boy? You okay?—well don’t do it again! Jeez,” Cross said, watching the brat proceed to almost down the entire thing in one gulp once again. At least the kid was enjoying it. In just a few minutes the kid finished his smoothie and placed the cup in front of him. It wasn’t everyday he ever got anything that good. Even on their best performance days it was hard for Mana to afford their basic necessities. Allen couldn’t remember the last time he had ice cream or a candy bar, although Allen wasn’t the type of kid to beg and whine for one like he saw other kids do to their parents. Allen was thankful to have Mana and thankful for anything the man gave him.

“T-Thank you,” Allen stuttered in a quiet voice, so quiet Cross barely caught it. Allen then proceeded to run off again when he heard the tapping of Mother’s cane against the floor. Cross looked up in annoyance at the old lady just walking into the kitchen.

“That little one never stays, long does he?” she commented.

“I’m sure he would’ve stayed longer if you didn’t decide to come in and be nosy,” Cross grumbled.

“You were making such a damn racket in MY kitchen. I had to make sure you weren’t trying to cut a body into pieces or something,” was the old woman’s response.

“You really need to stop watching that shit. You’re giving the kid nightmares. Besides I’m surprised you could even hear that with how deaf you are ya ol’ bat,” Cross commented on the old woman’s hobby of watching horror movies.

“The child has nightmares every night,” Mother said, waving Cross’s comment off before changing the subject.

“Barba’s managed to get the kid to grow closer to him. He’ll follow him around outside and help him in the garden now,” Mother said, changing the subject.

“What the fuck? How’d he managed that!? He’s a fucking giant and terrified the kid since day one! I figured he’d approach someone like you since you were closer to his own size than Barba.”

“Well, Barba is a friendly giant. He speaks loudly and can get quite clumsy but he’s approachable. You on the other hand could use some work. Lose the resting bitch face Marian,” Mother advised.

“Bite me.” Was Cross’s scathing reply.

So, the kid took a liking to Barba huh?

~

~(this is the triggering snippet I was mentioning earlier. If you want to read it then fine, but other than that you reached the end of this chapter. See you next time!).

Mana was having one of his ‘fits’ as Allen liked to call them. They were resting in Mana’s car,
waiting for whatever sickness Mana was experiencing to pass. He was delirious, shouting about some man named Neah and mistaking Allen for him. It wasn’t anything Allen wasn’t familiar with. However, if Allen wasn’t careful sometimes Mana got violent and tried to hit him. One thing Allen learned was to never ever try to tell Mana that he wasn’t Neah. It was easier to pretend he was. It calmed Mana down. Even with his fits, Allen adored Mana and tried to take the best of care of him when he had them. Mana must’ve loved whoever this Neah was very much to have such episodes over them. Anyways, they were in the car for most of the day and were across a rather suspicious looking gas station. As much as he hated to leave Mana in such a vulnerable state, Allen really needed the toilet, so he ventured out to the gas station to use their facilities. He also wanted to see if he could find anything that could give his adoptive father comfort. Maybe a candy bar would cheer him up? Maybe a cup of tea? He had to try and coax Mana to drink and eat at least a little something.

Allen felt safe around Mana, so he let his guard down, ignoring the group of men sitting in one of the booths in the gas station. They were loud and their speech was slurred. It wasn’t anything new. Allen would stay as invisible as possible and be in and out quickly. With how drunk they sounded, they probably wouldn’t even notice the child walking to the boy’s bathroom, his hands buried deep in his pockets to hide his left arm. Allen was so very very wrong. He should’ve known better. Even with his left arm being the way it was, he was still considered to be ‘cute’ to some people. As long as he kept his attitude in check, he could use this to his advantage. He HAS used it to his advantage plenty of times. However, his ‘cuteness’ also attracted a crowd of gross men that had the heavy smell of alcohol on their breath. Allen hated that smell, it made him feel sick to his stomach. It reminded him of Cosimo.

As Allen walked into one of the stalls to do his business, he didn’t lock the stall door. He was too short to reach it and sense there were not a lot of people around he wasn’t too concerned about someone barging in. Not that a locked stall door was going to stop anyone. They could still come underneath the door. As Allen was about to walk out of the stall, he heard the heavy, staggering footsteps of someone wandering in. He thought they were just going to use the bathroom and they would leave. Simple.

Well apparently that just wasn’t the case this time around. One of the men at the table noticed him and thought they would have a little fun. Allen was familiar with these types of men, but they never got as far as this one did. When Allen was ‘Red’, they got a swift kick in their jewels or shins depending on which was closer. When Allen was Allen however, he found it hard to hurt people because Mana didn’t like violence. Allen didn’t want to disappoint Mana or hurt him because he decided to hurt someone. So, when that man came into his stall as Allen was exiting, Allen froze.

“Hey there cutey, why are you here all alone. Didn’t your parents tell you not to wander around at night?” the man slurred, his mouth quirked into a smile. He looked to be in his 40’s and was balding. He had dark hair, but it was beginning to turn white with age. He had a beer belly and stubble on his chubby face.

Allen opened his mouth to respond but found no words could bubble their way out of his throat. It tightened in fear. What was he supposed to do? Kick him? Mana wouldn’t like that. What if he chased after him and hurt Mana? Mana was vulnerable right now, he couldn’t lead an angry man to him!

Allen gulped as the man grew closer, using his index finger to tilt Allen’s head up to look at him, “Guess I’ll have to take it upon myself to teach you myself. We’re going to have a little fun. Okay kid?”

Allen shuddered, his jaw tightening as he felt the man’s hand caress his face. His other hand rested on Allen’s waist, his thumb pressing into Allen’s hip bone. Allen fought the urge to gag as the man
leaned down to kiss him. He could taste the alcohol on his lips, and he smelled like sweat. He was disgusting, but Allen couldn’t move. He would protect Mana and he would keep his promise to Mana. No violence. Allen shuddered when he felt the man’s hand move up his shirt. He hated being touched, period. Anytime he got touched he got hurt. Mana was the only one who could touch him, and Mana never touched him this way unless they took a bath together. Even then it was only to help him wash his hair and back. That was all. No sexual intent. Mana would pet his hair, would rub his back or affectionately kiss his cheeks. It was all fatherly and it was out of endearment and comfort to the child. This man’s hands were not endearing or comforting at all. They were dangerous and held the intent to hurt.

Allen tried to move his head away from the man when he tried to stick his tongue into his mouth but that hand against his cheek tightened it’s hold and grabbed his hair with a vice like grip. Making Allen gasp and open his mouth. Allen’s heart pounded in his ears and he shut his eyes. He hoped this man would get tired of him soon and go away. He didn’t know the word that went with this, but he had seen it happen in the circus among circus performers and people in the alleyway. He saw a woman struggle against a man once, screaming and crying. It was different from the circus performers who seemed to be crying in pleasure, totally ignoring the child that was trying to sleep nearby. Maybe the woman was crying out in pleasure to, Allen thought. Allen didn’t understand that people were never supposed to touch you this way unless you wanted them to, especially someone older. He just hated being touched. Those situations and this one seemed the same to him. Allen didn’t know about sex, he didn’t know that sex was supposed to be done out of love for another person. He saw dogs humping each other, rabbits, etc. All he knew about this was that people did it and apparently it felt good. It was supposed to feel good he thought.

This didn’t feel good. He didn’t like the man’s saliva entering his mouth, he didn’t like the feeling of his tongue searching his mouth. He didn’t like the feeling when he felt a hand unbutton his pants and zip down his fly before it closed itself around his privates. It felt weird and scary.

Allen never touched himself that way before. As far as he knew that area functioned as something to pee out of. That’s all. So why was the man touching him there? Why did everything feel so weird? He guessed this felt…somewhat pleasurable, but he didn’t understand it, so it made him afraid. He didn’t know why his stomach was tightening up or why his blood was rushing in areas it never rushed down before or why his thing was coming up. It never did that before. What was this man doing to him?

Allen whimpered, finally pulling away from the man’s face, gasping for air. Apparently, this man thought that this meant Allen was enjoying himself and began to kiss down his neck. Allen’s body tensed up in anxiety. He didn’t like that. He didn’t like that at all. He whimpered again, feeling tears well in his eyes in fear. Was this man going to bite his neck out and let him bleed out on the floor? He seen a stray dog do that to a rabbit once. It was a killing move.

“It’s your fault I’m doing this. If you weren’t so cute, you wouldn’t have men like me doing these things to you,” the man growled. Was it Allen’s fault? He didn’t think he was adorable. In fact, if Allen hadn’t kept his left arm hidden, he wouldn’t be cute anymore.

“S-Stop p-please?” Allen whimpered softly, feeling his stomach tighten more. The man had no intention of stopping though as he kept stroking down there.

“Why? It’s clear you’re enjoying it.”

No, he wasn’t. There were few things Allen found enjoyment in, but this definitely was not it. When he enjoyed things, there was no fear. This was confusing and fear inducing. He didn’t know what his body was doing or why, but he wanted it to stop. Allen shivered, feeling his heart pick up speed, he could feel every fiber of his being tightening, hoping to whatever God was out there that
this experience would be over soon so he could go back to Mana. Allen had closed his eyes tightly, trying to block the man out, but in just a few moments his eyes flew open in surprise as his body convulsed and the tight coil in his stomach finally released itself. His knees buckled, and as he looked down, he was scared at what he saw came out of him. He had never seen that stuff before.

“W-Wha?” Allen asked, intent on asking the man just what the fuck he did to him and why that white stuff came out of him, but he had no time. The man had flipped him over and shoved his head to the hard, dirty floor of the bathroom.

“If you scream and ruin this for me brat, I will kill you. Understand,” the man said more than asked as he pulled down his pants further. Allen opened his mouth to protest but as he felt something push itself forcefully into his backside, he had to bite down on his coat sleeve to prevent himself from screaming out in pain. It felt like the man was trying to split him in half. Things were not supposed to go up there, ever. Things were only supposed to only come out of there. That was what Allen knew. Allen continued to bite the sleeve of his coat as tears began to roll down his cheeks. It’ll be over soon. It had to be over soon. He just had to deal with this for a little longer.

“God, you’re being such a good little doll for me kid. You’re so tight. Just keep being just like that,” the man groaned as he thrust up inside of him. Allen sobbed quietly. He felt so dirty. He felt so used, which wasn’t new to him. He's been used his whole life and hurt…but he was never hurt in this way. He wished Mana would come in here and save him. But of course, that wouldn’t happen. Mana was sick right now. He wouldn’t rescue Allen.

It seemed like forever. Allen yelped when he felt something warm shoot into his sore insides, his body tensed in fear. What the hell was that!? What did the man do? Allen shivered in disgust but was thankful when the man finally pulled out a few moments later, collapsing in a drunken coma next to him. Allen scrambled away from the man, his whole shaking in adrenaline and fear. He looked down and saw blood and white stuff trickling slowly down his legs. Blood. Allen resisted the urge to cry. Now wasn’t the time to cry. He had to run away. He’d clean himself up later. He could find a puddle or pond somewhere to wash up in.

With shaky hands, Allen pulled up his pants, went to the mirror to wash his hands and his face, before exiting the bathroom. It was like nothing happened. No one looked at him. No one asked why he took so long or why he was walking funny. Allen walked back to the car to Mana, who was sleeping his sickness away. Allen went off to find someplace to clean himself up in after he got a change of clothes from the car. As far as he could remember, he found a huge puddle, went back to the car and curled up close to Mana. He never told Mana what happened that day.

Chapter End Notes

Hiya! Long time no see! This is a drabble thing that I've been working on for about a couple months. Cross's past is still being written as we speak, just letting you know I didn't forget about it (if you want to know anything specific about his past, let me know, the suggestions are open). Other than that hope you enjoyed it!
Early bonding drabble set pt. 2

Chapter Summary

Cross learning how to interact with Allen. For the most part, this is more fluffy and funny than triggering.

So that’s why Cross was now standing at the window watching Barba and Allen interact in the garden to see if he could pick up on anything Barba was doing. So far, he understood very little as to how Barba managed to get the brat to warm up to him. Barba was working hard in Mother’s garden, stopping occasionally to wipe the sweat from his brow and rambling away to his tiny companion. Allen was sitting quietly in the garden, observing the man at work and listening intently.

Cross had no idea what they were talking about but if he knew Barba, the man was probably rambling away on the different plants in Mother’s garden, fishing, the weather, or maybe how he came to be here as Mother’s helper and basically child. Barba was obviously not Mother’s real child, but she found him as a small boy, abandoned by his parents. She gave him a place to stay and raised him, in return he did the things the older woman could no longer do in her age.

“See this one here Allen!? There are baby tomatoes starting to grow on this plant! Aren’t they adorable?” Barba gushed to Allen who leaned over at his sitting place to look at the green mounds that looked like tomatoes, but they were green.

“But tomatoes are supposed to be red. Why are they green Barba?” Allen asked, his voice whispery and soft, squeaking occasionally (he doesn’t use his voice often so it’s still weak).

“They’re too young! Once they grow bigger they’ll ripen and turn red,” Barba explained.

“Oh,” Allen said and stayed silent for a few moments, watching Barba pull out weeds. There was a question that had bothered him for quite some time as he slowly began to understand which plant was what. There was one plant he hadn’t come across though and he thought it was odd because this was a huge garden with a lot of produce. He would’ve thought Mother would have a plant like this…

“Hey Barba, how come Mother doesn’t have any human baby plants?” Allen asked, remembering the time he had asked Mana where babies came from. Mana said that human babies grew from the ground, much like potatoes or watermelons. They didn’t grow from trees because that was too dangerous. When the babies ripened up enough, excited fathers and mothers would go out and pick the babies out from their gardens. (Warning, this next bit is a little if not extremely graphic. Basically, it’s Allen’s first look at childbirth. I will mark the ending of the segment with a * if you wish to skip the entire thing. All you need to know is that Allen watched a circus worker give birth when he was young and before Mana showed up.)

Allen had a somewhat of a hard time believing his story at first because it didn’t fit with what he saw a couple years before he met Mana. He remembered quite vividly, a memory involving one of the cooks that worked at the traveling circus. She was a recent hire and was quite fat, but her belly was different from some of the ones rich, snobby men would haul around. Especially the Ringleader. She didn’t have those chubby jowls that those men had. It was just…different. Every
day her belly would grow bigger and bigger. Allen remembered feeling a bit concerned that she would explode or something because it wouldn’t stop growing. He remembered seeing the head chef and some of the performers make fun of her. Call her a sinner. A whore. They’d complain of her slowness, but Allen thought it was because she was young. She looked like she was still a teenager.

Then one night, the lady was nowhere to be found. Allen could hear pained moaning and groaning coming from far beyond the boundaries of their camp. No one else went to investigate, although they were partying after another one of earlier performances, so they were probably too drunk to care. As Allen went to investigate, he saw the woman laying up against a tree, her hands on her swollen stomach and face scrunched in pain. Her pants were off, and she was bleeding. Allen stayed far away from her, fearing that perhaps she was really going to explode and that was why she was in so much pain. He had a fleeting thought of running to get help but thought better of it. He would only scare people off with his arm and it’s not like anyone around him cared enough anyways. So, he stayed put to watch how this scary scenario would play out.

Allen stayed there a long time watching her. How what he thought were her death throes (actually contractions) would come and go. She’d rest her sweaty, flushed head against the trunk of the tree when they passed. When they came, she’d begin to groan, pant, and cuss. Her face twisting into pain as she voiced her agony. Sooner or later, Allen realized that the time had shortened between her episodes. They became more intense and frequent. Allen remembered feeling very afraid. What on earth was happening to this woman? How long had she been like this? How much longer was this going to go on?

Allen found with great fascination, disgust, relief, and horror that this woman was not on the verge of exploding at all. He watched as some strange, slimy, bloody thing slowly made its way out of the woman’s body and into her waiting hands. This was definitely not something Allen was familiar with as something that would ever exit someone’s body. As the horrific thing fully made its way out of the woman’s body, it began to cry…like a baby. A baby!? This woman pooped out a baby!? How was this even possible!?

Allen was so horrified and confused by this situation, that he quickly ran off. Perhaps that wasn’t a baby. Maybe it was a demon. Maybe that’s why they called her a sinner. Allen didn’t know. All he knew was that was perhaps one of the weirdest and scariest things he’d ever seen in his life. So, yes, Allen had a hard time believing in Mana’s story, but believing that perhaps what the woman had produced was a demon, not an actual human baby made it believable. He wanted to believe it, because it was what Mana said and he could trust in Mana. Mana knew lots of things. It sounded a whole lot more pleasant to. So Allen completely drove that horrific image away and clung onto Mana’s explanation like it was the Holy Grail.

Barba looked at his little companion in confusion, “Human baby plants? What are those?”

“You know…plants where babies come from. Mommys and daddys plant this seed and wait for it to grow and what comes out of it is a baby. When it’s ready they pick them from the garden,” Allen squeaked what his adoptive father told him.

Barba blinked a couple of times as understanding slowly washed over him. Oh. Allen didn’t know where babies came from and thought they came from plants. Well, this was quite the situation. Barba did not where babies came from. Mother made sure to tell him the truth, but Allen looked too young to know the truth. Which meant he had to lie to his companion…as much as he hated to.

“Well…uhhh…well we don’t have those kinds of plants because Mother doesn’t want to have any babies. She’d too old for them,” Barba tried to explain.

“Well what about some of the ladies that come by and ask her for tips on how to get a baby?
You’re good at gardening. We should plant some so the ladies can have babies because they’re having a hard time with their own baby plants,” Allen squeaked innocently. His little voice wasn’t used to talking all that much so it was quiet and squeaked a lot.

“That’s a good idea, but they’re very expensive and it takes a lot of work. We can’t afford it. Mother’s really wise though and she makes powerful elixirs to help the ladies out,” Barba said, trying to save the story in Allen’s head and avoiding letting him know the truth. He hoped he would drop it soon.

Allen hummed, sitting in silence for a few moments before he accepted Barba’s explanation, “I guess you’re right.”

“Why don’t we go check the chicken coop? There’s baby chicks that just hatched today,” Barba enthused, holding out his hand to the child as he stood up. He was determined to make sure Allen’s questions about babies were not more by distracting him.

Meanwhile Cross stood there in confusion, watching as Allen grabbed Barba’s hand as they walked to the chicken coop. Why had Barba looked so flustered? What did the brat tell him? Did he really want to actually bond with Allen after that? I mean, what kind of creepy weird shit is coming out of this kid’s throat?

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Later on, during the day Cross slowly emerged from the house, sitting on the porch as he watched the brat walk around Mother’s yard with a hen in his hands. Cross had found the brat loved to play with Mother’s chickens. Not the rooster though. The rooster was an asshole. As long as the brat stayed with Barba, the rooster wouldn’t come after him. So, it became the usual sight see Barba walking around the yard, doing the outside chores, with little Allen toddling after him, a chicken resting comfortably in his hands. It also became a usual sight to see a bunch of chickens trailing after Allen like they were his God or something. Mother found it absolutely endearing. Cross didn’t have the balls to admit it, so he looked on with his usual resting bitch face.

The brat had settled by Barba who was napping under a shady tree and began to play with the chicken. At least it looked like playing. Cross couldn’t tell. Allen was slowly moving the chicken around, watching as its head stayed in one place (basically, it moved around a little bit) no matter where he moved the body. After he got tired of that, he set the chicken in his lap and began to pet it like it was a dog. It didn’t take long for the rest of the chickens to come out of the woodwork to surround the two of the them. One in particular was making its merry way past the porch and towards their little overlord. It had stopped to look over at Cross, cocking it’s head up at him.

“What the hell are you looking at me for? He’s over there. Go! Shoo!” Cross growled, watching as the chicken clucked distastefully at him before it ran over to Allen (yes chickens run and it’s fucking weird). There was probably about fifteen chickens all curled up around the brat in the span of a few minutes. All Cross could see was Allen’s eyes as his tiny body was covered with the feathery bodies. That would be enough to piss Cross off, but Allen seemed to be content in nearly suffocating in feathers. Well, it wasn’t the weirdest thing he’s ever seen a kid do.

He still couldn’t figure out what made Allen warm up to Barba right away. Okay, the guy was a huge softie. That was a straight giveaway. Cross was looking for something that he could mimic to get the brat to warm up to him. For one thing, he sucked at being soft. He was big in many departments (wink wink) but when it came to a little shit like Allen, big was terrifying. This was especially true if you were a tall guy with a red eye, a weird mask covering half of your face, and barely smiled. Maybe he could try smiling more. He couldn’t make himself smaller physically, but he could try smiling more. Try to soften his edges a bit more.
While Cross was working on softening his edges, Allen began to warm up to Mother next. Cross didn’t quite know what made Allen suddenly go from avoiding her, to suddenly sitting with her on her rocking chair as she told him stories of when she was younger. Mother could be a sweet old lady, but if you got her angry, she wasn’t afraid to hit you over the head with her cane. Then again, she had yet to actually yell out of anger at Allen. If anything, the brat probably felt safe around her because she managed to keep someone like Cross in check. Surely a woman like that was a nice person…or a nicer person than Cross was anyways.

It made Cross angry to see the brat sitting there, listening to Mother’s stories tentatively for some reason (a.k.a. he’s jealous that Allen likes everyone else but him). Allen also began to help Mother when she talked to the townspeople seeking advice. If she needed something from the garden to make an elixir, he’d run out and get it for her. If she needed something to be carried, the little boy would carry it for her. No questions asked (even if said thing to be carried was twice his size and he was clearly struggling with it).

“You’re not telling him all the awful shit I did in the past. Are you?” Cross growled at the old woman one night after the brat had finally fallen asleep.

“No. Why?” the old woman asked in confusion.

“Well the kid likes you two a lot better than me,” Cross pouted.

“Are you jealous Marian?” Mother asked with a smirk, before continuing on in a serious tone, “It’s not our fault he’s warming up to us faster than you. It doesn’t mean he hates you compared to us either. He’s just a scared little boy that’s trying to figure out his new environment and the people in it. Being scared of you isn’t the same as hating you. The boy still flinches if either of us move too quickly and runs off at every loud noise. Before he came here, there were probably a lot of men like you that approached him and hurt him. I would be gun shy in his position too. Maybe you should try playing with him. The only thing you’ve done with him so far is bribe him with food.”

Cross was not pleased at that. Play!? With the kid!? How!? Allen didn’t really act like a kid to begin with and Cross couldn’t even remember the last thing he did that would be considered ‘playing’. Hell, Cross couldn’t remember a time when his own father played with him when he was a snot nosed brat.

“Play with him!? Do I look like a kid to you? I don’t know how to play with a kid! He won’t even let me near him!”

“Well, you better learn and fast Marian. Remember, Allen will be coming home with you and you can’t stay here forever. You have a job to get back to. If you don’t create a bond with Allen it’s going to make life harder for both of you-“

“I get it! I get it! But how the fuck am I supposed to play with the stupid brat if he bolts if I so much as breath next to him?”

“Just follow him around! Do what he wants to do, whether it’s boring to you or not. We can do some convincing on our end,” Mother responded, not willing to let Cross get out of this one.

Cross growled, annoyed that Mother wouldn’t just let him ‘nope’ out of this situation. It was already so unnerving and weird to clean the brat up and feed him like a woman in his catatonic state. Now she wants him to follow the brat around and do what he wants to do? God this fucking kid was going to be the death of him.
Cross wished Mother had forgotten their conversation the night before, but of course she didn’t. 
Nope. In just an hour of Cross waking up, she walked over to Cross, a very uncomfortable and 
timid Allen trailing behind her.

“Allright boys, time to go outside and play. Chop chop! You’re burning day light,” Mother said, 
clapping her hands together.

“Excuse me?” Cross asked, not believing that Mother was actually going to force him to do this.

“You heard me. You two are going to be together today, whether you like it or not. You can either 
play or be bored out of your skulls, but you have to be together. You two will behave. That means 
no fighting and trust me I will know of it if it happens. That also means no running away and 
hiding from the other on purpose,” Mother explained sternly, looking over at Allen on the last part 
of her statement. The brat looked down at the ground.

“And if we don’t?” Cross asked in a smart-ass tone.

“If you want to test that option out, go right ahead, but I’m telling you right now that you will not 
like the results.” Mother said in a clipped tone. She meant business. Fuck, sorry I asked, Cross 
thought to himself as he slowly dragged himself outside, Allen trailed after him timidly. He was as 
thrilled as Cross was by this whole forced ‘bonding experience’.

The two of them stood awkwardly on the front porch for a long while. Each of them waiting for the 
other to do something. Cross knew how to entertain himself, but his means of entertaining himself 
were…not exactly kid-friendly for the most part. That or they were considered ‘boring’. Allen 
didn’t quite know what to do. He could keep himself busy, but he found that a little difficult since 
coming here. Barba and Mother allowed him to help out around the farm, but they were also 
becoming very insistent on him ‘going off and playing’. Allen wasn’t used to that at all. He was 
used to performing or taking care of Mana. He was used to working all day with zero time for 
playing. He didn’t know how to play or what kids his age did that would constitute as playing. He 
sure as hell didn’t know what to do to play alongside an adult.

Cross sighed, feeling annoyed that this was going nowhere, “Alright brat. Go nuts. I’ll follow your 
lead.”

Allen gave Cross a suffering look. This was definitely not something he was used to. An adult? 
Following his lead? He was in control? Him? The kid? Not the adult? This wasn’t how 
this was supposed to go! He wished Mother had given him some ideas before shoving him outside 
with this guy!

“What the hell is up with that look!? You’re the kid here! This is your domain! You’re supposed to 
be the genius here!” Cross said in frustration. Don’t tell me this brat doesn’t know how to be a brat. 
Well to be honest, Cross already saw some signs that this kid honestly did not know how to be his 
age. He just didn’t think it would be this bad.

“You seriously don’t have any ideas?” Cross asked a few moments later after staring at the kid 
who looked on the verge of an aneurysm trying to figure this shit out. Cross sighed, thinking back 
to the shit he did when he was Allen’s age. Or at least from what he could remember.

He didn’t do a whole lot as a snot nosed brat because he didn’t have too many friends except for 
Mana and Neah. Sure, he had Tiedoll and a couple of nerd friends, but he usually stayed away from 
them because he thought they would cramp his style. As far as Mana and Neah went, Cross could 
only play with them during recess and what they did was weird. They didn’t act like all the rest of
the kids. Neah liked to play with bugs and pull their legs from their bodies, while Mana threw little funerals for them, crying the whole time over his brother’s cruelty. They spent their time creating a secret language filled with weird slash markings and allowed Cross to be with them to avoid the embarrassment of being alone during recess. Cross didn’t think the brat would be too thrilled at playing with bugs.

As for what Cross did when he was alone, which was almost always. He read. He took care of his mother. He tried to stay out of his father’s way. He cleaned the house. He did easy fucking homework that left him bored and feeling like the teacher’s thought he was stupid. He played with cards…

Cards. Hey there was an idea! Surely the brat was familiar with magicians and their card tricks! He could teach the kid how to play poker! Plus, it would help to strengthened out that arm of his to!

“Alright kid, I have an idea. Stay here,” Cross smirked, feeling proud of himself over his idea. He walked back into the house to retrieve his deck of cards, ignoring the concerned look Mother gave him. Allen looked back towards where Cross left, also looking quite concerned as to what this man had up his sleeve. It wasn’t long before Cross returned, a mischievous gleam in his eye as he slid out the deck of cards from their tiny cardboard box. He was pleased to see the brat still standing where he left him.

The concerned look in Allen’s face melted away only to be replaced by curiosity. Oh, he recognized cards like those before. He saw the performers play with them before and fight with each other over them. He saw magicians use them for their tricks. He saw people win money from these card games.

“You recognize them, do ya? Do you know how to play poker?” Cross asked as he sat down next to Allen.

Allen shook his head no. He wasn’t allowed to touch any of the props or play the card game with the adults (not like he wanted to anyways since they were all jerks, but still).

“Well congratulations, you’re about to learn. Sit your ass down kid.”

“Alright, let’s go through the cards. You got fifty-two cards in all, four suits. There are 13 cards in each suit. The four suits are clubs, spades, diamonds, and hearts. No suit is ranked higher than the other, they are of equal value. Each suit has 13 cards of different ranks. Usually Aces are the highest in poker, though certain games will have them as the lowest ranking card. Aces are followed by the Kings, Queens and Jacks. Then you have number cards ranging from ten to two, highest to lowest. You also have these cards called the Jokers. Some games will use them and these guys act as wild cards. They can take on any suit and rank the card holder desires,” Cross explained as best as he could. He had no idea if the information he was spouting out was making any sense to the eight-year old. To be fair, Cross wasn’t used to explaining shit to someone younger than him to begin with. Well, considering he has now acquired a kid, he better learn how to do this shit and now was better than later.

Cross continued to explain the rules of the game, the hands and their ranks. Cross had never seen an eight-year-old look so intensely focused on something before in his life. He was surprised that the kid didn’t space off thirty seconds into him explaining things like little kids usually did with their tiny attention spans. Or at least in his experience.

“Alright kid let’s see if you’ve been paying attention,” Cross said as he shuffled the deck and dealt out the cards.

“A-Aren’t we suppose to w-wager something?” the brat stammered in a soft, squeaky voice, surprising Cross momentarily. It was rare to hear the boy talk and it always startled Cross because
sometimes he forgot what the kid sounded like. The only games Allen saw being played involved money or chips.

“Yeah, poker could be played with betting money and shit. If Mother sees me teaching you how to gamble, she’ll cane me to death though. She’ll probably throw a fit with me just teaching you how to play the game,” Cross said as he looked at his hand and then at Allen’s. He went through the round slowly, helping the kid figure out which hand he could do and which hand Cross could do with the cards each of them had. After that round, he did another. And another. And another. And another. Beating the different hands and ranks into the kid’s skull.

Then Cross had another sinister idea. Wouldn’t it be fun to teach Allen how to cheat?

“Alright, now I’m gonna teach you how I play cards,” Cross smirked mischievously.

Allen gave him a concerned look. What did he mean by that exactly…?

“I’m gonna teach you how to cheat.”

“B-But cheating is wrong,” Allen squeaked.

“Only if the other person knows that you are cheating. It’s a lot more fun playing that way to. Plus, where I’m from, cheating was more of a necessity than just for fun. It’s one of the quickest ways to make money. I survived because of cheating. It was always a thrill to cheat rich assholes of their money. You know, the type who flaunt it in poor people’s faces and shit. Not like they needed all that money anyways. Consider this to be me teaching you a handy survival skill to have instead of me teaching you something bad,” Cross explained.

A necessity for survival? He could imagine Mana rolling in his grave at the idea of Allen learning how to cheat people out of their money (should it ever come to it). Still…this could be very useful in the future if Allen needed money for whatever reason. As much as he hated to disappoint Mana, he was also very aware of his disadvantage in this world. As a kid, he couldn’t work for money. He worked at the circus, but that didn’t guarantee him a warm place to sleep or three meals a day, he learned that the hard way. He needed to learn this man’s methods.

“Okay…” Allen responded, his tone shifting from innocent to something a whole lot darker. Cross felt that shift in the atmosphere and resisted the urge to grin. Mana’s mask had slipped a little bit it seems. Oh, this was going to be fun!

“Alright then,” Cross smirked as he began to show Allen how to hide cards up his sleeve and how to mark specific cards in a subtle way to let you know which cards you wanted to try and aim for. The brat was pretty clumsy at it the first couple of times he tried to hide the cards in his sleeves, but soon he was hiding cards like it was no one’s business. Shit, I might have some competition soon, Cross thought to himself.

“Excuse me!? Cross this wasn’t what I meant by playing with the kid! You’re teaching him poker aren’t you!” came Mother’s yell, causing both of them to jump in fear. Allen’s hands flew up to cover his ears in fear.

“Poker!? We’re not playing poker! What makes you think we are? We’re just two dudes playing with cards. Right kid?” Cross said, trying to save his ass. Damn it. He didn’t expect her to figure it out so quickly!

“Oh please! What else would you teach him!? Magic tricks!? Bull shit Marian. Put those cards away!” Mother yelled, raising her cane up, threatening to hit Cross upside the head with it.
“But we were bonding!”

“You can bond in a different way! Throw a ball! Throw Tim around! Take a hike! Roll around in the dirt! Just don’t teach the kid bad habits!” the old woman yelled. Tim cowered at the idea of being tossed around and Cross swore he saw the golem sweat drop.

“Well you heard the kill joy. Fun is over. You can give me my cards back willingly or I can shake you down. You choose,” Cross threatened. Allen pouted but shook the cards out of his sleeve and handed them back to the man.

“You taught him to hide them too? Unbelievable Marian,” Mother huffed in annoyance.

“What!? It’s a perfectly good and useful skill to have! Jesus woman don’t you have a nap to get to or a game of bingo-?” Cross fired back, barely missing Mother’s cane as she attempted to smack him on the head, “Jesus fuck woman!”

“I swear if you teach this kid to be a carbon copy of you Marian I will make your life miserable!”

“Well fuck I thought my life was already miserable-“ Cross tried to say before being cut off as he dodged another one of the old bat’s attacks, “Alright alright! We’ll find something more child appropriate to do! God!”

Allen let out what sounded like a small cough, but after looking how hard the child’s shoulders were shaking, Cross found out this brat was laughing at him.

“Oh, you think this is funny brat?” Cross asked, crossing his arms. Allen immediately stopped laughing and looked up at the man timidly.

“Cross, behave!” Mother barked.

“I wasn’t going to do anything! I’m just playing! Damn loosen up a bit!”

~

So, with cards out of the question, the two of them had to go find another thing to do together. The brat wasn’t too keen about going off on a hike alone with Cross, so they ended up throwing a ball back and forth for a little bit. Then Allen accidentally threw it straight at Cross’s groin (but to be fair Cross ended up throwing it at the brat’s head once before) which ended their game quickly. Thank god the brat didn’t throw it that hard or Cross would’ve had a hard time keeping his temper in check (which he already had a hard time with whether or not said person meant to piss him off).

Allen seemed to have loosened up quite a bit around Cross in the meantime…although part of the reason could’ve been the fact Cross didn’t kill him after throwing a ball at his crotch. Cross was taking a break, watching the little brat run around with Tim. Cross watched Allen grab one of Mother’s chickens, petting it absentmindedly.

“Did you catch dinner brat?” Cross called out, watching the child spin around on his heel to shoot a glare at Cross. Cross held up his hands in surrender, “Easy. It’s a joke. You pick out any names for them?”

Allen nodded.

“What’s that one’s name?”

“Burrito. She’s the nicest one,” Allen said as he walked over, depositing said chicken on Cross’s lap.
“You named it Burrito,” Cross deadpanned, somehow not surprised, “Hey I don’t want it brat! It’ll poop on me!”

“No, she doesn’t do that. It’s a she not an it,” Allen stated, satisfied that Burrito the chicken settled herself down onto Cross’s lap.

“Okay brat, what’s that one’s name over there?” Cross asked, nodding towards another hen walking nearby.

“Noodle.”

“Are they all food names?”

“No. That one over there Henrietta.”

“Do you have a name for the rooster?”

“No, he doesn’t deserve one because he’s mean,” Allen said with a pout.

“He aint that tough.” Cross growled, watching the rooster strut it’s way out of the chicken coop, as if summoned by them talking about him.

“How do you tell the difference between all the hens?” Cross asked, watching as Allen looked up and saw the rooster. The child timidly made his way behind Cross, trying to keep something between him and the rooster.

“You should name the rooster Mother Clucker or Chicken Shit,” Cross suggested, watching the rooster come closer to him. He heard Allen whimper behind him. Really? It’s just a fucking chicken! Well okay, it’s was a different story since he was a giant compared to this tiny ass rooster thinking he owns the damn place.

“I know you’re not thinking of coming near me. It will be the last thing you ever do little clucker,” Cross growled, watching as the rooster came nearer to him. Must be because he had one of their ladies in his lap or he was protecting a certain little brat. The rooster crowed threateningly at Cross and pawed the ground with its feet.

“You better watch it, or I’ll kick your feathery butt across the farm I swear to god man! You may think you’re hot shit but I’m tellin’ ya you’re challenging the wrong fucking cowboy,” Cross snarled. The rooster crowed again, puffing up its feathers before lurching itself at Cross. Cross unleashed a mighty roar, scaring the feathered fiend.

Allen yelped, putting his hands over his ears as he watched Cross stand up and proceed to make himself big and scary to scare the rooster. Least to say that rooster took off sprinting back to the chicken coop along with all the other chickens and the birds that were in the trees within the surrounding area. A couple of Mother’s goats actually flopped over and fainted because of Cross’s yelling.

“That’s what I thought, asshole,” Cross stated, smirking victoriously before he turned around to look at Allen cowering on the ground. For a moment he was afraid the brat pissed himself. Timcanpy decided it was hilarious to watch the goats faint and proceeded to mimic Cross by puffing himself up and unleashing a huge roar (though it sounded sort of like a scream to Cross) to make the goats fall back over.

Allen, who jolted in fear momentarily, unleashed a childish squeal (well at least that’s what Cross thought that was, it sounded more like a high pitched, harsh squeak) and began hopping up and down excitedly, thrilled by this new discovery. Especially since he wasn’t the object of Tim’s
screaming onslaught. Cross knew a long time ago Timcanpy was capable of growling, eating things, biting, and well...whatever the hell this was. Cross never saw the brat look so excited since coming here and he had to admit it was adorable to see the brat actually act like an excited little kid. Timcanpy, who had also never seen Allen act so animated before, did it again. Allen’s body instinctively tensed up again, but after realizing that Tim wasn’t being threatening to him, began to laugh hysterically.

Sure, it was downright scary to see Cross scare the rooster away, but Allen was also thrilled to see that feathery jerk sprint away in fear. It was also scary to hear the hellish screaming/roaring noises that Timcanpy was producing, but he also found it funny to see him scare the goats into fainting. Allen also didn’t know what Tim was even capable of yet, so he found this discovery to be both scary and entertaining. As long as Tim wasn’t aiming his fury at him, Allen was tickled. It was probably something stupid to laugh over, but he couldn’t help it. It was just super funny to him for some reason. Maybe it was because it’s been awhile since he laughed like this.

“What’s with all the damn ruckus out there! Marian!?” Mother hollered from the front porch.

“Why are you assuming this is my fault!?” Cross yelled back. He couldn’t help but smirk a little bit as Allen only continued to laugh harder at the situation. Timcanpy flew back towards Allen, growling playfully. Allen squealed (his version of a playful little scream since his voice was kind of shoddy from disuse) and ran off, beginning a game of chase with the golem.

“Because you were the first one that hollered!” Mother shouted back, slowly coming to the realization that Cross hadn’t been yelling at Allen like she originally thought. Instead the kid was laughing his head off and running around with Tim.

“Well it’s not my fault your rooster wanted to throw down! He’s lucky I didn’t decide to turn him into fried chicken!”

Mother tsked and shook her head, watching as Tim decided that two people were not enough to play their game of chase and began to piss around with Cross to get him to play with them.

“What do you want you little shit? Oi! Knock it off! You’re crazy if you think I’m going to chase after you,” Cross growled as Tim grabbed at Cross’s hair and snapped his jaws near his face, grinning mischievously. Cross huffed in annoyance, letting Timcanpy fuck around with him for a few more moments before he snapped out and grabbed his tail. In an instant, Timcanpy went limp and played dead, his body drooping and swinging below.

“Really you drama queen?” Cross scoffed but saw Allen out of the corner of his eye, pouting and crossing his arms. Cross smirked and held the captured Timcanpy out towards the brat, tauntingly, “What? You want your friend back brat? Come and get him.”

Allen took a step forward but seemed a little shy about approaching Cross. Sure, he went behind Cross to use him as a human shield from the rooster, but it didn’t mean he was totally comfortable being near Cross. He knew Tim wouldn’t hurt him unless he deserved it. Tim was pretty careful when rough housing with Allen, but Allen wasn’t sure how Cross would be. He didn’t know his boundaries.

“Come over here and rescue him brat. Show me what you got,” Cross continued to taunt, interested in seeing if the brat would actually come after him to rescue Tim. Tim began to help out by producing wounded, animalistic (or as close to animalistic that a golem could manage) noises to get the child to react faster. Allen approached Cross cautiously, defensively. Cross smirked and swung Timcanpy a little faster in his grasp, taking a couple steps back as Allen got closer.
Allen huffed in annoyance when Cross began putting more distance between them.

“Oooo such an angry look. I’m so scared. Come on pipsqueak. Come at me,” Cross chuckled as Allen moved a bit quicker, trying to grab Timcanpy, even though it was futile,

“Come on! Jump higher brat! Is that the best you got!?"

Tim, being bored by simply hanging, decided to snap out of his playing dead and proceeded to try and curl up to snap at Cross’s hand.

“Oi! Don’t bite me you little shit! I brought you in this world and I can take you out!” Cross yelled, cursing when Tim had managed to bite him, and Cross let go of him with a curse. Tim flew off, grinning tauntingly to Cross, egging him to come chase him.

“Alright you two. You wanna play that way, we’ll play that way,” Cross growled, his eye glinting with mischief. Allen immediately took off sprinting with a squeal, Timcanpy hot on his heels. Cross took off after the two of them, deciding he would go after Allen rather than Tim (who was already cheating by flying high in the sky). The brat was doing pretty good staying ahead of Cross. For being such a pipsqueak, the kid sure ran fast, but he wasn’t so good in the endurance department. It wasn’t long until the brat began to lose energy and began to rely on dirty tricks to slow Cross down. He threw things back at Cross to slow him down and tried to zig zag his way around the farm to try and lose Cross. Too bad Cross was already familiar with chasing down rowdy juveniles. This brat didn’t stand a chance.

Finally, he had him cornered behind the house. The brat apparently lost steam and tried to sneak into the house through one of the windows but was too slow. Allen turned around, looking up timidly at Cross.

“Looks like I got you now brat. I gotta hand it to you, you’re a fast little shit,” Cross said. Instead of touching Allen though (like one would in tag), he simply lowered himself to sit in front of the child. Based on the way Allen was looking at him, something told him he was not going to like it if he touched him, which was fine. The brat was dirty anyways and while Cross was also dirty, he didn’t want to get himself dirtier by touching the kid.

Cross looked up, noticing the sun was beginning to go down, “Shit I think it’s time to make some dinner. Go find Tim.”

Allen blinked and nodded, before charging off to do just that.

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One luxury Allen never had was T.V. When he discovered Mother’s T.V. set, it became a source of entertainment to watch the kid react to it. Allen had seen a T.V. before outside of some stores and sometimes they’d watch the weather on the ones the motels provided, but Allen never really sat and watched something of entertaining value on the television. Usually they were so tired out that they would only watch the news or weather before falling asleep. Out of curiosity Cross changed the channel to animal planet. Kids loved animals, right? It was raining outside, and he was sure the brat was bored out of his mind. He had no idea where the brat went, he probably hid off into some tiny, dust bunny filled corner of Mother’s house. Perhaps something more colorful and interesting would lure the child over. Mother looked up in question at the random change but decided to sit back and watch what would happen.

It took about an hour. Through increments of that hour Allen slowly made his way into the living room his eyes trained on the T.V. that was currently showing an educational film about lions. Cross watched Allen out of the corner of his eye who first peered over the wall of the next room to
watch the show. Cross didn’t know if it was voluntary or involuntary, but the kid had his head tilted in interest. It was adorable.

Then, after a few minutes passed he crept a few feet out from behind the wall. His eyes never leaving the T.V. He continued creeping a few feet forward periodically until the show switched to one of birds. That’s where it got really interesting because whenever a bird on the T.V. tilted its head, Allen’s would mimic it, blinking curiously. Cross smirked, continuing to watch him. Mother smiled endearingly, watching the child interact with the television set.

Allen still cowered when the birds made a loud noise on the T.V., his shoulders would hunch up and he’d back away a little bit, but he didn’t run off. He seemed pretty engrossed in it. His eyes wide and bright like he’d never seen anything like T.V. before. Which he hasn’t exactly, but Cross didn’t know that. Allen just thought that television was adult stuff. All it had on there was the news, scary movies, and boring documentaries. Or at least that’s all the adults seemed to watch in this household.

After about ten minutes Allen had apparently forgotten that Mother and Cross were in the room and began to try and copy the bird noises on the television. A soft smile would light up on his face when he figured out how to do the sound. He was surprisingly quick at learning them. Of course, he was Mana’s kid. He was sure to be full of surprises.

“Well my goodness you’re like a little bird,” Mother commented when the show was over, and it was moving onto something to do with ocean animals. Allen jerked at the sound of her voice, his face flushing a dark red at being caught being weird.

“Should nickname you Birdie. Did Mana teach you that?” Cross commented. Allen was a little relieved the man didn’t seem to disapprove at his weird bird mimicking. Sure, the nickname was a little girly, but the kid was small, and could make bird noises (later on, when he learned that Allen could sing, he would find that this nickname fit him even more.).

Allen shrugged. It was a little bit of both. When Allen was still ‘Red’ he would mimic bird noises he heard outside to entertain himself. He was decent at it, but Mana later taught him more bird noises and other sound effects he could make with his mouth.

“What else can you do?” Cross asked, his eyes sparkling with interest and… amusement (that’s what it looked like to Allen anyways)? Allen felt a little unease at the extra attention, but nonetheless showed off some other sound effects Mana taught him like the sound of pouring water, a water drop, or crickets (a crowd favorite that always got them to laugh during their performances). He continued with other sound effects they used when they were miming doing something like the noise of wiping down a window (squeegee), the sound of bones cracking, a creaky door, R2D2 noises, and phone notification noises (a personal favorite of Allen’s when they were in a public place. He loved watching people look at their phones, thinking they had gotten a text when they haven’t). Once the commercials were over however, Allen’s attention returned to the T.V. like he didn’t just make a bunch of sound effects that were potentially going to be used to annoy Cross in the future.

“I think we’re still gonna call you Birdie,” Cross commented, leaving the kid alone when he saw his attention return to the television. He was impressed by the kid’s skill though. Mana taught him well in the short amount of time he had him before he tragically passed. It wasn’t a lot of progress, but it was progress. The kid still sat far away from them and barely talked for the most part (at least to Cross) depending on the day. He was capable of laughing and acting like a child, but he was also still jumpy. However, Cross considered making noises to mean that the kid was starting to get quite comfortable with his new situation.
Cross’s eyes snapped open to the sound of screaming. A sound he was way too familiar with and have been familiar with since bringing the brat under his care. While it wasn’t exactly like those agonized, blood curdling screams that went on and on anymore, they were still haunting. It sucked hearing a child scream like that. It sucked to see the brat have bags under his eyes because he couldn’t sleep well. It sucked hearing the brat cry himself to sleep at night. It sucked that the brat woke up soaked in urine (Cross was lucky if the damn pull ups did what they were supposed to do, but he hadn’t managed to find the right stuff for Allen). But there wasn’t a whole lot he could do.

Allen refused everyone from touching him other than Timcanpy. Even after getting a bit closer to Barba and Mother, he still refused being touched. They tried sitting in the same room as Allen to get him to sleep. When he woke up screaming, Barba and Cross tried to sit in the same room as Allen to get him to fall back to sleep which was a hit or a miss. Sometimes he’d cry for a few minutes and finally fall asleep, other times he’d cry off and on for hours with little sleep. Barba found it hard to sit up that long with Allen, so that job ended up going solely to Cross. Sometimes Allen would let them help him get out of urine-soaked clothes (that would be the only time the brat would ever let anyone touch him), other times he would absolutely refuse being touched and sleep in soiled clothing, no matter how much of a fight Cross put up.

Cross got up with a groan and made his way over to the room the brat was sleeping. How many nights in a row was this? Cross couldn’t remember. Way too many, that’s for sure. There had to be another way. He opened the door with a soft creak, seeing the small, bawling figure in bed jump. “You’re alright brat. It’s just me,” Cross sighed tiredly as he turned on the lamp to assess the damage. No soaked bed sheets but the brat smelled like piss, “Alright kiddo. Let’s get up and get your ass changed, you smell like piss. Come on, you don’t want to sit in a soaked pull up all night, that’ll give you a rash.”

Allen slowly pulled himself out of bed, crying shamefully as the two of them walked to the bathroom. As Cross grabbed a fresh pull up for Allen he asked, “What are we going to do about this kid? You’ve been waking up like this for most of the week. You need to sleep. This whole waking up screaming thing is a bummer…for both of us. I don’t think you like it and I don’t like hearing you scream at night.”

Allen sniffled pathetically, his nose beginning to run. Ugh gross. The brat looked absolutely exhausted. Cross sighed and grabbed some toilet paper before handing it to Allen, “Blow your nose before it starts forming a damn river.”

Cross quickly helped Allen change before leading him back to the bedroom, the waterworks not stopping even a little bit as the kid crawled back into bed. They seemed to increase a little bit actually, probably at the idea of going back to bed was Cross’s guess.

“Oh kid. I’m not familiar with this shit so you’re going to have to help me out. I don’t know how or what would be comforting to you to get back to sleep. I don’t know what to do to get you to fall asleep and stay asleep. Was there anything that Mana did for you? Or is there anything that I can do for you that might help you? Do you want me to make you something? Do you want me to lay down with you? We don’t have to be touching or any of that shit,” Cross sighed. He was at the end of his rope here.

Allen sniffled, pausing momentarily to nod. He was sucking his thumb. Cross would’ve been annoyed at the thumb sucking and disgusted, but after being around Allen for a while he got used to it. He still wasn’t pleased that a kid his age was still sucking his thumb, but it was a comfort thing and he didn’t want to take that away from the brat. At least not right now when he was in
such a vulnerable state.

“What? You want me to lay down with ya?” Cross asked, not sure which option Allen was nodding to.

Allen nodded again with a little sniffle.

“Alright brat, scoot over. You better not piss on me in your sleep, “Cross growled as Allen scooted over so the man could fit on the bed as well. Allen blinked, as if surprised that Cross actually did this for him. It was kind of weird having another person to sleep next to since Mana died.

“Well? Lay your ass down.”

Allen did as he was told and timidly curled up in bed, staring up at Cross with huge, tired eyes.

“What are you staring at? Close your eyes and get some sleep,” Cross yawned, watching as Allen softly gasped and shut his eyes tightly. Okay. That was a little cute. It wasn’t long before the brat was softly snoring away beside Cross. Damn, that must’ve been the fastest he had ever fallen asleep before in a long time. If he would’ve known how well this would work, he would’ve done it a long time ago.

During the next night as Cross made sure the brat was in bed, he was surprised to find Allen waiting for him expectantly. That thumb of his still in his mouth.

“What do you want? Go to bed.” Cross stated. He watched Allen stare down at his bed, looking a little disappointed.

Cross sighed. Oh…he had a feeling what the brat wanted.

“You want me to lay down with you again tonight?” Cross asked, watching the brat lighten back up instantly. He rolled his eyes, “Alright, give me a minute and I’ll be in.”

In a few minutes Cross returned with a book (because he wasn’t ready to sleep yet, but he didn’t mind laying down next to the brat). Allen looked at the book in curiosity. He had no idea what the title said but it sure didn’t look like a child’s book, although it had a picture of a child on the front of it. As Cross settled beside him, he looked over at Allen, his eyebrow raised.

“What? Do you want me to read you to sleep?” Cross asked, looking back at the book in his hands. It definitely wasn’t a kid’s book. It was actually a book about traumatized kids and methods that adults could use to help said traumatized kids, but he didn’t see anything about it that would make it something bad to read to the kid. If anything, it’ll probably bore the kid to sleep.

Allen blinked and looked at him before looking back down at the book. Well, I guess that was a yes.

“Alright, lay down. Don’t complain to me if you don’t understand a damn word though. It’s not kid’s book like Where the Wild Things Are or some shit,” Cross growled, waiting until the brat was settled in before he began to read out loud. Instantly, Allen didn’t know a single damn word Cross was saying, but it still felt nice to be read to. Sure, it wasn’t like when Mana read out loud to him...although that was very seldom. Mana preferred to make up his own stories (which still hard to follow though). All his stories had a boy named Neah in it and they jumped around a lot. They were pretty nonsensical at best, but Allen still loved listening to Mana tell him bedtime stories.
though.

Allen must’ve passed out in the span of just a few minutes since Cross began reading, which was fine by him. Less whining and less time he had to spend reading out loud. That was the first time in a long time that Allen slept throughout the night with zero problems.

It was also the first time Cross woke with a foot in his face and a brat cuddling his leg. How in the fuck did he manage to get down there?

~The brat playing Hide and Seek…well…more like go hide and scare people (also a snippet)

As time moved on and Allen slowly became more comfortable around the three adults, he invented a little game that confused the shit out of Cross but was also freaking adorable. The brat was already great at hiding around the house and he used that to his advantage in the game. The brat would go hide somewhere in the house and if someone walked by, he’d jump out and scare them. The kicker was, there were times where you could see a puff of white hair, or you’d see Tim flapping around a certain area, giving Allen’s hiding spot away. That didn’t stop Mother or Barba from pretending to be scared by him just so she could see the brat laugh at his own cleverness.

Cross didn’t get the memo the first time the brat popped out and roared (squeaked) at him. Cross proceeded to scare the brat right back, which was not the right thing to do seeing how quickly Allen scrambled away from him in fear. Plus, Mother gave him a scathing glare.

So, almost a week went by before Allen decided to do it again to Cross. Even though Cross knew where he was (due to Tim acting like a big, golden beacon, announcing where Allen was at), he found himself pretending to actually be scared by the brat. It was endearing to see how happy it made Allen to scare the big, bad Cross and Cross ended up joining in this little game. So, whenever the little brat jumped out in front of him with ferocious little squeak he called a roar, Cross either jumped or complained that Allen nearly gave him a heart attack.
Happy Birthday Cross

Chapter Summary

You can figure it out from the title huh?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Happy Birthday Cross

(Allen: 9)

Cross opened his eye, instantly squeezing it shut when blinding, white light, flooded through, threatening to burn out his retina. Okay, that might’ve been a bit exaggerated. Cross groaned, beginning to shift in bed, but stopped when he felt a weight on his arm. He opened his eye again, the blinding white light no longer burning as he looked over at his arm, seeing a certain, white-haired, bedhead laying on it, snoring softly away. Cross smirked and reached over to ruffle up the fluffy mess, earning a hoarse little whine from the child sleeping beside him.

“Time to wake up little bird. The sun is up and if you wait any longer there won’t be any worms left for you,” Cross cooed, rubbing Allen’s back. The child whined, rubbing his face against Cross’s arm to try to shield his eyes from the sun. “Oh no. No no no. You gotta get up. I know you didn’t sleep well last night, but if you sleep in too long today you won’t sleep tonight. Come on. Get a little fire under your ass, let’s move.”

Allen whined again. Refusing to move. Cross rolled his eyes and sat up. Allen began to whimper; threatening water works as his pillow moved on him.

“Oh stop, you’re okay,” Cross growled, grabbing and picking up the exhausted Allen as he made his way to the kitchen to make some coffee. It was just another normal day in the neighborhood. Well…okay not exactly. It was Cross’s birthday, but he always treated it like any normal day because it was. At least to him.

He never exactly celebrated his birthday. Sure, when his mother was still alive and if she was lucid enough to remember, she’d get him a cupcake that was plastered in artificial frosting (not the buttercream stuff, the nasty artificial shit) that was so sickeningly sweet it would make him gag. He’d choke it down though to make her happy. She would get him a toy car or some cheap ass little toy that was for kids a whole lot younger than him, but he’d always act so surprised and excited. He knew money was tight and even though it may not be something he’d play with it still meant the world to him that someone remembered his birthday. There was one birthday about a year before his mom died that was one of the best ones he ever had. She got him his guitar with the money she got from selling drugs. When she passed away Cross spent his birthdays getting absolutely wasted.

Usually by now he would be pouring himself a glass of wine to get a head start of becoming absolutely shit faced. Now that he had a certain bratty, child currently dozing on his shoulder instead of waking up like he was supposed to, he had better plans. He set the child on the counter, keeping a hand on him as he went about making coffee so he wouldn’t fall off. Last thing he needed was the kid to bust his head open because he couldn’t wake up.
“Oi, are you ever going to wake up? Come on, lemme see those peepers. What do you want for breakfast?” Cross asked, ruffling up Allen’s hair and poking his cheeks. Allen whined and batted at Cross’s hands, refusing to open his eyes. Cross rolled his eyes, continuing to try and wake up the child by tickling his feet or rubbing his back vigorously, earning a bunch of crabby whines. No dice. Looks like the brat was going to need to sleep for a little longer.

“Alright, come here. Go back to sleep for a little bit. Only for a little bit though,” Cross said, grabbing Allen and propping him on his hip. It wasn’t the first time that he had to let the brat get a few more zzz’s in before being able to function and it was probably not going to be the last. Cross reached up to grab a mug before pouring his new drug of choice inside it, watching at the dark brownish-black liquid slosh around against the sides before settling. He took a sip of the warm, bitter elixir before pressing it up against Allen’s back. He chuckled at the little shiver Allen gave before sighing happily at the warm feeling.

Cross held Allen for a little while, making sure he fell back to sleep before he walked over to the couch and laid him down. Once he made sure Allen was passed out, he proceeded to prepare breakfast and began to go through the onslaught of birthday wishes from Anita, Tiedoll and everyone else who decided to put up with his ass. After a half an hour Cross went back to try and see if Allen would wake up and grabbed a piece of toast in case he needed to bribe him with food.

“Oh! Happy Birthday by the way! How old are you now? A million trillion years old?” Allen asked all sweet and innocent.

“Sometimes you make me feel like I’m a million trillion years old. By the way it’s rude to ask

“Alright, are you ready to wake up now?” Cross asked, lightly pinching Allen’s ear. Allen whined, but lifted up his head and squinted over at Cross. Clearly, he was not happy with being woken up again. Cross offered the piece of toast he had as a peace offering. After a few moments of scrutinizing the toast from afar, Allen accepted his peace offering. Cross sat back, letting Allen eat the toast and wake up. Needing food in his stomach in the morning was Allen’s version of other people needing that first cup of coffee in the morning before you talked to them.

Once Allen finished his toast, he looked a little less crabby. That was a good start.

“Good morning, crabby pants,” Cross greeted.

“Good morning, person that gives me food,” Allen mumbled with a soft smile.

“Well I do more than just give you food,” Cross scoffed.

“Yeah, but that’s one of the most important ones,” Allen responded back with a happy little smile.

“Well if all I do is give you food, I guess I should ask if you want eggs and bacon,” Cross responded.

“I didn’t say that was all you did, but yes I want some eggs and bacon,” Allen said.

“Excuse me…but I want some eggs and bacon…?” Cross said, trailing off expectantly.

“Please?”

“I was going more along the lines of adult overlord or something like it, but please works to.”

Allen rolled his eyes before following Cross obediently to the kitchen with the promise of food.

“Oh! Happy Birthday by the way! How old are you now? A million trillion years old?” Allen asked all sweet and innocent.

“Sometimes you make me feel like I’m a million trillion years old. By the way it’s rude to ask
someone how old they are.”

“Yeah, but you’re not a someone. You are my emotional support adult that gives me food and makes me feel better when it storms outside or if I’m sick.”

“I’m confused. Are you insulting me or complimenting me?”

“Both. I only learn from the best,” Allen squeaked out, batting his eyelashes sweetly.

“Eat your food little imp,” Cross said with an eye roll as he passed down a plate of food to Allen.

“Thank you! I love you!” Allen chirped, his sarcasm slipping as he skipped off to the table to eat, leaving Cross in his shock. He still could never get used to that shit. Being told I love you from some bratty kid, even if it’s sarcastic.

“Mom says I can help make your birthday cake!”

“I don’t need no damn birthday cake. Swallow your food before you talk, I don’t want to see what’s in your mouth. Also, I don’t want to do the Heimlich Maneuver on you.”

“You do to need a birthday cake! And it’s CPR!” Allen said, brattily opening his mouth to show the chewed-up food inside of it at Cross.

“No, CPR is for drowning or to restart heart and breathing cessation. The Heimlich is to dislodge whatever is blocking one’s airway. I hope to God that I never stop breathing and you’re the only one in the house. Last thing I need is someone doing the Heimlich maneuver on my dying ass when I am in need of CPR instead.”

“Well, who cares about that! We’ll worry about that when you’re old and gray and in adult diapers and you can’t remember your name! You still need a cake though! How else are you gonna be a year older!?”

“Kid, I’m immortal. I’m not going to die. I’m not going to turn old and gray. If I ever do, I’m forcing you to change my ass for all the shit you put me through as a little brat. Besides the only reason you want a cake is so you can eat cake. I know you,” Cross shot back before shoving a forkful of food in his mouth.

“Nah, I’m gonna be rich and famous! I’ll pay someone else to do it! And so, what I want to eat cake!? Everyone loves cake!”

“Well…you’re going to be famous alright. Famous for being a pain in the ass…”

“I only learn from the best,” Allen sing-songed.

~

“Hello! I have arrived! You no longer have to act like total savages, I am here to cook a lovely meal for my boys!” Anita exclaimed as she opened the front door, her arms full of paper bags.

“The only savage is this lil runt,” Cross commented, looking back from his spot on his recliner. The brat launched himself from his lap, nearly face planting into the floor as he ran over to greet Anita.

“Hi mom! Dad says he doesn’t want a birthday cake, but I said he has to have one because that’s the rules! He won’t believe me though! We’re still gonna make it, though right? Right? We have to
have cake on a birthday because it’s a birthday and if we don’t have cake then we’re just awful, savages and we don’t deserve to be alive!” Allen ranted hyperactively as he swarmed around Anita. He instantly insisted on carrying something, to which Anita gave him the smallest bag (even though he insisted he could carry more, which Cross and Anita knew he couldn’t).

“Don’t worry, we will be making a cake. Whether he wants one or not,” Anita said with an endearing smile as Allen went off to take his bag of groceries to the kitchen.

“I don’t need a cake-” Cross started in protest.

“I don’t care. I am making you one and it doesn’t matter how much you whine or throw a fit. You will be having a birthday cake and you will like; even if there is a butt load of sprinkles on it because our crotch goblin that isn’t really our crotch goblin, but we love him nonetheless doesn’t know how to control himself. Also, did you give him sugar?”

“No, I think that’s just the sleep deprivation talking or the fact he likes food, especially cake. I’m serious though I don’t need one-“

“You said you’ve never had a birthday cake before, right?”

“I had a birthday cake before…”

“But not on your birthday made for you. Right?”

“No…” Cross sighed, feeling himself begin to lose the battle.

“Exactly, so that ends now. You’ve gone 36 years without it and that it way too long!”

“You’re 36!?” Allen exclaimed as he ran back into the room. He grabbed Cross’s face, his eyes narrowed as he scrutinized the man, “Nah! Can’t be! You have to be at least as old as dirt. Your bones pop like it!”

“Watch it brat or I’ll tie ya up in the basement by your ankles,” Cross growled teasingly as he pinched Allen’s nose.

“Then I’ll just spit in the cake batter!”

“Well jee, you already cough, sneeze, and rub your snotty nose on me! Why should I draw the line at spit!?”

“You’re right…maybe I should put a cockroach in it,” Allen giggled.

“Good source of protein,” Cross shrugged.

“We’re not putting any weird things in the cake! Now come here my little helper we got a lot to do and little time!” Anita said, clapping her hands before pointing at Cross, “And you. You will stay here and not move a single muscle. Got it? Good.”

“Sweet. I’m an expert at being lazy.”

“Yay! This cake is gonna be so good!” Allen yelled as he dashed into the kitchen.

“You better behave Cross or no birthday sex,” Anita smiled slyly as she leaned down to kiss Cross before making her way to the kitchen.
Least to say Cross behaved…mostly. There was a time that he tried to get into the kitchen to get a cup of coffee (he was rather addicted to it since giving up alcohol) but Allen wouldn’t have it.

“No, you can’t come in here!” Allen yelled as he pushed against Cross’s lower back with all his might. Cross wasn’t going anywhere though.

“What do you mean? This is my kitchen! I’m just getting coffee!”

“You don’t need coffee! You can wait like two hours! Oh my god moooovee your big, stinky butt!” Allen complained.

“Excuse me? It’s not my fault you’re like the size of a freaking chihuahua.”

“I aint a chihuahua!”

“You squeak like one to,” Cross commented.

“Oh my god just get out! I’ll get you coffee just go away!”

“What if you forget? You know I need like five of those to deal with your nonsense, right?”

“I won’t forget!”

“But what if you do!”

“Gooooo!!!!”

“Alright, jeez fine. Fuck. Sorry,” Cross said with an eye roll as he was shooed out of his kitchen by his brat.

Finally, after about three hours Cross was allowed to walk wherever he wanted in the house without Allen or Anita getting pissed at him (mostly the kitchen). Anita was finished preparing dinner which consisted of steaks and potatoes, which for Cross was an excellent meal and not just because steak was expensive. As a kid his diet consisted of the weird ass stews and soups his father made, toast, bland cereal and powdered milk, hamburger, cornbread, really anything that was cheap, and you could buy in bulk. There were no snack foods back in Cross’s days. There were no Debbie snack cakes or any of the junk food kids today eat. You ate whatever the hell was made, and you didn’t throw a fit. If you decided not to eat your cereal, you ate it for supper when all the cereal pieces were soggy and gross. You didn’t have a choice. You either ate that or starved. Steak, potato chips, soda, candy, wine, were all luxury items for Cross. He still looked at the world in that way in a sense.

After dinner, Allen disappeared, which was fine with Cross because that gave him some alone time with Anita. As much as he would’ve love to take her on the couch, there was a kid present and said kid was not in bed so sexy times would have to wait until later. Also, since there was a kid in the house and the kid was prone to nightmares, Cross had set up a schedule of sorts (due to Allen walking in one time in the middle of intercourse because of a nightmare) and changed some of his usual things that he did after said ‘adult time’. First of all, after any and all intercourse Cross had to make sure he had some sort of clothes on his body. Second of all, after any and all intercourse, sheets had to be changed (just in case the brat had a nightmare). Third of all, any and all intercourse had to be done in a certain timeframe (so the brat knows that he can’t just disturb Cross whenever he wanted) and something had to be put on the door signaling that ‘this isn’t a good time to come in right now’. It was a pain in the ass, but it was something you did because…well you have kids. You do a lot of weird shit when you have kids and you go through a lot of pains to make them comfortable while also being able to do the shit you enjoy.
So, Cross settled to making out with Anita (which was already plenty gross for Allen) until the brat returned. After giving Cross his usual ‘ewww you guys are kissing gross’ look, he looked at Cross expectantly.

“Uhhh…can I help you?”

Allen gave him a ‘are you seriously that dumb?’ look before saying, “Close your eyes and open your hand”

“Don’t you mean eye-?”

“Oh my god just close your seeing holes!”

“Fine, but for a nine-year-old you sure act like a bratty teenager. You sure you’re not developing early or some shit? I swear to God if it’s another loose tooth I am disowning your ass.”

“You know for someone who is as old as dirt you sure talk more than dirt does,” Allen responded snidely back before placing an item in Cross’s hand. It felt like string, “There open them!”

“Okay, change that, if it is a necklace with all of the teeth you lost within the last year, I am disowning your ass.”

“I’m not that gross but do you really think it’s smart to give me ideas? Just open your eyes!” Allen responded excitedly. Cross did as he was told, watching Allen look from the item he put into hand and his face like an excited dog that gave his master a dead animal and wanting praise for it. Cross held up the little item in his hand. It was a corded necklace with an assortment of beads that had strange symbols on it. There were also three different charms. One looked like a red S or a chili pepper of some sort. One looked like an alien animal cat thing in a circle. The other looked to be a circle made of petrified wood with strange line markings that looked familiar. The beads also had those strange line markings. Mana. It was Mana and Neah’s strange written language they came up with.

“Alright…uhhh so a shark tooth thing, alien dog, and Mana’s weird hash mark language stuff…” Cross said unsurely he was mostly perplexed at the Mana’s language. He was not exactly sure what to make of this weird gift.

Allen deflated, both in disappointment that Cross hated the gift he made and that he didn’t understand the meaning behind it. He was a little surprised though that Cross knew of the language Mana taught him, but he was also a little pissed that he was calling it ‘hash mark’ stuff.

“It aint just hash mark stuff! It’s a language! Plus, that’s not an alien dog it’s The Sheiah Dog. It offers protection from black magic and it protects the druid’s secrets. I don’t know who the druids are, but some of the circus folk worn them on their bodies because they were superstitches-“

“It’s superstitious,” Cross corrected, but was nonetheless listening to Allen in interest. Now that he actually knew what the hell this was supposed to be, he actually thought this was pretty cool. It was sort of like a piece of the kid’s past.

“Whatever. And then that thing isn’t a shark tooth. It’s an Italian horn…or unicorn’s horn…or Leprechaun’s staff. It gives you good luck and good fortune. It also protects you from the evil eye. I dunno what that is but some of the circus folk were always obsessed with it. The last thing I did myself. It’s a symbol that Mana said protected people. And the other symbols on the beads spell out your name in the secret language he taught me. He wore the circle charm thingy a lot but never out in the open. I guess it’s because he wanted to keep the language a secret between us or
whatever. I saw it sometimes when he played with it. Anyways, you gotta wear it always! Okay!? Mana lost his charm a before the accident and he died so you can’t forget to wear it okay! Bad stuff happens if you forget to wear it.” Allen responded awkwardly.

Cross nodded in understanding, but also seriousness because…well Allen was talking about Mana’s death which was always something serious. He usually never talked about it unless he was upset over a nightmare. As far as how Allen was doing over Mana’s death, the kid still blamed himself for the accident. He was also always finding weird reasons as to why Mana died, for instance, losing his weird charm thing that protected him and then dying because of it. Or that Allen had a ‘cursed’ left arm and that’s why Mana died. The kid didn’t quite understand that the accident was actually an accident. That Mana had an old car and was definitely not the most ‘stable’ person to be driving in the first place. It was a thunderstorm that happened when it was still pretty cold out (winter was slowly shifting to spring) and Mana hit a slick spot that sent the car off the road. That’s what the investigation found out anyways. There was no explanation about Allen’s weird eye scar. Either way, it wasn’t some weird voodoo or curse that killed Mana. It was an accident.

Cross opened his mouth to say just that but thought better of it. He tried to have this conversation so many times with the kid already and it just wouldn’t get through to him. He also didn’t want to kill whatever positive mood everyone was in by having the conversation again. It was better to just try to accept Allen’s reality and do whatever he could to make him happy. So, Cross put the necklace on instead.

“So, the circus performers wore weird stuff like this, huh? I heard of a lucky rabbit’s foot and shit like that but…damn. This is pretty damn cool brat, thanks,” Cross responded, admiring the necklace. Even though the brat’s handwriting was shit, he had to admit he had a good hand at drawing symbols on some beads.

“I didn’t know how many to put on there, cuz you seem like a pretty unlucky guy but three seems good,” Allen commented.

“Thanks…?” Cross responded awkwardly, not knowing if that was meant to be an insult or not.

“Just don’t lose it or forget to wear it! I mean it! You gotta wear it always! I’ll know if you don’t!” Allen commanded in a serious pout.

“Alright, alright. Chill, I’ll wear it.”

“You swear?”

“I swear, I’ll do the whole poking my eye out with a needle thing bull shit to alright. I’ll wear it.”

“Okay!” Allen chirped, dropping the seriousness, “So you like it?”

“Yeah. I mean, it’s something you made so technically I’m forced to like it, right? “Cross said, playing it off cool.

“Rude!”

“I’m joking! Jeez kid. It’s cool. Really cool. I never even heard of these protective charms before. Mana wrote out marks like these when we were younger, but he never told me what they meant. I always thought he made it up because he was bored or some shit.”

“Guess you weren’t special enough,” Allen commented, puffing his chest out pridefully. So, Mana only shared this language with him!? Sweet! Plus, Cross liked his gift.
“Yeah I guess not,” Cross smirked, although in the back of his head he felt a little concerned. Mana had also shared this language with Neah who has been MIA since high school. He wasn’t totally sure how far Mana’s insanity went or the possible things he did to Allen during his less lucid moments. There was a few times Allen let it slip after a particularly horrible nightmare or if he was talking in his sleep. Cross wondered if Mana had mistaken Allen as Neah a few times, which wasn’t a huge deal on the outside (maybe), but it also let Cross into Mana’s mental state a little bit.

The day continued with some old coins with strange markings, (because Cross had a thing for collecting old, weird shit and pretty, expensive shit), a silk shirt (mostly because Anita had a thing for it..and also Allen. The kid stole one of his red, silk shirts and refuses to give it back), and an ancient, miniature head that looked both creepy and interesting. It looked cursed. Anita also informed him that it was actually quite cheap so…yeah it was cursed. Cross didn’t mind because his house was haunted already because of some shit his mistresses had given him over the years. Pretty sure some of them hexed some of the items.

“Can we have cake now?” Allen asked minutes later, staying several feet away from the miniature head. Cross kept moving it closer to Allen when he thought the brat wasn’t looking and watched as the brat scooted further and further away from it. Anita told him to stop teasing him, but Cross found it to be quite entertaining.

With an eye roll, Cross stopped messing with Allen in favor of cake. It was a different experience, that was for sure. First of all, there was a lot of fucking sprinkles courtesy of Allen because ‘it looked pretty’. Second, there was also a lot of candles which made Cross feel old and also a little concerned about starting the smoke alarm. Or starting his hair on fire. Whichever happened first. After going through the whole singing bit and getting Allen to help him in blowing out all the candles, they were eating intensely sugary and crunchy cake (crunchy because of the sprinkles). After eating their fill of cake, Cross sent Allen off to go take a bath and get ready for bed before settling in with Anita (*wink wonk*)

Chapter End Notes

(I know this isn’t the best drabble and I am a day late. However, I wanted to try and do something for our most favorite Dad trying his best. Anyways, school is fast approaching again so updates will be slower, especially since it’s my last year of college and I have to prepare for grad school. I have a list of drabbles I want to try and get done before I leave but there is no guarantee I will get to them all. I want to get at least one drabble for Cross’s past done, Allen’s first concert, Allen’s first firework show, and I also got a rebellious Allen drabble that I want to finish to. Though the last part is actually Cross’s point of view during the whole Jake situation. Anyways, thanks for reading and your comments. See you next time!)
Cross's Past

Chapter Summary

Trigger warning: child abuse, domestic abuse, bullying, depression, underage sex mention, psychotic breakdowns, car accident, facial mutilation. You read at your own risk. Let me know if I have to add any more tags for this. There is two parts, this is part 1.

Chapter Notes

(So, here is the long-awaited piece that depicts Cross’s childhood after alluding around it for god knows how many times within the series. This may or may not have a separate story area…whatever you want to call it. Depends on how this goes and if you guys are curious about any other plot points, but I’m hoping to make this specific piece to be a basic outline of Cross’s childhood. I’m going to keep this piece within the drabble series because I think it is important to lay a better foundation of Cross, especially to understand Cross more as a character within the series. If more is added in the future, then I will make a separate area like I plan on doing with all the Link and Allen stuff since that’s becoming more fleshed out. This is so the drabble series can stay mostly parent Cross and child Allen related. Key word mostly. I know we’ve deviated a little bit. Sorry.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

(Cross Age 8. Setting: Around the late 1970s to early 1980s. I tried to talk to my parents and do some research for this bit. Yes, Bak and Komui are around the same age as him, alongside Tiedoll and some others. I know this doesn’t match with their canon ages exactly, but it’s pretty obvious we’re not being canon here. Also, I know it’s not canon for Cross’s first name to be Marian, for this series it is. As for what his actual, real full name is…I’ll leave that to your imagination.)

Cross was really really late for school. Again. Shit.

The little eight-year-old looked up at the house clock that was always an hour behind. It said it was 9 in the morning, when in actuality it was 10. Two red eyes glared over at the couch towards the loudly snoring, scraggly man with a huge beer belly. Bottles strewn all around him. One in particular had been knocked over and had stained the carpet with its vile substance. The shirt that barely covered his swollen abdomen was stained and the living room reeked of alcohol. The TV was still on blaring The Price Is Right, the glow made him look eerie, especially sense the whole house was dark. The curtains were almost always drawn because the man hated the neighbors being able to look inside the house. Plus, it helped if the man was nursing a hang over which wasn’t often. He was quite tolerant of alcohol now. That man was the man he called ‘sir’ and if he didn’t he got a nice hard ‘thwack’ on his head for his disrespect. This man had the same red hair (it was shoulder length) and the same red eyes that Cross had. The differences were that his face was chubbier than Cross’s (it looked more swollen to Cross), the man didn’t wear glasses like Cross did and he had a gross reddish-brown beard that Cross wanted to pull off. It was as scraggly
and messy as his hair and smelled like booze. Everything smelled like booze. This man’s sweat practically smelled of booze. This excuse of a man was his father. He refused to refer him as such.

It was all his fault! If he didn’t get drunk last night and start yelling at mom, Cross would’ve been able to sleep at a decent time so he could wake himself up for school! But no. Now Cross was going to get into trouble and that stupid man was going to punish him for something that was his fault to begin with! Cross glared up at the clock once again before walking over to the pantry in search of something to eat. He frowned at the lack of options. A loaf of bread, a couple of cans of soup and vegetables, some stale cereal and powdered milk. Cross sighed and decided he didn’t want to choke down cereal that morning, so he made a couple of pieces of toast instead. As he ate his toast, Cross walked over to put on his shoes. There was a piece of duct tape near the big toe of a shoe where a hole had developed, and the bottoms of the shoes were threatening to fall off as well. Cross put on his shoes, hearing a creaking noise behind him. He looked up to see a woman with long, messy, brown hair, and warm, light brown eyes. She would’ve been beautiful if it wasn’t for the ugly yellow stain on her cheek, an old bruise. This was the woman that he called “Mom”.

“Are you off to school?” she asked, her voice as warm as her eyes. Cross liked her eyes. Every time he looked in the mirror, he wished he had those eyes instead of these awful, red, demon-like ones.

Cross nodded, not telling her that he was actually supposed to be there two hours ago. She could’ve driven him, or woken him up for school, but Cross didn’t want to bother her. She already had enough to worry about with his father and holding down a job. It’s not that she was irresponsible. She was just…not all the way there all the time. She had episodes where she would stay curled up in bed all day, muttering to herself, and crying. Sometimes she would forget who he was. She was sweet to Cross either way and Cross never could bring himself to hate her.

“Alright. Have a good day at school sweetie. Learn a lot,” she smiled, watching her son nod at her again before grabbing his ratty backpack and walking out the front door to begin the long trek to school.

~

“Well, it’s so nice of you to finally join us this morning Marian,” came that annoying, old woman’s voice as Cross finally entered the classroom.

Cross shot the old, tall, witch-like, prim and proper dressed woman a scathing glare. He hated being called that name. That name meant pain (no, seriously look it up, most people believe it to mean sea of sorrow or bitterness). It was a name his father used often, and anything tied to his father, he loathed. He preferred Cross and everyone knew it. Cross wasn’t even his real name. It was made up. Well, it was more so a reference to a certain biblical symbol.

Cross ignored the sounds of quiet laughter that bubbled up within the room as he took his seat. One of those who had laughed was right beside him. This mischievous asshole had short, somewhat spikey, unruly, black hair and light brown eyes (although they looked almost golden sometimes. At least to Cross). This kid was Neah and his dopey twin brother sat on Cross’s other side. His name was Mana. He looked almost exactly like Neah but his eyes didn’t hold the same mischief that Neah’s held. Plus, he was beginning to grow his hair out which made it easier to tell the two apart. These two were Cross’s friends, or at least Mana gave the relationship they shared with him as friendship. Cross viewed it as a convenience than a friendship. No one else wanted to be around him.

Well, that was kind of a lie, there were a couple nerds that wanted to be around him. One was named Komui, one was named Bak, and there was another named Froi. Everyone called him Tiedoll though. There were moments Cross liked to be around Komui and Bak. They were both
extremely smart and loved science which was Cross’s favorite subject. Tiedoll on the other hand… well for some reason that artsy nerd wouldn’t leave him alone. It was creepy. Cross put up with it though because Tiedoll was nice to him even after he got into fights and wasn’t always the nicest person. Anyone who could put up with Cross’s crap was worth some sort of respect after all.

~

The rest of the morning went by uneventfully and decent. In Cross’s terms it meant he didn’t score a detention or was not called out by the teacher other than when he walked into the classroom in the beginning. However, that didn’t stop the feeling of dread or anxiety he had when he would have to eventually return home. There was no doubt that his teacher made a phone call to the house and alerted his father that his son was once again tardy. Even if his dad didn’t pick up the phone, he would figure it out through his mother.

At recess Cross watched Neah pull the legs off of the poor, unfortunate cricket he held in his grasp. Neah always had a fascination with dissecting and disassembling animals much to Mana’s distaste. Neah also had a fascination for pranks and messing with people just to see their reactions. Mana was kind and compassionate, although there were a few screws loose with him to. He was what the adults would call ‘special’ and not in the complimenting kind of way. You know the type of adults. For the most part he was fine when he was around Neah (which was almost always. The two were connected at the hip) but if he was away from Neah too long he’d become anxious and would ‘freak out’. As for how he would freak out, it sort of depended. Cross only saw Mana freak out only once and that was because Neah had to stay home sick one day. His family forced him to go to school and it’s like he became a different person. He was a total space cadet for most of the day and he acted like Cross wasn’t even there. Then he just snapped. Had a total meltdown. Cross didn’t know what exactly happened that made him snap, but when he did, he was screaming shit about how the government was trying to kill his brother or some shit. Mana was then taken home. Then Neah and Mana returned the next day and it was like nothing happened.

Even around Neah Mana still acted a bit strange. He invented a special written language to communicate with Neah because he was paranoid about people listening in on their conversations. In art class there was quite a few times a concerned phone call was made because Mana had made something fucked up and gorey. He was obsessed with drawing these mechanical doll looking things with a star on their heads. He drew them wearing other people’s bodies and called them Akuma. It was pretty fucked up. There was also a few times Mana made up a very ‘questionable’ stories. There was a reason why their grade school teacher stopped assigning them things that involved creating. Cross never got to read the offensive materials himself sadly, but he got to see some of Mana’s artwork before they got taken away. A realistic eye being stabbed by a knife, complete with gore. A man hanging by his neck on a tree. A grotesque profile of a clown with blood coming out of its mouth. Yeah. That’s a little fucked up for an eight-year-old.

“So, do you think today is going to be the day your dad finally kills you?” Neah asked cheerfully.

“Neah! That isn’t something to joke about!” Mana whined as he looked over to Cross apologetically, “I’m sure he won’t be that bad. Maybe he’ll be passed out when you get home. You said he had off today, right? So, he’ll probably drink the whole day.”

“I hope today would be the day he finally kills me to put me out of my fucking misery,” Cross mumbled to himself with an eye roll. He knew this was totally not the kind of conversations eight-year-olds should have, but they were strange kids. Very strange kids. With strange situations. Well, in Cross’s case a shitty situation.

Mana gasped, with tears filling his eyes, “Cross that’s awful to say! We’d be sad if you died!”
“Speak for yourself Mana,” Neah shot back with an awful smirk.

“Neah! Apologize!” Mana whined.

“It’s fine Mana. My dad is clumsy and stupid. Just because he manages to land a few punches, he’ll never be able to kill me,” Cross bragged. There were a few close calls though…

“Let’s change the subject please?” Mana asked, wiping tears from his eyes, “Are you nervous for the quiz this afternoon?”

“There’s a quiz!” Cross asked. Shit! He forgot to study!

“Maybe if you beg I’ll let you cheat off of me,” Neah grinned.

“Beg? No way. I’d rather die. I’ll go down with what little honor I have left,” Cross said.

“Which is to say zero honor,” Neah shot back.

“Shut up Neah.”

~

Declined again. He didn’t have any lunch money once again. Cross ignored the laughter behind him as the woman stamped his hand about needing lunch money and sent him back around to get a free lunch that consisted of nothing more than a cheese sandwich and a carton of milk. This became a routine that he was very familiar with and annoyed with. After countless phone calls home and having his hand stamped, the school came to realization that Cross’s family was just one of those problematic families. His father was too prideful to put his son on the free lunch program, so sometimes if the school hounded his ass enough, he’d send Cross off with lunch money. On days that he didn’t, the school would usually give him a free meal. He didn’t know whether it was out of pity or just following procedure, but it still didn’t make it any less embarrassing.

Cross made his way over to Neah and Mana, ignoring the snickers and the whispers as he sat down across from them.

“No lunch money again huh? No worries, mom packed us extra,” Mana said as he handed over some baby carrots and a bag of chips. Neah threw in a twinkie and some grapes.

“Your mom is a saint. Make sure to tell her that,” Cross said as he accepted the food graciously. Caterina always packed extra food in the twin’s lunch boxes specifically for Cross. Cross had only been to their house once and that was when he was quite young. The twins were having a birthday party and invited the whole class. It was really quite lavish, a whole lot different than what Cross was used to. Cross was lucky his father even let him go. He didn’t know what tipped her off to his situation. He wore his best clothes that day, but now that he thought about it, he did look quite ragged compared to the other kids. Maybe he was too skinny? Too pale? Either way that beautiful, blessed woman pulled him aside that day and sent him home with leftover cake and other foods he could only look at and drool at the grocery store. Least to say his father was not happy about that, hence why he wasn’t allowed to go back there or go anywhere.

Even so, Caterina still made sure Cross was fed. Over the summer, it was trickier sense Cross had to stay at home. It was either because his father told him so (cuz we can’t have the neighbors know our business) or he had to take care of his mother. Mana and Neah would still stop by periodically delivering food and on days that his father was merciful enough to let him hang out with his friends, he’d eat better than he had in days.
There were times Bak, Komui, and Tiedoll would also chip in, especially Tiedoll who had a strange fixation on trying to be like a second mother to Cross. It was kind of annoying, but if it meant getting free food then he would tolerate it. He had no idea why Komui and Bak would put up with him or give him food, but he’d take it.

~

Cross carefully opened his front door, wincing at the squeak it made. He poked his head over the door, hoping that his father wouldn’t be home. He looked to the left, then the right, then back to the left, again to the right. He stood absolutely still, listening for any movements, any creaks or squeaks of footsteps. Nothing. Cross took a hesitant step forward in the doorway-

“Hello!”

Cross nearly jumped out of his skin, his head whipping around to land on his mother who smiled serenely down at him.

“I’m sorry for scaring you my little love,” she smiled apologetically before walking gracefully to the kitchen, “Your father is at work right now. I went grocery shopping. You know the interview I went to a couple days ago to work as a cashier down at the gas station? I got the job! I made cookies to celebrate! They’re a little burnt though.”

“Congratulations,” Cross responded, deciding to savor this moment. It wasn’t everyday his mother was so motivated. He hoped that this job lasted a lot longer than the last one. Cross followed his mother to the kitchen, flinching at her hand as she handed him a semi-burnt cookie. If she noticed it, she didn’t say anything about it. He hated it when he did that to her, he was sure it made her feel bad. He couldn’t help it. It was instinct. He took the cookie from her hand and began to nibble at it, watching her as she hummed and busied herself with making dinner. It was like nothing happened the night before. She was like any other mother out there. You would’ve never thought there was another side to her. A scared little girl trapped inside this woman’s body.

~ (Cross Age: 10)

Mom didn’t come out of her bedroom today. Once upon a time his parents both shared this room, but as of late his father took over the couch and T.V, while his mother retired to the bedroom. This was nothing new. As Cross listened to the loud snoring coming from the couch he reached up, grabbed the doorknob, and twisted. When he pushed opened the door, it revealed a messy bedroom. Clothes were strewn all over the floor, ripped from their hangers. There were torn up paper from books, newspapers, notebook paper, bills. On the bed, the rumpled blankets were pulled in the middle, covering the curled figure of his mother, staring at the wall, unblinking. The gentle, barely perceptible rise and fall of her chest let him know she was breathing. Well that was one good sign.

Cross began to go through the routine. Exit the bedroom. Heat up some leftovers or make her something to eat. Try not to wake up the asshole on the couch. No groceries? Steal money from the asshole’s wallet. Go grocery shopping. Make food. Feed mom. Clean up her bedroom. Help mom get up and go to the bathroom. Help mom take a bath. Help mom back to bed. Let mom rest. Clean up the beer bottles in the living room. Try not to wake up the asshole on the couch. Clean the dishes. Sweep the floors. Check on mom. Continue to clean the house until the asshole awakens. Steal food from the kitchen and hide in your room before the asshole awakens. Do not go downstairs no matter what you hear. Avoid him at all costs. Do schoolwork. Wait until the car starts up and leaves. Check on mom. Take her to the bathroom again. Give her fluids. Sing to her. Stay with her. Hear the car returned to the house hours later-

“Oi! Where the fuck is my dinner, woman!” the asshole yells.
Cross took a deep breath. He made sure his mother was asleep before he quietly left the bedroom and went downstairs. Ignore the tightening feeling in your gut. Swallow down the anger and fear.

“What the fuck are you looking at you worthless waste of space!? Why don’t you do something useful and make some dinner or do I have to do everything around here!?” the man hollered at him, his red eyes glinting down at him angrily.

“Yes sir.” Keep a straight face. Swallow the bile threatening to bubble out of your throat. God, he hated calling this fucking idiot ‘sir’. Go into the kitchen, heat up the leftover food you gave mom. Grab a beer. Give the asshole his food and booze.

“What the fuck is this shit Marian?” the man spat.

“It’s soup.” Cross said. Ignore the fact he used the name you hate.

“Soup?”

“Yes sir.”

“You know for a snot nosed piece of shit who does nothing but mooch off of me and your mother, you’d think you’d be capable of making decent fucking soup,” the man yelled, throwing the bowl of food on the ground. Cross flinched, staring at the mess on the floor. What a waste of food.

“Forget it. I’m going to the bar. That shit better be cleaned by the time I get home, or I’ll whip your ass. Got it?”

“Yes sir,” Cross said without missing a beat, watching his father storm out of the house out of the corner of his eye. He flinched hard when he heard the door slam. He hoped that didn’t wake up his mother, “Fucking piece of shit man…”

Cross stalked off to the kitchen to grab a washcloth so he could clean the mess on the floor. It didn’t matter whether or not he cleaned it. The asshole would still find a reason to whip his ass. Just wait until he figured out that Cross stole some money from his wallet for food. He’d figure it out eventually. After all, that was good money to use for drinking. Of course he’d be on top of that shit. Fuck, sometimes he’d try to beat Cross thinking he stole money from him, when in actuality the stupid asshole forgot he spent it on booze. Some sacrifices had to be made though. There was just no winning with this asshole.

After seeing to it the mess was cleaned up (because Cross hated the mess), Cross returned to the bedroom to check on his mother. He could hear soft crying coming from behind the door. Cross sighed, opening the door and closing it softly behind him before he made his way back on the bed. He placed his mother’s head on his lap and began to play with her hair, gently untangling the snarls with his fingers. Then he began to sing one of her favorite songs:

“All our times have come
Here but now they’re gone
Seasons don’t fear the reaper
Nor do the wind, the sun, or the rain, we can be like they are
Come on baby, don’t fear the reaper
Baby take my hand, don’t fear the reaper
We’ll be able to fly, don’t fear the reaper
Baby I’m your man…”

He continued to sing and comb his fingers through her hair. Even after he was finished singing the
song, he continued to fill up the silent, dreary household with singing. He sang Queen, Eagles, Alice Cooper, Joe Cocker, really anything. He sang until his throat hurt and his mother had fallen asleep long ago. Then he turned on the radio to keep the silence at bay for a little longer and listened to music until he fell asleep.

~(How Cross Got the Mask. Cross age: 12)

It wasn’t supposed to ever get this far. Well at least Cross didn’t want it to get this far but knowing his father, he should’ve known that he knew no limits. Cross should’ve just stayed out of it. He should’ve just left it between his mother and his father. He would’ve tried to have stayed out of it, but his mother was so fucked up that night that he just couldn’t stand by and watch as that asshole sent punch after punch to her face. To her body. Especially when she wasn’t fully all together in the moment.

He didn’t quite know exactly when, but he knew that she was using something. He could see it in her face. Her pupils were smaller. She was becoming thin. Her speech was incoherent and slurred sometimes. She was sleeping more. She had needle marks on her arms. He found needles and burned silver spoons in her bedroom. He was still quite young so he couldn’t exactly figure out what it was, but he did know she was using something. He knew what people looked like on drugs. He knew the signs, though he couldn’t differentiate her usage from her psychotic breakdowns. The mother he loved was disappearing faster and faster from his grasp and he didn’t know what to do to keep her from slipping away. So, what happened that night could’ve been from the fact she was high on something or she was have a mental breakdown. Either way, it was one of the worst days of Cross’s life.

Cross was minding his own business that night. He was upstairs in his room doing his schoolwork although he mostly trying to escape through the radio, he had stolen from his mother’s room than schoolwork. They’ve been screaming at each other off and on for hours now. They were screaming about money, about how worthless the other person was, about how crazy the other person was. It was giving him a headache. Then he heard a loud thump and a crash. Before he knew it he was running down the stairs and into the kitchen just in time to see his father push his mother against the wall once again, his fists raised above his head, aimed to go straight for her face.

“No! Hey! Stop it!” Cross hollered as his launched himself at his father, grabbing onto his arm with both of his.

“No! Not until you leave her alone you smelly, fat, pig,” Cross spat venomously up at his father.

“What did you call me you sack of shit!? I’m gonna fucking kill you you good for nothing demon child!” his father bellowed. Cross quickly pushed himself off the floor and took off in a sprint. He tried to run outside, but he made the nasty mistake of thinking his father had a few drinks in him. At least then he had a better chance of running away from him, but no. His father was quite sober, and it didn’t take him long to catch him. Cross yelped when he felt his father grab a fistful of his hair and began to drag him past the dining room (or the little space they dared to call a dining room) where he grabbed a chair and walked out to the garage.

“So, you think you’re tough shit huh Marian? Let’s see how you are once I take the wind out of your sails you ungrateful little shit,” his father growled as he continued to drag him by the hair, the chair scraping behind him. He closed the garage door behind him and locked it. Then he placed the chair off in the corner of the garage with a loud thump, throwing Cross in it. Then the struggle really began. Well, at least Cross put up a struggle, no matter how worthless it
was. He was a string bean compared to this monster of a man. It didn’t matter how much he kicked or screamed; his father had the upper hand. Eventually he had tied Cross to the chair, but not before Cross landed a few good kicks before doing so. One was good enough to give him a nice nosebleed. Good. The fucker deserved it. Then his father walked out of the garage, leaving Cross to wonder what kind of plan this fucker had for him.

Cross’s father returned after several minutes with a cross necklace and a pair of thick, protective gloves on. The cross itself was not those itty-bitty pendants. No, this cross was quite large, and it was a glowing, fiery red. That was odd. What was he thinking of doing with that? Cross continued to glare at his father, anything to keep the fear from trickling across his face.

“Sense you are a demon child, I believe it is quite fitting that you be marked,” his father stated. Cross had seen his father looked ruthless and cold before. He saw him look so inhumane that he saw he was looking at the devil himself instead of his father. This night, he swore he did see Lucifer himself in his eyes. For many nights to come he would see have nightmares of the way his father looked at him before pressing the burning, hot metal into his face, directly on his right eye. It was the worst pain he had ever felt in his life. Even as he grew older, he would still recount this as being the worst pain he had ever felt in his life. He didn’t know what was worse. Was it the physical pain of his face burning, the revolting smell of burning flesh, or the way his throat and lungs burned as he screamed? Or was it the emotional pain, the idea that his own father, his own flesh and blood, being able to do this to him with no remorse? The idea of being marked like he was just some fucking animal.

“You don’t think your hot shit now do you? You’re nothing but a weak, stupid little demon. This is what you deserve you little prick,” his father spat, leaning down close enough that Cross could feel the spit fly from his mouth onto his face. If Cross wasn’t busy trying to control the amount of fear, rage, and pain he was in, he’d probably have a few choice words of his own to say to his old man. Instead he sat, shaking, gasping, crying, sweating. He couldn’t open his eye. No matter how hard he tried. Not a lot of people realize how scary something like that can be. Humans take their vision for granted as it is and even though Cross still had the use of one eye, it was still absolutely terrifying.

His father was merciful and untied him before leaving him alone in the garage. He could’ve easily just left him there and forgot about him. However, Cross wasn’t feeling gratitude. He was too busy trying to walk himself to the bathroom to press ice cold water to the burn, which was proving to be difficult with only one eye. He was too busy coming to terms that his eye was totally fucked (well okay…maybe…he wasn’t sure yet but it was sure going to leave a nasty scar!). He was branded. Permanently scarred on his face. What the fuck was he going to do? How was he going to hide this? His friends were going to call the police! He couldn’t leave his mother alone here! He couldn’t bear the thought of never seeing her again! He could give less of a shit over his father, but his mother? Someone had to take care of her! He had to take care of her!

There was nothing else he could do except to keep a cold compress on his eye, try to make up a believable story over how he injured his eye, and hope that the damage done to it isn’t as bad as he thought.

Cross stayed home for a few days to let the wound heal and scar over. During this time his body was ravaged with fever. He should’ve gone to the hospital, but his father didn’t want to explain why there was a burn mark in the shape of cross on their child’s face. His mother was too busy getting high to worry about the fact her son was severely injured. So, who exactly took care of Cross? He didn’t know. He just knew someone did, but instead of feeling comforted he felt angry. Why? He was about 100% sure that it was his father who ultimately took care of him. The only reason he was taking care of him was to hide the fact that he was an abusive piece of shit and his
mother was crazy as fuck. It wasn’t out of remorse or because it was his job as a parent.

Once a few days passed, his injury felt better. Cross’s pride and emotional state was an entirely different story. As he got up to take a shower and look at the damage done to his face in the mirror, he saw the mark burned into his face. An upside-down, red, swollen cross. He was hideous. A monster. He could see the worst of his fears came true. His eye would never open again.

He ended up going to school the next day, much to his reluctance. He ended up trying to hide the injury with a huge piece of gauze taped to his face. Of course, that didn’t stop the stares or the questions his friends immediately fired at him at every turn. The lunchroom. The lockers before class. The boy’s bathroom, which they were in right now.

“Dude, what happened to your face? Did you scratch it?” Neah snickered, thinking that Cross had just done something stupid.

“Yeah sorta,” Cross lied.

“No way, that’s one huge scratch! Can we see it?” Bak asked, peering closely at Cross’s face. Cross glared in annoyance and flicked his forehead, a warning for him to back the fuck up.

“No.”

“Aw come on. If it’s just a scratch it shouldn’t be that bad right? Let’s see it,” Neah teased as he crept closer.

“Neah, leave him alone,” Mana warned, seeing how pissed off Cross was getting at how pushy the others were being.

“What’d you scratch it on?” Komui asked.

“You guys should just leave it be. He doesn’t have to show anyone-“

“Yoink!” Neah exclaimed as he ripped the gauze off of Cross’s face. The boy’s smirk only grew when he saw the grotesque burn mark on Cross’s face, “Whoa man, that’s no scratch!”

“Neah I’m going to fucking kill you right where you stand! I swear to God!” Cross hissed viciously as he took a couple of steps towards Neah. Tiedoll and Mana came to the rescue, holding Cross back as he flailed pathetically in grasp. Damnit! If he didn’t have that fever earlier this week, he would’ve been able to shove them off!

“Is that...? Is that an upside-down cross!?” Bak exclaimed

“Shhh keep it down Bak! You’re going to expose us,” Komui hissed, smacking a hand over Bak’s mouth.

“Oh my God Cross who did this to you? Was it your dad? Cross this has gone too far we have to tell someone-“ Tiedoll started.

“I swear I will put your ass six feet under if you call or tell anyone puffball! It’s fine! Give me my damn bandage back you piece of shit! Ya’ll fucking suck!” Cross growled out angrily, ignoring the way his eye stung or the way his voice cracked with emotion. He snatched the bandage out of Neah’s hand before swooping his hair over his eye and storming out of the bathroom. His hair was a little past his shoulders now. He had grown it out months prior so he wouldn’t look so much like
his dad. It was also to emulate his favorite rock band members.

“Marian-“ Tiedoll called out, rushing after him.

Cross never whipped around so fast in his entire life to glare heatedly up at Tiedoll’s face. His entire face was red with rage, his single eye burned with hell.

“Don’t you ever call me that name ever again! It’s Cross! Also mind your damn business you nerd! I don’t need you or anyone else to come save me!” Cross hollered before shoving Tiedoll hard enough to send him on his backside and running off. Cross didn’t stay for the rest of the school day. He ran home and blocked out the world with his radio.

After the weekend Cross returned to school but avoided his friends entirely. Every time they tried to approach him, he pretended they didn’t even exist. He pretended the whole world didn’t exist. All he did was sit there and stare off into space. He was afraid of saying anything. Afraid of being exposed. He was afraid that this would be the day he would taken away by police. Away from his mom. Away from his so-called friends. He was afraid of being put into some orphanage or foster home. Some place where he didn’t know anyone around him. He would put up a good fight though. He wouldn’t go down easy. He refused to.

Later on in the day, Neah walked by, stopping by Cross’s side, “Ya know with this whole silent and staring blankly ahead thing people are gonna suspect something is wrong. Everyone is already talking about you and I don’t think you want them to talk even more and ask questions because of your odd behavior, right? Anyways, if you’re done throwing your little temper tantrum, you should come meet us in the boy’s bathroom during lunch. Bak, Komui and Tiedoll have been working their butts off over the weekend to make you something I think you’d like. However, if you’re not done throwing your little fit, don’t bother coming. We can’t afford another explosion like last time.”

Neah turned and gave Cross and odd, serene smile, before walking off like nothing just happened. Or the fact that did insult Cross. Fucking temper tantrum? Are you fucking serious? He was scarred for life and this idiot thought he was throwing a temper tantrum? Fucking asshole. Either way he went into the boy’s bathroom during lunch, suppressing his anger and distrust as much as he could.

“What do you want?” Cross asked bluntly.

“Well first we wanted to apologize for how we were acting. It wasn’t fair of us to push you like that, even if some of us just do it because we care,” Mana stated, everyone else but Neah nodded. Mana elbowed his brother roughly in the ribs.

“Ow! What? I thought it was cool! I’m jealous! I would love to have a manly looking scar like that, the women would be all over me- Ow!” Neah yelped as his brother elbowed him again, “Alright, I apologize. That wasn’t kind of me.”

“Anyways, we’ve come up with something cool to help you hide that scar better,” Komui said with a mischievous grin, alongside Bak who also shared the same look.

“Tada!” Komui exclaimed, revealing a white mask big enough to cover half of Cross’s face from behind his back, “It’s a mask! Obviously, it hasn’t been tested out yet so there might be some design features we’d have to work out, but I think this’ll do the trick. Of course, we would have to make new ones as you grow older and your face inevitably grows as well, but for now it should cover the scar with no problem. We’ve also designed it to go with your glasses with no problem and the band to hold it in place can stretch. We chose a color so it could easily be hidden by your hair! Tiedoll drew out the design while Bak and I did the technical work. It’s really quite neat isn’t it? Your welcome!”
“The design is supposed to derive from Phantom of the Opera, but I also wanted to include a cross of some sort in it. After all, it fits your name. Consider it an apology for calling you by your other name,” Tiedoll explained.

“So? Put it on! I want to see how cool you look,” Mana yelped excitedly as he grabbed the mask from Komui’s hand. He approached Cross, gingerly taking off the bandage on his face before carefully putting the mask on his face. Once the mask was secured, Mana took a step back to peruse his work.

“Dude you look so cool,” Bak said, jumping up and down excitedly.

“We did such an amazing job, haven’t we Bak!?” Komui said, grabbing Bak’s hands as they pranced around like idiots.

Neah tilted and head and smirked, “Yes, it really does suit you. I think women are going to love it. It makes you look mysterious.”

“It does suit you well. Who knows, maybe you’ll start a fashion trend” Tiedoll agreed with a chuckle.

“What do you think Cross?” Mana asked, gesturing with his head to the mirror. Cross hesitantly stepped towards the mirror to look at his reflection. A cross mask to someone named Cross. It was very fitting. Plus, it did make him look cool and bad ass. These dorks also worked their asses off over the weekend to make him this.

“I think I have a better shot with the ladies with this,” Cross commented with a sly smirk, feeling his self-esteem which was nonexistent after being burned, rise back to where it was supposed to be. Maybe even a little higher. Sure, he still had to get used to seeing with only one eye and the fact this was his father’s fault. He had to still deal with the stares, but at least this made him look much cooler than a stupid piece of gauze.

Tiedoll face palmed, but nonetheless smiled. Bak and Komui hugged each other gleefully, taking his comment to mean he forgave them and loved the mask they made him. Neah huffed and rolled his eyes, while Mana clapped happily.

As the years went by, Komui and Bak did have to make him numerous other ones. It wasn’t just because his face was becoming slimmer as his body aged naturally either. Cross had been known to get into fights, but the fighting became more frequent as he grew older and sometimes his mask got damaged. It became common for Cross to have a couple masks at his disposal should the one he currently had on got ruined.

Chapter End Notes

(Song mention is Don't Fear the Reaper by Blue Oyster Cult. Onwards to part 2!)
Cross's Past Part 2

Chapter Summary

Trigger warning: child abuse, domestic abuse, bullying, depression, underage sex mention, psychotic breakdowns, car accident, facial mutilation. You read at your own risk. Let me know if I have to add any more tags for this. There is two parts, this is part 2.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

~Cross Gets His Guitar (Age: 12, before he got his mask. Excuse me while I cry.)

It was his 12th birthday, a birthday that he would remember for the rest of his life. As far as birthdays went, it wasn’t something that was exactly celebrated in his family. He had tried in the past when he was around six to beg for something more for his birthday. That of course didn’t go over well. His father could give less of a shit that his son was turning a day older let alone a year. His mother on the other hand…well she tried to make it special for her son. Money was never easy to come by and there were quite a handful of days where they went without electricity. Any money his mother tried to set aside was taken by his father eventually to fund his drinking problem. If it wasn’t his drinking problem, then it was to pay the bills.

Cross never expected much on his birthday but still appreciated the effort his mother gave in an attempt to make it something special. Some birthdays she was more lucid than others. She always remembered it, though she would forget what age he was turning. There have been birthdays when he’d receive a toy or a trinket that was meant for boys a whole lot smaller than his age. He didn’t mind it though because he understood his mother was trying. It wasn’t her fault. His mother would attempt making cupcakes that were so sugary it made Cross’s teeth hurt thinking about it. Sometimes they’d be burned. Other times she bought it at the store. He’d still eat it though because it made her happy. It didn’t matter that she forgot how old he was, it didn’t matter what she got him for his birthday, it mattered that she remembered enough to do something for him. It mattered that she was happy he was alive and that he made it another trip around the sun.

His 12th birthday was around the last time he’d ever saw his mother being the mother he knew. It was just before she started down the road to heroin addiction. She was in a lucid period at the moment and actually knew how old he was going to be. That evening she pulled him into her room, closing her door behind them. His dad was at work, but he would be coming home in at least an hour.

“Alright my little love, close your eyes. No peeking,” she said excitedly after she made sure he was sitting comfortably on the bed. Cross humored her and kept his eyes closed, hearing the sounds of her going to her closet to retrieve whatever it is she had hidden. Then there was an added weight on the bed when she returned and the sound of soft rustle of said object being placed on the bed in front of him.

“Alright, now give me your hands. Keep your eyes closed,” his mother giggled as she took his hands into her soft, colder ones (her hands were always cold it seemed) and placed them on what felt like a leather box. Case. It was a case. Whatever it was it felt huge and Cross felt both excited
and fearful. This was a lot bigger than anything his mother ever gotten him before. How much did it cost? Dad was going to burn the house down with his rage if he found out what the hell she did. Fuck, she really didn’t have to do this. Maybe it wouldn’t be too late to take it back to the store to get a refund?

Cross let his hands wander over the case for a little bit before he found the snaps that held it closed.

“Go ahead, open it,” his mother urged.

“Nah I think you should open it,” Cross said, feeling a bit fearful that if he opened the case then he wouldn’t be able to give it back. Whatever this was, it was expensive, and he knew they couldn’t afford it.

“Nonsense it’s your present. You have to open it.”

“Nah this is expensive we can’t afford it-“

“Don’t worry about that. You’re too young to worry about money. You deserve this for putting up with all the stuff your father and I have done over the years. Trust me, it’s okay. Please open it,” his mother continued to urge.

Shit, his mother was really excited over this. As much as he felt he didn’t deserve whatever this was, he knew if he tried to send it back it would break her heart.

“Are you sure…?”

“Yes! Open it! Open it!”

Cross couldn’t help but laugh, both out of nervousness and the fact he could his mother hopping up and down on the bed like an excited little girl. Alright. So Cross fingered open the snaps and flipped the case open.

“Can I open my eyes yet?”

“Nope! You gotta guess what it is first!”

Well shit alright then. So Cross let his hands wander along the inside of the velvet casing towards the mysterious object. It was huge and smooth. As his hands continued to wander, he found strings. As he wandered up and down the frets, he could feel the headstock on one end and the bridge on the other, the strings making a hushed sound as Cross fingered them. No way. No way in hell was this happening. This was a dream. This wasn’t what he thought it was. Then he plucked a string out of curiosity and heard the warm sound it produced. It was a guitar. An acoustic guitar. No doubt about it.

Cross’s eyes snapped open to land on the polished, new guitar sitting right in front of him. The wood was a beautiful dark red, not like the light brown that usual acoustic guitars had.

“H-How…?”

“Do you like it? I thought you needed a little something something to go with that voice of yours. It would be a crime to have that voice without a guitar to go along with it,” his mother stated.

Cross looked down at the guitar, back up at his mother, back down at it, and then back up at his mother. Like no way in hell she bought this for him. There was no way in hell this was his.
His mother laughed, “Don’t look at me like that. I promise it’s paid for. It’s all yours if you want it.”

“Seriously?” Cross croaked out, feeling his eyes sting a little.

“Yeah, I’m serious. You can take her out, she’s not gonna break you know.”

“I don’t know how to play.”

“You’re smart. You’ll figure out how,” she responded as she helped to settle the instrument on Cross’s lap, “You know you’re gonna have to name her. Maybe after your first girlfriend?”

“God that’s so cliché’ Cross laughed.

“Okay, so maybe not after your first girlfriend, but you still need to name it something. All the best musicians name their instruments,” his mother advised as he plucked a few strings.

“Dad’s gonna flip his lid.”

“I don’t think your dad is physically capable to do any flipping. Besides, he can shove it up where the sun don’t shine. What kind of mother would I be to let her baby waste such a beautiful singing voice?”

“T-Thank you…”

After that it became routine for Cross to play the guitar everyday after his father went to work or the bar, whichever happened first. He kept the guitar hidden from his father because he was afraid that if he found out he’d try to get rid of it. Sure, his fingers hurt like a bitch after the first few days as they blistered and bled, but it was fucking worth it. It didn’t take him long to learn a few songs on it and it became part of his routine to play his guitar while he sang to his mother. Even though he laughed at the suggestion, he did end up naming his guitar after his first girlfriend….Maria.

~ Maria (Cross age: 13)

Finally, detention was over! Jeez it sure felt longer than the last time. So, what he put laxatives in the teacher’s coffee when they weren’t looking? He figured since they were acting like such a hard ass to everyone lately, perhaps they were blocked up. He was doing them and everyone else a favor by doing this. Plus, it was hilarious, but of course this pompous new kid named Malcolm Leverrier had to open his stupid mouth and announce that it was Cross who did the deed. Fuck, couldn’t we have just spun up the tale that nature was simply taking its course? Coffee could get things going down there. It’s a stimulant after all.

So that’s how Cross got detention and was currently making his way out the entrance doors before he heard ‘it’. Ooo yeah, the suspenseful ‘it’. As for what ‘it’ was, it was a voice. A woman’s singing voice floating out of the choir doors. Cross stopped abruptly where he was before moving towards the voice with a little smirk. He could stay here a bit longer, after all it would keep him away from home and the inevitable rage of his father because his son wasn’t home to make him dinner.

Cross carefully approached the open choir doors and peeked over the corner to get an eye full of the woman responsible for such a lovely, sexy voice. He was surprised to find a petite, pixie-like creature standing in the middle of the room creating such a melody. Just by looking at her though, Cross had a feeling she was going to grow up tall. Really tall. And stunning. She had black, curly hair and cherry lips. Even though she was in casual attire, a blouse and jeans, Cross knew she would be breathtaking in a dress. It was a good thing she wasn’t wearing one today
because Cross would probably die. He was absolutely smitten. Oh, and her eyes! Her eyes were the brightest shade of green he’d ever seen (although the lights could’ve made them that way. The choir room lights were always on dead set on blinding someone). God, he wished he knew the song she was singing. It sounded like opera. Too bad he was too much of a rock and roll kinda guy.

However, Cross was quite shy back then. He was not the charming lady killer he was today (that came about a little bit after Maria). So, when the song ended, Cross tore his gaze away from the girl. The dreaded walk home felt a little less dreadful this time around.

Over the next week Cross stayed after school to watch her sing (at least on those days where he didn’t already have detention). He had found out from Neah that her name was Maria and she was a grade ahead of them. She sang competitively and was superior at it. Why wouldn’t she be? With a voice like that she could make it to Broadway! He would always end up leaving before she could catch him spying on her. His friends didn’t understand why the hell he wouldn’t just walk over and talk to her. He always acted like he was the sexiest guy in school and could get any girl he wanted. Now that he finally had the hots for someone, all his cockiness faded and was replaced by sweaty palms and an erratic heart rate.

It took almost two and a half weeks for him to finally talk to her and it was purely by accident. He was in detention again for trying for picking a fight with some asshole kid who saw he had the hots for Maria and proceeded to call him a freak because of the mask he always wore. He won that fight. He wasn’t lying either. There had been quite a few fights he lost, but as the years went by Cross had become quite the fighter. Sure, he was still a skinny shit, but he was growing taller and getting some muscle, much to his annoyance. He couldn’t keep up with his growing body and ended up taking clothes from his friends just so he would have something to wear. When it came to father though, he had a long way to go. He could only defend himself and try to escape the worst injuries.

Cross was walking around the halls, getting ready to leave the school after detention. He would’ve sat and listened to Maria, but he didn’t hear any singing, so he figured she was done with practice and went home. Thinking he was alone in the school building; Cross was singing her solo to himself. Just as he was turning the corner to his locker, he ran into the girl he was spying on for the past couple of weeks. Pretty cliché huh?

“Oh my god I’m so sorry! Are you okay?” came a soft, squeaky voice from the girl named Maria. You definitely wouldn’t know it was from the same girl who produced such a rich, melodic voice in the choir room. Cross was surprised.

“Oh, yeah I’m fine. Are you? Sorry I wasn’t looking where I was going,” Cross apologized, feeling his face heat up. Wow this was the closest he’d ever been to another woman before, other than his mother.

“Yeah I’m fine. Don’t worry about it. It was my fault. I shouldn’t have been running the halls like that.”

“It’s after school. There’s no teachers around to tell you not to.”

Then there was an awkward pause between the two of them.

“Well, anyways I should go-“ Cross responded awkwardly.

“Hey, were you the one singing just a moment ago? Or was that someone else?” Maria blurted out.

“Singing uhh…yeah…that was me. Sorry, I know I sound stupid and-“ Cross said, trying to
apologize for the fact of him watching her perform her solo, but he didn’t get that far.

“No, you sound amazing! Oh my god how are you not in choir already!?” Maria interrupted.

“Uhhh…seriously?”

“Yes, seriously!”

“Thanks.”

“No problem uhhhh…” Maria started, gesturing for Cross to give her his name. Cross didn’t get the memo and tilted his head a little in confusion. Maria found that to be adorable and chuckled, “Your name? What’s your name?”

“Oh! Uhhh…well my real name is Marian but call me Cross.”

“Cross? Oh, I see you’re that troublemaker in the grade under me,” Maria stated with a soft smile.

“Troublemaker? Most of them start it, I just finish it.”

“Is that so? Okay Cross what are you doing tomorrow?”

“Uhhh…well probably gonna get detention, I don’t know yet. It just sort of happens, I don’t really plan it.”

Maria laughed again, “Well, do you think you could be on your best behavior for one day so you can hang out with me after school? I don’t have practice tomorrow.”

“Me? Hang out with you? Like with your girlfriends or-“

“No, just me.”

“Oh….Ohhhh! Oh, so it’s a date? Is it a date?”

“You’re so funny Cross! Yes, it’s a date.”

“Oh. Oh well sweet. Yeah I’ll behave.”

“Good, I’ll see you tomorrow,” Maria said with a soft smile before turning and walking away, leaving Cross to stand there like a blushing idiot. That was also the day Cross got his first girlfriend, but as to why he named his guitar Maria that comes a lot later. While Cross used to get into fights and raise hell at school since he was at the age of 5, he didn’t start drinking until he was 13. He didn’t start partying and drinking until he was 14. He never liked the smell of alcohol or the taste of it until Maria came along. He stole a sip when he was around four of his father’s beer. Maria taught him how to make it taste good courtesy of her parent’s wine cabinet. Maria taught him many things that his own father should’ve really taught him. She looked innocent on the outside, but that little girl was anything but. Still, he loved her.

Maria taught him how to have sex and how to pleasure the female body. Looking back on it, they were quite young to be doing these things, but it made them feel grown up. It made Cross feel powerful and it filled up a hole within him that he didn’t realize was there before. Cross didn’t realize how touch starved he was until he met Maria. Maria also encouraged his musical ability and got him to join choir (though he never competed in any competitions like Maria did).

It kept him out of trouble for the most part. Cross was quite happy with his life around this time. Sure, his parents still fought, his father still got drunk, they got into fights, mom still used, but this
was also around the time where he started to run off. If shit got bad at home, he’d run off to Maria’s house. As far as her parents knew, he was just some troubled kid looking for an escape for the hell that was his life. Sure, they stole alcohol from her parent’s wine cabinet, but never enough to get shit faced. Any kind of sex they had was at his house only when he was sure his parents were out, and her parents knew nothing about it. Her parents were not aware how grown up their daughter was. As far as they knew Maria was this sweet little girl who excelled in school and choir. Sure, she picked out a strange boy to hang out with, but he sure didn’t act like most troubled boys. Cross was smart. He could kick some ass if push comes to shove and he was rough around the edges, but he loved Maria and respected her. He talked shit with his friends but for the most part he respected them. They gave him food and clothes when he was in need of it after all. For everyone else, he didn’t trust them, or he was indifferent to them. He could pick out the assholes or the potential assholes in a crowd. He was doing odd jobs for money (although he was also still stealing money from his father). His grades could use some improvement, but it was either boredom or lack of a place to actually sit down and do his schoolwork with zero distraction. It wasn’t stupidity or lack of motivation. In other words, Cross didn’t fit the stereotype of ‘troubled poor kid’ at least not fully.

The two of them dated until Cross was nearly 14 ½ years old. It wasn’t like they broke up or anything like that. No. What happened was that life had decided Cross was enjoying his life way too much and needed to be knocked down a few pegs. Well, a lot of pegs. Maria managed to convince Cross to join the school talent show that year, which she had also signed up for (as she had done years prior). Together they picked out their songs.

So, the two of them practiced together until the big day. Maria was slotted to perform first which meant Cross was sitting backstage sweating and freaking out. The only people here to support him were his friends and Maria. His father was too busy drinking his life away and his mother was probably off getting high somewhere. Holy shit he couldn’t believe he was doing this. He couldn’t believe that Maria actually managed to convince him to do this. After Maria’s excellent performance (which Cross sadly didn’t pay much attention to because he was trying not to piss himself backstage), there were a few acts before Cross’s.

“You’re going to be great out there! Just relax and take a deep breath,” she cooed as she moved the hair out of Cross’s face.

“What if I forget the lyrics or the chords?”

“You won’t. Cross you said it yourself, you know this song like the back of your hand. You sang this for your mother countless times. Even so, this is a talent show. It’s not like this is going to make or break you as a musician,” Maria reassured.

“Easy for you to say. The entire school is out there. You’re not the one with some weird mask on their face and your dad isn’t known for being the town drunk-“

“Cross it’s not a weird mask. It looks sexy on you. It’s you. Who cares what they think? You’re a talented singer and guitar player. You’re nothing like your asshole father. I know that. Your mom knows that. Your friends know that. The haters can eat shit. You’re going to knock em’ dead! Look, just pretend you’re singing to me, alright? We’re in my bedroom and we’re just singing together. There’s no one else around. Just us.”

Fine. Alright. It’s just the two of them. It’s just the two of them singing together in her bedroom. Cross isn’t currently walking out on a stage, he’s not currently being blinded by harsh stage lights, there isn’t a crowd of people in front of him. He’s in Maria’s bedroom, about to sing her a song-

Life was never that simple. Life always had this sick, twisted way of bringing you back into
reality. It was never really gentle either. It always went from you being on Cloud Nine to having that nice little cloud you’re on suddenly dissipate, sending your ass plummeting back down to Earth. He didn’t even get the chance to sing or play for the crowd before ‘something’, to this day he has no idea what, came plummeting down from the rafters, covering him head to toe in the most rancid smelling shit he had ever smelled in his life. He could never identify what the hell that was, but he could always remember the smell. Sometimes just thinking about the memory made him gag. Fuck, he couldn’t even remember what song he was even going to sing.

Cross couldn’t even hear the roaring laughter. All he felt was numb. He would’ve opened his mouth, so he didn’t have to breathe the foul smell that covered every inch of his body, but he was afraid it was going to get into his mouth. He didn’t remember how he got backstage, but he could remember Maria crying and apologizing profusely. He didn’t know why. It wasn’t her fault. Kids were just assholes. He could remember walking back to Maria’s house before the talent show ended and feeling cold seep into his bones as the filth cooled and dried on his body. He stood in her shower for what felt like hours, scrubbing his skin raw and washing his hair countless times until the smell was gone from it.

“They’re fucking assholes! They’re all fucking assholes! No more than that! They’re more than assholes! Who the fuck would even think to do this!? This isn’t like that fucking movie ‘Carrie’!” Maria raged as brushed through his long hair, “I should’ve never suggested it. I swear if I would’ve known I would’ve never suggested—"

“Maria it’s fine.”

“No, it’s not fine Marian!” Maria protested (she soon had the right to call Cross by his real name in their relationship so the fact she was using it now didn’t piss him off. It did surprise him though because she only used it during sex, after sex, other loving moments, or moments like these that were important in some way, shape or form), “None of this is fine! Your dad beating the shit out of you and getting shit faced every night! Your mom getting high every night or you having to take care of her when she breaks down! Your father screwing up your eye! None of this is fine or normal! You deserve so much better than this!”

“Yeah, well life doesn’t seem to think so. The world is shit Maria. All we ever do is eat, shit, sleep, go to work for forty plus years, raise a family and die. That’s life. I mean sure you got your good parts of life and it’s either good enough for you to keep living through this shit or it’s not and you end up offing yourself in some way. Sure, some asshole kids dumped shit on me, and it sucks major ass, but I have enough to keep living. Having shit dumped on me is not enough for me to call it quits and if I find the motherfucker who did I’ll fuck them up so bad that they’ll have to figure out a new way to take a shit because it surely won’t be out of their ass. Not after I shove their head so far up there!” Cross responded. He just wanted to forget this night. He didn’t want to think about how fucked his home life is or how fucked the world was. All he wanted to do was to lie down on Maria’s bed and sleep with her in his arms.

“I’m still sorry,” Maria whimpered, tears in her eyes.

“Don’t be. Don’t cry about it. It’s not your fault. Your suggestion was wonderful. Life just decided to take a shitty downward spiral,” Cross explained as he took Maria’s hand in his before pressing a kiss against the knuckles, “Let’s just forget the world for a while. I just want wanna lay here with you and stare at your beautiful face. Can’t we do that?”

So, they did, and while they were laying there next to each other in her room filled with stuffed animals and medals won from her choir competitions, Cross shoved down the self-loathing and the pain. Just like he always did ever since he could remember. Ever since he came to the realization that it didn’t matter how hard he cried or begged, the world was still a cold, heartless bitch. If he
cried, he got hit. If he showed up at the wrong place and wrong time, he got hit. If he forgot to call his dad sir, he got hit. If he forgot to make dinner or clean the house, or his dad found out he stole more of his precious money, he got hit. If he was becoming way too happy with his life, life hit him back.

Life wasn’t done hitting back though.

A couple weeks later Maria was out with her girlfriends. They got into a car accident. Maria and another one of her friends died on impact. They were hit by a drunk driver. It wasn’t his father (thank God or Cross would’ve killed that fucker the moment he found out) but it was one of his father’s friends (and it still took everything within Cross not to break down his fucking door and kill him).

Cross walked into school that day, wondering why everyone was moping and crying. Tiedoll was the one who approached him and told him the news. Cross turned sharply on his heel and walked out of those fucking school doors without looking back. He didn’t return to school until almost a full week later and it was Tiedoll who showed up to his house and dragged his ass back. The day Maria died was when Cross began the downward spiral into the same drunk his father was. He quit playing his guitar (but kept it around and named it after Maria). He quit singing. He quit giving a fuck about school and only did enough to pass. He started to go out partying every night and hooking up with women, never settling down with just one. He was out to drown his sorrows and party his cares away.

~ Mother’s Death (Cross Age: 15)

He should’ve stayed home that night! Damn it, if only he stayed home! He could’ve watched her; he could’ve tried to plead with her to put down that fucking syringe for a night! He didn’t though. He was too busy getting ass and wasted. Just like his father, although he preferred getting wasted over ass. By the time he got home she was cold. Long gone with a syringe sticking out of her arm. He failed her. He had failed her the moment he knew something was up and didn’t stop her after her first use all those years ago. He failed her when he didn’t stay home that night. Now his mother was gone. She was alive one moment and gone the next.

The funeral was as simple as it got as was to be expected by his dad who wanted to make sure he had enough money to support his drinking habit rather than give mom even a decent funeral. Mana stood on one side of him, crying enough for all three of them even though he didn’t even know his mom. Neah stood on the other side of him, seeming to take great pleasure in taking in the misery around him like the fucking psycho he was. Cross stood there. He just stood there. He had no more tears to cry. He cried plenty upon seeing her dead body on her bed. He was surprised his father even fucking went to the funeral.

After the funeral, Cross went out and got so wasted that he blacked out for the very first time. He woke up at Tiedoll’s house. So of course, that meant a nice long lecture from ‘goody two shoes’.

“You know you got so drunk you pissed yourself last night,” Tiedoll stated with that stupid ‘disappointed mother’ expression on his face.
“Yeah? So?” Cross grumbled, his head currently in Tiedoll’s toilet after purging last night’s bad decisions.
“That isn’t exactly healthy you know! You’re still in high school! Look at you, you’re sick!”
“Ughh not so loud…”
“Cross what if you got hurt? What if you got alcohol poisoning and died?”
“Who the fuck would miss me?”

“I would! Bak would! Komui! Mana! Neah!”

“We all fucking know Neah would dance on my fucking grave, the fucking psychopath! Komui and Bak ignore the fuck out of me at school! The only reason you and Mana would miss me would be because your total wusses!”

“Komui and Bak ignore you because you become putrid and mean when you’re drunk! You know I could do the same! I don’t have to put up with your drunken ass! I didn’t have to let you in last night or change your urine-soaked pants! I don’t have to put up with your hung-over crabby ass!” Tiedoll snapped, actually cursing for once (shit he meant business).

“Then why do you!?” Cross yelled back, his bloodshot eye glaring at Tiedoll.

“Because that’s what friends do! We support each other at our worst!”

“Fuck you! I don’t need friends! I’m not some weak ass fool like you! You’re weak Tiedoll and sooner or later that weakness is going to bite you in the ass! It’s a dog eat dog world out there! Your kindness and charity will only get you taken advantage of! Next time, just fucking leave me for dead! Alright!? I didn’t fucking ask you for shit!” Cross yelled back, before clumsily storming out of Tiedoll’s house.

He knew that wasn’t fair to Tiedoll, but with little pride he had left Cross couldn’t bring himself to apologize until years later. After his mother’s death Cross became toxic and angrier. Angrier than he had before. It’s like everything he bottled up inside was just now coming to the surface and Cross was now finally living out the life of a demon. Maybe his father was right.

Bak and Komui were the first to drop out of his life. Tiedoll remained distant but was still always there no matter how much Cross raged and got shit faced. Neah was Neah. Now that Cross thought about it Neah probably loved to watch the train wreck that was Cross. Mana was…well he was Mana. He still expressed his concern like Tiedoll, but he wasn’t as naggy as the puffball.

There was a point in time Cross actually fought back against his father and won and that was after his mother’s death. Cross caught him selling some of his mother’s stuff (jewelry, books, etc) for money so he could spend it on drinking and Cross flipped his shit.

“She’s dead now! Not like she’s going to be using any of this shit now!” his father yelled at him.

“That’s not the point you fucking idiot! That was her stuff! That has sentimental value! You can’t just sell that shit so you can get drunk!”

“I bought her that shit! That’s my fucking money! I decide what to do with it and some shit for brain son of mine isn’t going to tell me what to do!”

“Fuck you! You are the reason why she is dead! If you weren’t such a piece of shit to her, she would be here right now! I wouldn’t look like this! I wouldn’t have this mask on my face! You are the reason why my life is so fucking fucked! You are the reason why we barely have enough money for food! We haven’t had electricity for the past few fucking days because you keep spending money on booze! Fuck you! I fucking hate you! I wish you died instead of mom! I wish you would die already so I don’t have to fucking look at you!” Cross yelled, his voice cracking painfully as he raged at his father.

“You fucking piece of shit!” his father yelled before launching himself at Cross, his hand back and raised, ready to punch Cross square in the face. Cross was a lot fast though and moved his head to
the side, his dad’s fist hitting nothing but air. Then Cross let him have it and hit him squarely in the
nose before kicking him in the gut, sending his ass to the ground. He really let himself go.

His father put a hand on his nose, blood already trickling down his face, before looking up at
Cross. He seemed surprised that his son actually made him land on his ass this time around.

“If I ever catch you selling mom’s shit again, I will break your fucking legs old man. I’ll make
sure you never fucking walk again and laugh as you go through DTs before your inevitable death.
You want your fucking booze money so bad? I’ll get you your fucking booze money. Watch me,”
Cross said, his voice cold as ice as he glared down at his father. Then he walked out of the house to
do just that.

~Neah Disappears, Mana Goes Off the Deep End, Father Dies (Cross Age: 17)

Neah was gone. MIA. Poof. Disappeared. Nobody knew where or why. Mana didn’t even know
where or why. All that Cross knew as he walked into that school building was that Mana was
beyond consoling.

“He’s gone! He’s gone! I don’t know where he’s at! Cross you have to help me!” Mana wailed,
running up to Cross and gripping onto his arms like a lifeline.

“Who is gone!? What are you talking about!?” Cross exclaimed, pushing Mana roughly off of him.
What the fuck was his problem!? Cross glared angrily at the students giving them weird, freaked
out stares. He was causing a scene. Cross wasn’t liking the attention.

“No! He’s not! The Earl took him! I know he did! I know he did!” Mana shrieked like a mad man,
“I’m next! He’s going to kill me next! You can’t let him kill me Cross! Please don’t let him kill
me!”

“Who the fuck is the Earl! Mana you’re not making any damn sense calm down!”

“Sorry kid, but you’re coming with us,” a police officer called out as they pushed their way through
the crowd of students towards Mana.

“No! No no no no! Cross! Don’t let them take me away! Cross you have to believe me! The Earl
took him away from me! Neah is in danger! He’s going to kill me! Neah is going to
die! I know he is! Cross help me! Get off of me! Cross! Cross!” Mana continued to scream as the
police officer got in between them and started to take Mana away. Why wasn’t Neah coming out?
Where was he? This had to be some sort of prank, right? He would never prank Mana in this way.
Not to this extent.

Something was wrong. Something was wrong. Something was wrong. Cross could feel it. That
sinking feeling in his gut. Before Cross knew it he was pushing back against the officers as ice cold
fear filled his gut and the hairs on the back of his neck stood up.

“Hey, leave him alone. Leave him alone! Mana you have to calm down! Mana calm down! Leave
him the hell alone! Let me talk to him!” Cross yelled as he shoved back the officer trying to pull
him away from Mana. Cross reached out his hand towards Mana. He didn’t know who this Earl
was or what he wanted with Mana or Neah. He didn’t even know if this man was real or just part of
the weird fantasy, he had made up with Neah. He knew Mana was disturbed. Still, seeing how
blown Mana’s eyes were. How fearful and pale he looked, like he saw a ghost, Cross couldn’t help but try and come to his aid. He was his friend for crying out loud. He was insane and was having a total breakdown, but Cross knew that look! That was the same look his mother had during her fits!

“Get off of me! Let me talk to him! Let me to talk to him! Mana!” Cross yelled desperately. The cops were having enough of this and decided to use their taser on Mana to get him restrained. Those fuckers!

“What the fuck! What the fuck did you do to him!!?” Cross yelled in outrage. He didn’t need that! All he needed was someone to talk to, damn it! Just as Cross swung around to punch the nearest police officer in the face, he felt his whole body seize up painfully and he dropped to the floor like a sack of potatoes. After five seconds of pure pain riveting throughout his entire body, he laid there, his body shaking. He had been also tazed. Fun. Least to say he was no help to Mana who was hauled out by two police officers. Cross also got to take a fun little trip to the police station for attempting to assault a police officer. After a harsh slap to the wrist (as the saying goes), Cross was allowed to go because he didn’t actually land a hit on any of the police officers. He had no idea where his friend was or what happened to him.

He went to school the next day. No Neah. No Mana. There were rumors that Mana was put into the nut house. Days continued to go by with still no sign of Neah or Mana. No clue. Nada. Nothing. Neah was there one moment and gone the next. That was also the last he had ever seen Mana. He heard rumors years later and tried to follow them in order to catch a glimpse of his friend (and to hopefully find Neah) to no avail. He would find Mana one day though, just not alive like how he originally thought their meet was going to be.

Cross graduated high school and didn’t bother to go to the ceremony. It didn’t matter anyways because his father didn’t give two shits and his so-called friends weren’t exactly talking to him anymore. The ones that were had disappeared off the face of the planet. Cross was free from the hellish confines of the school. There was one good thing about it all though and that was the secretary Martha whom became quite a good friend of Cross’s over his four years of hell school (I mean high school). He talked to her a lot when he was sent to the office. On his very last day of school he gave her a loving kiss on the cheek, thanked her for bull shitting with him for all these years, and bid farewell to that piece of shit of a building. He also made sure to flip that fucker off and he didn’t give two shits that Mrs. Watson (the annoying as fuck English teacher) saw him do so from her classroom window.

About a month after graduation, the asshole, the monster of his childhood, the bane of existence finally passed away by getting so drunk that his breathing stopped completely. Good riddance. The funeral was even smaller than his mother’s, with just Cross and the preacher. The preacher was there to do his job. Cross was there to make sure that the fucker was officially dead and six feet under. Cross was officially alone in this world.

Sure, Cross had his booze and his women, but ultimately it came down to the simple fact that he was truly and utterly alone.

~The Birth of Timcanpy (Cross Age: 25)

“Please fucking work this time. I really don’t want to call the fire department for the fourth time this week,” Cross muttered as he flicked the yellow orb with wings he created out of sheer boredom. Yes. Sheer boredom. He just wanted to see if he could do it and here it was. Well, at least he hoped. He was almost ready to throw this fucker away after six hundred failed attempts to get this stupid fuck running. Yes, six hundred failed attempts. Why did he decide to create such a weird fucking little thing? He had no idea. Honestly, he was surprised he even had the motivation to do this. Six hundred attempts? Jeez!
“Hello? Are you going to wake up? Come on man I worked so hard on you. I don’t even fucking know why but at least work so I don’t feel like my life is a total fucking failure.”

Then the little thing made a whirring sound of sorts and its tail that ended in a little swirl moved a little bit. Cross raised an eyebrow. Okay? Was that it?

Well this little invention was just getting started (Cross only hoped this time it would shoot out flames from its mouths or spit acid. Yeah, he didn’t know how the fuck that happened because he did not program it to do that. At all.). Thanks to Bak and Komui over the years, Cross knew a thing or two about robotics. He was always quite the science nerd in the past. This was nothing more than him trying to build a robot of sorts, something to help around the house, but it became much more. The little robot flapped its wings and spun in circles for a little bit.

“What? Are you stupid or something?” Cross asked.

The little robot heard him and spun around to face its creator. Then the body of the robot which had a yellow cross on it (because duh he made it and his name is Cross, it was his signature of sorts) split open into a grin, revealing several sharp little teeth.

“Oh, so you can hear me this time and you smile. Great. That’s a lot better than trying to eat me alive,” Cross commented.

The golem snapped its teeth challengingly, causing Cross to raise his eyebrow.

“Alright then. We’ve gotten a lot farther than previous times before. Let’s start with something simple,” Cross said as he looked around his dingy little room. His eyes landed on his cellphone on his nightstand, “Alright. See that device over there on the nightstand? It’s a cell phone. Go over and grab it, then bring it back here.”

The robot golem did as it was told. It flew over and grabbed the device in its mouth before flying back over to Cross slowly. However, instead of dropping the cellphone on the desk in front of Cross, the stupid bastard ate it, complete with a gulping noise.

Cross’s eye twitched.

“Are you fucking kidding me right now!? You know that costs money, right!? I need that for work!” Cross yelled.

The little golem grinned once again, not at all fearful of the man’s rage. Then, without hesitation, the golem coughed it back up. Oh. Good. So, his phone wasn’t destroyed. Where did all that saliva come from though, Cross noted in disgust. He didn’t program the robot thing, whatever it’s called to contain saliva. Cross checked his phone, surprised that it even still worked.

“Alright. You’re a little bit slow but that’s a given considering this is your first time fully functioning without any issues. I’ve programmed you to be able to learn, to record things, and to be practically indestructible. You can grow and shrink at will and apparently even though this is your first time out and about you got quite the personality about you. I can’t believe this actually worked, “Cross murmured, more to himself than to the robot. God he was really lonely, wasn’t he?

“You’re gonna need a name…let’s see….what about Timcanpy? Tim for short?”

The golem seemed to think it over for a few moments, before it grinned once again up at Cross and made a small whirring noise in agreement.

“Alright, cool. Cool….”

Yeah, Cross wished he could say that the rest of getting to know the little fiend went as smoothly.
Turns out there was a lot of things he didn’t program the little shit to do, but he somehow fucking learned. He didn’t know how. He just did. First of all, Timcanpy loved to eat his tobacco. Timcanpy also loved to eat anything else in sight if it meant pissing Cross off. Timcanpy also had a tendency to get eaten by cats, but Cross was happy to see that Timcanpy was, in fact, indestructible. Timcanpy was also annoying at times and got needy sometimes. He loved to sit on Cross’s head and chase after butterflies. It was a curious little thing, which was how Cross made him, but that was also why he seemed to be eaten by a cat every other week or so. It was a small price to pay to have such a neat little thing running around the house (even if it destroyed shit, annoyed the fuck out of Cross, as well as many other questionable things). He also found Timcanpy loved to chase after laser pointers, which provided quite a few hours of entertainment.

Timcanpy’s creation made Cross a little less lonely and later on would prove to be quite useful in keeping tabs on Mana later on.

~The One Who Saw Potential (Cross Age: 26)

“Cross?” Tiedoll exclaimed, holding an infant in his arms.

“Hey! Whassup?” Cross slurred drunkenly on Tiedoll’s doorstep.

“What do you want?” Tiedoll asked, his eyes narrowed a little bit as he took in Cross’s drunken form.

“Uhhh…I kinda forgot where my house is,” Cross chuckled, Timcanpy was already flying around in Tiedoll’s house, making himself right at home. Timcanpy stopped right in front of one of Tiedoll’s children, a black boy who looked to be about ten years of age. Both of his eyes were clouded over. He was blind.

“Marie, go upstairs please,” Tiedoll commanded politely of his son. Marie, who held out his hand for Tim to rest on, obeyed his father. Timcanpy flew back over to Cross’s side.

“Can’t you use uhh…” Tiedoll trailed off.

“Timcanpy.”

“Timcanpy to take you home?”

“No, this little shit would probably lead me to a ditch somewhere and just abandon me. Besides, don’t you miss me? It’s been years since we talked. When the hell did you decide to get another brat? Isn’t one enough for ya?” Cross slurred.

Tiedoll put a hand over the infant’s head who began to cry, flabbergasted at Cross’s language.

“Fine fine. Come in, but please refrain from swearing. I have kids here.”

“Ahh they’ll learn it eventually Tiedoll.”

“That may be so but if you wish to stay here you better refrain from using that sort of language or I will throw you out.”

“Fine,” Cross hiccupped as he collapsed on the couch in Tiedoll’s living room.

Tiedoll sighed, throwing a blanket unceremoniously on Cross, “Sleep it off. I don’t want to talk to you while you’re drunk. Don’t be making a bunch of noise either. Marie has school in the morning and Daisya needs to sleep.”
Cross was already passed out even before he threw a blanket over his form.

When he awoke the next day, it was to the sound of a crying baby and a throbbing headache. Cross got up with a groan, holding his aching head. Where the hell was he? This wasn’t his house…

“Good morning. Did you sleep well?” Tiedoll asked, holding a cup of coffee out to Cross, a crying Daisya in his hands.

“What do you think?” Cross shot back sassily before taking the cup of coffee. He nodded his head at the kid in Tiedoll’s arms, “Who is this crying little imp?”

“His name is Daisya.”

“What made you decide to raise two boys single handedly? Was life not hard enough for you?”

“What made you decide to get drunk all the time? Are you trying to make your life more difficult?”

“Damn. You’ve gotten sassier last time we talked.”

“You said you would keep your language clean.”

“I did? When?”

“Last night.”

“Oh…yeah I didn’t remember that.”

Tiedoll sighed, “Of course you wouldn’t.”

A few minutes of silence pass until Tiedoll blurts out, “When are you gonna quit fooling around and get serious?”

Cross looked up in curiosity, “Hmmm?”

“Cross, you’re falling into your father’s footsteps. Ever since Maria died you’ve done nothing with yourself, other than making Timcanpy. You keep losing job after job. You sleep with woman after woman. Every night you get drunk! Don’t you want to do more for yourself? Don’t you want to settle down? To not worry about living paycheck to paycheck? To raise a family?”

“You’re starting to sound like a stupid commercial Tiedoll,” Cross commented, “Besides, what does it matter? Life hates me. Ever since Maria died it’s been screwing me around. My mother died. Neah is gone. Mana went crazy. My dad is gone. Komui and Bak are gone. I got nobody. I was born alone and I’m going to die alone like the demon I am.”

“You’re not a demon Cross.”

“Then what the hell am I? I got fired from my job. All I have is this stupid little yellow orb with wings.”

“Language,” Tiedoll politely reminded, earning an eye roll from Cross, “Well, what do you want to be?”

“I don’t know. I didn’t think I’d make it this far. I wasn’t even trying to,” Cross shrugged.

“Well, you never wanted to be like your father…” Tiedoll trailed off.
“And yet here we are! It’s in the genetic code!”

“You’re going to blame genes on this?”

“Yeah. You got a problem with that?”

“Yeah, I do actually. You were never the type to just give up Cross. If people had a problem with you or wanted to pick a fight with you, you knocked them on their butt and told them to go shove it. What happened to that?”

“Adulting happened. Life happened.”

“Well that’s quite the excuse.”

“Excuse me?”

“You heard me. Let me know when you’re done with your excuses and you’re ready to shape up, alright? I need to feed my baby.”

Cross stared at Tiedoll’s retreating back as he went into the kitchen, wondering just what he had in mind.

~

Curious as ever, Cross actually did take Tiedoll up on his offer. Before he left Tiedoll’s house he had an interview set up at the police station.

“Don’t I need a degree or something for this?”

“Yeah, but I’m sure they’ll be able to place you somewhere while you work on that. After all, you invented Timcanpy and you have always been quite the observant one during our childhood, even with just one eye. Besides, don’t you want to try and find out whatever happened to Neah and Mana? This may be the perfect job for you to have,” was Tiedoll’s explanation.

So, that was how Cross got his job starting as a police officer. Sure, he had to try to keep clean (which he managed…sometimes.), he mostly drank at home and when he did it was usually binge drinking rather than drinking everyday like he was used to. After finally earning his degree and all that jazz, Cross finally found some sort of purpose in his life. He also got to find out more about Neah and Mana. There wasn’t a whole lot of information to begin with, mostly on the Neah front, but he was able to track Mana’s whereabouts.

He was a circus clown in a traveling circus and changed his name from Mana Campbell, to Mana Walker.

~Little Bird (Cross Age: 34)

Shit. Cross had just arrived at the scene of a pretty grisly car wreck, which was nothing new exactly. He went to quite a few of them starting out as a police officer. However, this one was different. The rain was pouring and there was thunder in the far-off distance. It had just begun to shift from winter to spring and while they began to see some thunderstorms pop up in their area, there have also been days with some snow. It was a cold night, around seven. The sun had just gone down on the horizon and Cross had been called out here to assess the damage and file a report.

The car was totaled. It was a one car crash and from the tire marks on the road, it must’ve
hydroplaned off the road and into a nearby tree. That was Cross’s guess. As Cross approached the car, his flashlight slowly sweeping over broken glass that was scattered around the area, Cross could see it was an old car. Didn’t even have seatbelts. That was illegal in this day and age. As Cross continued to look at the crash site, he saw him. He was laying on the hood of the car, covered in blood. He could recognize that face anywhere though.

It was Mana.

“Fuck,” Cross sighed. Damn it he didn’t want to meet Mana again like this. Not like this. Never like this. He was hoping he’d meet him again over a cup of coffee, maybe with Neah who had been miraculously found. Some fairy tale dream that was. Cross lowered his head and closed his eyes, his jaw tightening as he tried to reel back his emotions.

Then he heard a little whimper. Barely audible. Damn, he thought he was hearing things at first. Cross slowly walked over in front of the car, quite a few feet away, his flashlight slowly sweeping the area before it landed on a little body. A child. Cross looked back at the paramedics and other police officers, surprised that they hadn’t noticed. Cross stepped closer towards the frail, body. A red, deformed left hand. An oven mitt that was laying a foot away must’ve been used to cover it up, Cross thought. The child had brown hair and glazed gray eyes that were only little slits. A little boy? He was still breathing, miraculously. After being thrown that far out of a moving vehicle he really shouldn’t be. There was an odd cut made into the boy’s left eye and was bleeding profusely. It was the star that was cut into his forehead that threw Cross for a loop.

That star in particular looked familiar. It was a pentacle, like what Neah drew when they were kids. It looked like the same symbol that was on those akuma’s foreheads that Mana always drew to. What the fuck did this mean? The little boy whimpered again loudly. Cross looked back up at his coworkers and the paramedics and back down at the boy. He knew he should leave him in their hands. He knew it. But that arm…that face. They’d put him in an orphanage for sure. He probably wouldn’t even get adopted. Not with an arm like that.

He knew he could get fired for this, after all this could be considered tampering with evidence/witness reports considering if this kid even made through the night. Still, this kid was with Mana. Cross failed Mana in the past that day they took him away. Cross felt it was time to repay his debt. Besides, looking down at the kid, he felt this strange kind of pull towards him. One that he didn’t have with the other kids he helped. He had to admit, the kid was cute.

So, Cross took off his coat and gently wrapping up the small, pathetic, frail little thing in there. Damn he was skinny. Didn’t Mana ever feed this kid? Then he carefully picked the small child up and carried him to his car. He laid him down on the passenger side to keep an eye on him, letting Timcanpy inspect the newcomer before he made two phone calls. The first one was to Tiedoll.

“Yeah…I’m gonna need a huge favor from you…I gotta take some weeks off from work…”

The next call went to Mother a woman he had met when he was a bit younger.

“Hey there old hag, I found a little runt and I need to know how to take care of it, so it doesn’t die on me. I’ll be over there in twenty minutes.”

Chapter End Notes

(Heyyy guys so I finally wrote a summary somewhat of Cross’s past! I’m sorry ahead
of time for any mistakes, I wrote a good portion of this on pure adrenaline alone! Hope you guys enjoyed it. If you guys have any suggestions or parts of his past, you’re more curious to see more of let me know! I may just turn this into a series, maybe not, who knows! I know I didn’t get to Martha or Mother exactly, which I’m sorry about but this was getting super super long and I was trying to go for a basic summary of sorts. After all, I got officially two more weeks of summer on the dot and I have a lot of drabbles I want to try and finish before those two weeks are up. That being said, some things need to be cut short! Once again if you have any suggestions, let me know! See you next time!)
Cross huffed in annoyance as he watched the screaming kids currently running around his lawn chair, watching one in specific because bad luck seemed to follow him everywhere. Someone also thought it would be funny to give the kid some monster energy drink, so he was absolutely losing his damn mind right now. No matter how child proof Cross made things, Allen always found a way to somehow get hurt in the end. Or someone decides to throw a wrench in there and test that plan…like feeding him some fucking energy drink, I’m looking at you Komui-

After the billionth go around of Allen and Lavi running around his chair, Cross reached out his hand, grabbing the nape of both Allen and Lavi (He didn’t grab Lenalee because Komui would throw a fit) before sitting their energetic butts down and force feeding them water because it was hot as fuck outside. Plus, he thought he’d be able to dilute Allen’s system of the monster energy by filling it with water (that didn’t do anything but make the kid need to pee every five minutes). Once he was satisfied by how much water each boy consumed, he sent them back out to the wild with both brats cackling like hyenas.

“I will never forgive you for feeding my kids drugs,” Cross growled as he glared at Komui.

“How do you know it was me?” Komui asked, offended.

“You have a bloody monster can right in front of you!”

“Yeah, but you can’t prove I fed some to your kid.”

“You gave him a small cup with the shit in it! I tasted it before, I know you gave him it!”

“…So, it’s really hot out today huh?”

“Don’t change subjects Komui!”

“Your kids are going near the river again.”

“Really?” Cross said, not believing Komui fully but he actually turned to look behind him to confirm that yes, those snot nosed little brats was near the god damned river again.

“God damnit! Brats you get away from the damn river before you slip and fall in! Don’t make me come over there!” Cross yelled, watching as Allen proceeded to shoot him a challenging glare. God damnit it was too hot for this…

“I swear to God you two…!” Cross threatened as he got up and began to walk towards them. Lavi rightfully backed away from the river upon Cross beginning to make good on his threat. However, it seemed Lavi had the shared braincell today because Allen wasn’t moving and seemed a lot more ballsier than usual. Lenalee on the other hand was away from the river because she was Lenalee and she knew the moment she put herself in any kind of danger Komui would throw a huge fit.

“Allen get away from the water right now or I’m gonna paddle your ass!” Cross threatened as he stomped closer. No dice. Allen was now smirking at him, not at all threatened by the wrath of Cross. That only pissed Cross off more as he stomped all the way to Allen to try and grab him, but the little boy was too quick and took off at a sprint. As Cross tried to catch up to Allen who ran
near the side of the river with ease, Cross’s foot slipped on a patch of loose earth and he proceeded to take a little dive into the river.

“Well it was nice knowing you dude,” Lavi squeaked out as he backed away from the drenched the man in the river whose anger was rising dramatically with every second that passed. Lenalee looked like she was having a hard time deciding if she wanted to laugh or cry. Allen didn’t seem at all perturbed until he saw one glowing, angry, red eye glare at him from behind a long curtain of red hair. Cross watched as the brat’s owlish eyes blinked, surprised that Cross had fallen into the river, to absolute fear. The exchange took less than a second before the chase began with Allen sprinting like his ass was on fire (which Cross may actually set on fire or make it feel like it because of the mass ass paddling he would be receiving because of how pissed he was) with a drenched Cross barreling after him. Then the two disappeared leaving Komui, Lavi, and Lenalee alone wondering what would become of Allen’s fate.

After several minutes that felt like centuries, a panting Cross returned, carrying a crying Allen like a football. Well at least he wasn’t dead.

“Sit and don’t move until I say you can,” Cross growled as he set Allen down on a blanket and sat in his lawn chair with a huff.

“But I don’t wanna sit, it hurts,” Allen whined.

“Well then lay down! It’s not my fault you decided to go and be dumb. You could’ve drowned in that shit! You’re lucky it was me and not you that fell in,” Cross huffed in annoyance, glaring at Lavi who looked lost without his buddy.

“What you want some to Junior?” Cross threatened.

“Nope! I like my butt as it is sir!”

“Good!”

Lavi wasn’t bored for too long however as Tiedoll rolled in with his band of snot-nosed brats. Tiedoll took one look at the soaked Cross and the pouting, tear stained cheeked Allen laying down on the blanket on the ground. Cross caught him looking at the two of them and glared.

“Don’t ask,” Cross growled.

Tiedoll held up his hands in surrender, turning his attention to Allen instead, “Wanna see what I got? I got sparklers. We can light them up when it gets darker.”

Tiedoll grabbed the cardboard box of sparklers out of plastic bag to show to the sad little boy who looked utterly confused (Fyi: they’re the type of fireworks where you just hold it in your hands and the end sparkles). What were sparklers?

“Really Tiedoll he’s supposed to be in trouble,” Cross sighed.

“Why are you surprised? You know Tiedoll spoils all the kids whenever he’s around,” Komui chimed in, watching Lavi say some off handed comment, causing Kanda to tackle him to the ground in anger. Tiedoll was ignoring Cross in favor of explaining what sparklers were to Allen.

“Are you excited to see fireworks tonight?” Tiedoll asked the child.

“Yeah, I only seen them on TV from what I can remember,” Allen responded.
“You’ve never seen them away from television before?”

“Not once.”

Tiedoll turned and gave Cross a look at this as if to say, ‘have you fully prepared him for this?’ Cross gave Tiedoll an annoyed look as if to say, ‘what the hell do you mean?’. Tiedoll sighed, turning back to Allen, “I think you’ve been punished enough. Why don’t you run off for awhile before the firework show starts?”

Allen looked back at Cross, seeking approval. Cross ‘tsked’ before saying, “Whatever, go.”

When Allen sprinted off Tiedoll finally turned back towards Cross.

“Cross I can’t believe you didn’t warn him about this.”

Cross rolled his eyes at the start of Tiedoll’s lecture, “What do you mean warn him? It’s fireworks. Kids love those things!”

“Yes, but not all children! Fireworks are loud and scary for some children! What if he reacts negatively to this? Are you prepared to deal with it?”

Hmmm…well he did have a point. Allen really hated thunderstorms…he also hated loud sudden noises, but fireworks were cool and colorful. Maybe he wouldn’t react so bad to something that was supposed to be positive and fun.

“You haven’t had you,” Tiedoll stated at Cross’s lack of response.

“He’ll be fine. Fireworks are supposed to be fun, not like thunderstorms or anything like that crap. Besides, he has me here.”

“I still really think you should’ve warned him ahead of time. This could be quite an unpleasant surprise for him.”

Cross sighed, unwilling to admit that he totally spaced out Allen’s possible reaction to this. How could he forget to account for this!? It was so blatantly obvious!

As the evening progressed, more people began to show up at the river, including vendors. This was a popular place to watch fireworks in town, so it was important to show up early to get a good spot. While time moved quickly for the brats running around, Cross was hot and bored to death. There was one good thing that came out of this though and that was when Tiedoll decided to send the kids out to get sno-cones. It gave some peace and quiet to Cross and plus the brat actually brought him back a sno-cone as a peace offering of sorts from earlier.

When the sky darkened enough Tiedoll began to light and pass out sparklers which was the coolest fucking thing since sliced bread, at least for Allen, but not so much in the beginning. In the beginning Allen was kind of freaked out by this sorcery.

“A-Ahhh! It’s gonna burn me! Make it stop, it’s following me!”

“Yeah idiot moyashi, it’s because you’re holding it!” Kanda shouted at Allen who was running around and flailing the sparkler in his hand, “Dude watch it you’re going to burn someone!”

“Haha look Al! I’m a wizard from Hogwarts now! Wingardium Leviosa!” Lavi shouted as he twirled around hyperactively with his lit sparkler, drawing shapes in the air. That seemed to distract Allen from his fear enough to start mimicking him, thinking it was super fun. After that Allen was just fine with this magical stick of sparkly fire that Tiedoll kept giving to him.
As the sky began to darken further, the children were then forcefully (In Cross’s case because his kids were particularly wired) told to sit and wait for the firework show. They didn’t want to lose the kids in the darkness, although Cross was sure he’d be able to see Allen from miles away because of how white his hair was. The kid was easily a beacon in the night. Not so much in the snow but there was plenty of months before that. Cross let Allen sit further up with his friends, even though he would rather have him by his side to assess his reaction to this new stimulus. Whatever, he was right behind him and he knew it. If he had any problems, he could run back to him.

Then, without warning, the first firework was little a soft boom was heard in the distance as a little ball of fire wiggled it way slowly up the sky before bursting, flamey red streaks came from the center unleashing a thundering boom. In an instant Allen went from happy and laughing with his friends to scared out of his little mind. In a blur of white that little boy ‘noped’ the fuck away from his friends and towards Cross for safety like clockwork. Cross really should’ve been able to guess this reaction, but he also didn’t want to assume and somehow influence the kid to have a scared reaction to the fireworks.

Allen was fine until he heard the loud banging sound and watched as the sky started on fire. It sounded exactly like thunder and in an instant Allen was not a fan of this outing that was supposed to be fun because ‘pretty things happening the sky’. He didn’t know it was supposed to make a loud noise and produce this mass blossom of flames. So, in an instant he ran to the only other thing here that could be possibly be more threatening than fireworks, and that was Cross. As the next firework lit off Allen was desperately climbing onto Cross’s lap and trying to become one with his torso like his life depended on it.

“Ow! Shit kid! Slow down or I’m going to drop you!” Cross growled as he tried to situate himself to accompany the scared child on his lap that who jolted violently at the next explosion at began to wail.

“We’re gonna die! We’re gonna die! They’re trying to kill us!”

“We’re not gonna die brat, nobody’s trying to kill us! It’s just gunpowder and shit exploding in the air. Ow! Kid that’s my fucking ribs!” Cross tried to explain as Allen tried to shut out the noise by nuzzling into him.

“No! They’re gonna kill us! They’re tryna’ start us on fire!”

Cross rolled his eyes patting the wailing child’s head. He was sure if he looked up, he’d see Tiedoll’s smug look, but instead he focused on the upset brat that was trying desperately to shut out the loud, thundering noises. Well, he sure didn’t want the kid to totally miss out on what was supposed to be a fun time, but he also didn’t want to force the kid to suffer through about fifteen to twenty minutes of loud, scary noises either.

“Brat you’re okay. We’re fine. The fireworks are not gonna hurt us. They’re loud and scary but they’re not gonna hurt us,” Cross explained as he tried to pull Allen away from him to situate him, so he was facing forward on his lap. Allen immediately threw more of a fit, wanting very much to just hide his head in Cross’s chest until the big scary noises were over.

“Oi oi oi calm down! Calm down! Let me show you what we’re gonna do here. All that’s in the sky is pretty lights alright? Here, I’ll get rid of the scary noises alright? Just sit your ass still,” Cross growled as he put his hands over the younger’s ears. Allen tried to squirm away from Cross, clearly not having it. Well, Cross wasn’t going to give up quite yet.

“Allen! Oi, Allen! Open your eyes and look up at the pretty lights. See these little motherfu-I mean
they can’t hurt you,” Cross said, trying to correct his language because Tiedoll was around…not at all because he was around children. He was pretty sure the kids gave less of a shit of what he said, it was Tiedoll who had the problem. He could barely take the usage of the word ‘jerk’ let alone ‘cocksucker or fuckface or…’ wait we’re getting off track here.

Allen continued to cry, but eventually he did open his watery eyes to look up at the pretty lights in the sky. Even though he could still feel the thundering booms in his chest, it was a little less scary with Cross’s hands over his ears to muffle the sound a bit. Plus, he was with Cross and Cross would be able to protect him by this witchcraft in the sky.

“See? Isn’t it pretty? What shapes do you see in them Allen?” Cross asked, deciding he’d distract the kid further by making his try to figure out possible shapes the fireworks made.

“That one looks like a pokeball,” Allen sniffled.

“Yeah sure…” Cross responded, he couldn’t remember what the fuck that was, but if it made the kid start to focus on how pretty and neat the fireworks were instead of how scary and loud they were, he was willing to agree to anything.

“That one looks like a top hat and that one looks like hair,” Allen said, continuing to point out shapes as his sobs subsided into astonished little gasps.

Cross hummed, watching as firework after firework exploded high in the sky. There were some fireworks that exploded lower in the sky which provoked a little bit of fear in Allen because he was afraid that the ground would start on fire. A few minutes into the firework show, Cross experimented by taking his hands off of Allen’s ears, to which the little boy immediately whined and grabbed the man’s hands to put them back on his ears. Cross pouted, but left his hands where they were, making a mental note to invest in noise cancelling headphones for the brat.

Then as fast as they appeared, the fireworks ended. It lasted for about fifteen minutes, but it felt like only five minutes to Allen. Cross felt like it was eons.

“Alright brats let’s go and try and beat traffic,” Cross said, picking up the youngest of the brats he was in charge with for the night and waiting for the second one who dragged himself slowly over. Apparently both brats were beginning to crash hard. While Lavi was nearly sleep walking, Allen was already dozing in Cross’s arms.

“I want to be carried to,” Lavi whined, lifting his arms up towards Cross who was already rolling his eyes at the idea.

“You’re bigger than Allen though,” Cross whined

“Gramps doesn’t carry me! Besides I aint that big,” Lavi pouted and put on his best puppy dog eyes. Even though Allen was the master of it, Cross could see his charm rubbed off on the little red-headed gremlin because he had a hard time saying no.

“Ughhh…fine,” Cross groaned as he knelt down to grab the other brat with his other arm.

Lavi grinned before happily latching onto Cross, momentarily quarreling with Allen as they fought for space.

“If you two keep fighting I’ll drop you and force you both to walk back to the car,” Cross growled at the two pathetic whining humans in his arms. That got them to stop rather quickly. It felt like eternity walking back to his car with two snoozing brats in his arms. Sure, he was happy their hyperactivity wore off…but damn it he wished they didn’t crash this hard. By the time he got
home, which was late because he didn’t beat traffic like he wanted, he had to carry each brat in from the car one by one. Each of them refused to wake up long enough to drag their little behinds to bed. As Cross laid Lavi down beside Allen on his bed, he heard it. The loud bang of some asshole neighbor lighting off a firework late at night.

In an instant Allen was roused awake and began to cry. Shit. Just like clockwork, Lavi woke up because Allen woke up. Just because Allen was crying, Lavi began to cry to.

“Aw shit-Shhh…don’t cry. Damn fucking neighbors!” Cross cursed, sighing when both little boys continued to cry and reach out to him.

“God fucking-fine we’re going to my room to sleep…right after I make a complaint to the police.”

That is how Cross ended up with two brats laying on either side of him right before he fell asleep and how he got one brat’s foot in his face while the other was nearly falling off the damn bed.

Chapter End Notes

(The end. Shit July was a long time ago…I planned on doing this before July ended but…shit happened lol. By the way I am still working on my Tokyo Ghoul sequel. I got some written out, but school and work has kept me very busy that I’ve been too burned out to do any writing. I also ran out of some ideas for this series, or at least ideas that would make me motivated to keep writing. I hope sooner or later that works itself out…may be something to do with being burned out. So yeah, that’s why this be so short. Have a nice day! Hope you enjoyed!)
Teen Rebellion (Pt. 1)

Chapter Summary

This is Cross's POV of the whole Jake scenario. Some people wanted to see Cross handling a rebellious Allen so here you go! Trigger warning: Abusive boyfriend not respecting boundaries. Cross being pissed and cussing. If you guys read the triggery chapters then you know what is to come.

Chapter Notes

(Allen is 13 in this. Just turned 13. I wanted to play around with teenage rebellion a bit more and Cross’s reactions. I also wanted to play with the whole ‘Jake’ relationship a bit more and Cross’s reactions towards it. I may end up tweaking previous chapters up a little bit later on, for instance I’m thinking of making Link two years older than Allen instead of three because I want to write more high school stuff with those two. Especially Lavi. This specific drabble is tweaked a bit. Originally Allen’s relationship with Jake lasted three months. In this drabble, this is before he ‘dated’ Jake but was still hanging out with him and being influenced by him. Then it shifts into when he was actually dating him and their break up. I know my chronological order is a little messed up but I’m trying to make it fit with the original drabble time line as best as I can.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“What do you mean he’s not there? He said he was going over to hang out with his friends,” Cross questioned Tiedoll over the phone, staring warily up at the dark clouds slowly rolling into town. Allen had left earlier saying that he was going to hang out with his friends (which Cross automatically thought was Tiedoll’s kids and even if it wasn’t, it was probably involving his kids one way or another), which was fine. Cross trusted Allen’s friends.

Well, Cross forgot that they were under a winter mix blizzard warning later on tonight and began to get worried when he saw the clouds begin their descent on their town. He really didn’t want his brat out in a blizzard warning. Well dipstick forgot to take his cell phone so Cross couldn’t directly call Allen and let him know he wanted him to come home.

So, he decided to call Tiedoll and let him know he wanted Allen to come home before the snowstorm hit, only to find out Allen wasn’t there.

“Well my kids are all home. Perhaps he’s hanging out with Lenalee or Link. He may also be over at Bookman’s house with Lavi since his grandfather returned home, you can try there,” Tiedoll suggested.

“Alright, I’ll try Komui. Thanks Tiedoll,” Cross responded, not feeling too worried. It wasn’t the first time or the last time the whole friend group wasn’t hanging out together. Hell, the kid could also be over at Twinkies house, so he still had three places left to try.
So, he called Komui. No Allen. Okay. Fine. There was a good chance he was at Junior’s or Twinkie’s house, no big deal.

He called Bookman next. No Allen. Alright, so the kid was more than likely scarfing down Twinkies pastries, no big deal. No big deal, Cross thought to himself, though the sinking feeling in his stomach was getting worse and worse.

He called Twinkie’s cell phone.

“Sorry, he didn’t stop by. I’ll keep my eye out for him though,” Link offered. That’s when he felt his stomach hit the floor. Okay. Now he was worried.

“Alright, thanks Twinkie,” Cross sighed as he hung up the phone and smacked it down on the counter he was leaning on to watch the clouds come closer and closer. Where the hell was his son at? Cross’s first gut instinct was to jump into his car, tearing down the streets to go look for him. He held back though. Anita was at work and he didn’t want to miss Allen if he happened to come home in the next few minutes or so. Sure, it sucked Anita might be stuck at work, but at least he knew she was in a warm, safe, building. He had no idea if the brat was in one or roaming around in the streets in this cold weather. To be fair, Allen wasn’t a total idiot even though sometimes he acted like it. Allen could handle himself on the streets for the most part. Cross would wait a little bit to see if he showed up.

Five minutes go by. It feels like a fucking century. No Allen. The clouds are growing closer and it’s beginning to spit freezing rain. Cross resists the growing urge to get into his car.

Two more minutes go by. The raining ice pellets hit against the window faster. Cross can’t sit still; his fingers are tapping away on the counter. He’s pacing around the house, looking through the windows at the front of the house, hoping to see the familiar white head pop out in the distance before the snow blurred it out of existence. No Allen.

Ten minutes go by. Cross can’t tell if these were rain pellets or snowflakes anymore. It becoming harder to see outside. Cross snaps and storms over to grab his keys. He had to look for Allen! Just as he storms up to the front door, it opens, revealing a red-cheeked, shivering, 13-year-old Allen who looked pissed. Cross would be to if he had to have freezing rain pelt mercilessly in his face. All the tension in Cross’s body melts when he sees those two silver, accusatory eyes look back up at him.

“I was just about ready to look for your ass. I forgot we were in a snowstorm warning tonight” Cross said in apology as he stepped aside to let his icicle of a brat in.

“I can’t feel my face or feet,” Allen whined brattily.

“Would’ve been easier if you had your cell phone. I could’ve picked you up. I think we’re going to have to tie that sucker to your hip or something,” Cross growled out, though it was more out of teasing than anger. He watched as Allen took off his wet, slushy shoes, watching him carefully. He wasn’t acting suspicious.

“We should do the same thing with your car keys,” Allen sniffled as he walked to his room to put on warmer clothes. Cross followed him.

“It’s not my fault Tim keeps hiding them!”

Summoned by his words, a tiny golden orb with wings popped out of the collar of Allen’s neck to give Cross a toothy grin. Little asshole.
“You need to clean your room,” Cross commented, earning a glare from the brat which looked at scathing as a tiny kitten hissing like it was the most ferocious thing in the universe. Then Allen slammed his room door in Cross’s face.

“And you need to get a new car. We all have things we need to do,” came Allen’s muffled reply.

“Oi you leave my car out of this. So, who the hell were you hanging out with today?” Cross asked, twirling his index finger around to mess with Tim who was attempting to perch on it.

“I already told you, they were friends,” was the muffled reply. Cross could hear drawers opening and closing and Allen’s clumsy steps as he got dressed as quickly as possible to combat the cold.

“Yeah but are they friends I know?”

“No. They’re kids from school. Some of them play guitars and stuff and are trying to start up a band.”

“Is that so? Are they any good?” Cross asked, grabbing Tim’s tail as the little varmint threatened to bite him in annoyance. Tim struggled for a few moments before he hung limply in Cross’s grasp in defeat.

“Dunno, haven’t heard them play yet,” Allen responded, finally opening the door to reveal his pajama clad form. He looked from Tim to Cross and glared at Cross, “You’re so mean to him! No wonder why he likes me better!”

“The little asshole started it! I’m just finishing it,” Cross stated, holding Tim high above his head as Allen tried to make a grab for him. Allen couldn’t grab him no matter how hard he tried. He might’ve grown over the years, but he was still rather small for boys his age and hadn’t hit a good growth spurt yet. Cross smirked, taunting Allen by dangling the golem above his head. Tim was playing dead, “What are you gonna do brat? You’re only a little pipsqueak.”

Allen puffed out his cheeks in irritation before a sinister look passed in his eyes. Oh shit that can’t be good. Before Cross knew it, two ice cold hands went up his shirt.

“You little shit!” Cross yelped, dropping Tim canpy who thankfully began to fly the moment he felt Cross release his tail. Allen cackled and ran off down the stairs, beginning the game of chase.

“Oh Allen, where did you go? ~” Cross trilled, hiding the hand with ice in it behind his back. Cross walked around the house as quietly as he possibly could, listening for any signs of movement. Then he heard a loud pop and his head whipped around to see a nerf bullet lodge itself into the wall a couple inches above his head. Cross whipped his head around to look at Allen who stood with his mouth open.

“Oh fuck,” Allen muttered before taking off.

“Oh Allen, where did you go? ~” Cross trilled, hiding the hand with ice in it behind his back. Cross walked around the house as quietly as he possibly could, listening for any signs of movement. Then he heard a loud pop and his head whipped around to see a nerf bullet lodge itself into the wall a couple inches above his head. Cross whipped his head around to look at Allen who stood with his mouth open.

“Oh fuck,” Allen muttered before taking off.

“C’mere you little shit! That aim was disgraceful! I raised you better,” Cross yelled, chasing after Allen down one of the hall and trapping him near the end of it.

“Back off man! I’ll shoot! I swear to god I’ll shoot! I’m crazy! You don’t want to mess with me,” Allen shouted, playing up the whole crazed shooter stereotype.
“Yeah. I’m sure you will and you’ll miss like you did earlier to” Cross teased as he crept closer. Allen backed up closer to the wall, holding his nerf gun out shakily. Cross didn’t know if the kid was playing or if he actually was a little afraid, either way, the acting was great.

“Swear to god man you come any closer and I’ll shoot!” Allen shouted, his voice cracking on hysteria.

Cross took one step closer and Allen pulled the trigger. Nothing came out.

“What the fuck!? Oh come on! Seriously!?” Allen shouted, the crazed victim act dropping in annoyance.

“You ran out of bullets!? Oh my god kid that’s rich,” Cross cackled.

Allen threw the gun down in frustration and pointed a finger at Cross, “No. I swear to god you stay back. You smell like adulthood and I don’t want it-No-What’s in your hand?

What the hell is in your hand!? No no no no!”

“It’s too late kid. You can’t run or hide,” Cross grinned evilly as he stepped closer to his brat who slowly slid down to the floor.

“Please be gentle,” Allen gave one last whimper before Cross slid the ice cubes down his back. Allen let out a yowl of surprise before trying to run off once again, but Cross wouldn’t let him. No, instead Cross embraced his little brat, pressing the dreaded ice cubes against his back.

“Take it like the man Allen. This is what you get for that god awful aim you had earlier,” Cross said as he held his struggling and screaming brat.

“I just got warm ya jerk!” Allen screamed breathlessly as he tried to pull away from Cross, but the older man was too strong and easily turned and pinned Allen on his back. Cross towered over Allen right in between his legs, his hands on his neck, pretending to choke him out.

“Come on brat, how are you gonna get out of this one? I taught you better than this! Stop struggling and think. If this was the real deal you’d be choked out in five seconds,” Cross said, testing his brat’s memorization skills. Over the many times they wrestled on the ground, Cross had taught Allen ways to get out of certain pins. It was both for entertainment and educational purposes. However, it’s been awhile since Cross put him in this pin/choke hold and he was struck with the idea of testing to see if his brat remembered how to get out of it.

Allen relaxed his body momentarily and Cross could see the gears turning and then in a split-second Allen acted. Allen’s right arm went underneath Cross’s arm grabbing near his right elbow, his thumb on the same side as his other four fingers (note: important distinction because if he wrapped his hand around Cross’s elbow with his thumb on one side alone, the attacker could break out of his hold towards his thumb because it’s weaker then the side with four fingers.). He used his other hand to grab Cross’s shoulder, near his neck. Then Allen brought his left leg up and pushed against Cross’s right leg, (this makes Allen’s body pivots away from the hand he is grabbing Cross with) before he brought up his left leg, wrapping itself under Cross’s armpit. His left leg came up around Cross’s face to wrap itself over Cross’s neck, pushing his hips up to throw the older man off and onto his back with a dull thud. (* other important note: if you wish to see this escape in action look up 5 Choke Hold Defenses Women MUST Know | Self Defense | Aja Dang and it starts around 7:31. Very useful information to know. Especially with this move because you can break your opponent’s arm when you get them on the ground. I know my explanation did not do it much justice, but I tried).
“There ya go!” Cross praised as Allen scooted himself away from Cross. Cross made a mental note to go through that move with Allen once again though, he was unsatisfied that it took awhile for Allen to remember how to get out that hold. Allen wasn’t finished though and launched himself at Cross. Cross pulled back, allowing his brat to climb on top of him and pin his arms above his head. Cross struggled a little bit, allowing Allen to feel superior that he managed to pin down Cross. Then Cross went through the technique. Well, too bad Allen wasn’t prepared for it because just as Cross pushed up on his hips and moved his arms down, the brat lost his support (which was pinning his wrists against the floor) and smacked his face against the floor above Cross’s head with a loud thump. (video to watch this technique: Women's Self-defense Technique - Man Pinning Both Wrists in Mount Position on GracieBreakdown’s channel.)

Allen groaned in pain, completely collapsing on top of Cross who laughed, wrapping his arms around Allen, “You okay? The goal was that you were going to try and catch yourself.”

“Ughhh! I know! Fuck I’m going to be pissed if I get a bruise!” Allen growled as he sat up, rubbing his forehead.

“Oi. Watch your fucking mouth. We don’t fucking swear in this motherfucking household,” Cross said, reaching up and grabbing Allen’s chin before squeezing his cheeks.

“You swear all the time,” Allen whined, his voice muffled because Cross was squeezing his cheeks. He tried to bat his hand off of him.

“Yeah? Well it’s too late for me. You’re young. There’s still hope for you. Learn how to insult people intellectually and confuse the fuck out of them,” Cross said, pushing his brat off of him before sitting up, “You smell gross. There’s this thing out there that’s called soap and deodorant. Use it. Please. You’re a teen now.”

“That wasn’t me! That was you!”

“Bullshit!” Cross retorted, but his sniffed under his arm to double check, “Yeah, that ain’t fucking me.”

Allen sniffed himself, before making a face, “Is that what teen spirit smells like.”

“No, that is what brats who don’t fucking shower and use deodorant smell like and if you don’t get your ass in the shower, I will personally throw you in there.”

“You and what army?” Allen shot back sassily.

“I don’t need a fucking army when there is a scrawny little pipsqueak in front of me,” Cross growled as he picked Allen up with ease and began to carry him to the bathroom.

“Hey! Rude! I didn’t say I wasn’t going to take one!” Allen yelped, trying to put up a fight.

“Doesn’t matter! You were testing me! The Alpha male of this household!”

“I thought that was Anita…”

“Well she isn’t here right now is she-? HOLY SHIT KID DO YOU WANT TO GET DROPPED!?” Cross screamed when he felt Allen shove his ice-cold feet against him and nearly made Cross drop him in shock. Allen cackled in response, yelping as Cross dropped him unceremoniously on the bathroom floor.

“That’s it. I don’t want to play with you anymore,” Cross responded melodramatically, “I’m
calling your mother and telling her that your abusing me.”

“Oh, the great and almighty Cross Marian can’t handle a little cold!? Pathetic! No wonder she’s
the Alpha Male!” Allen quipped back as Cross walked off.

“You better get your ass in the shower before I take you over my knee! You may be 13 but you are
still small enough to get a good ass whooping!” Cross threatened.

“Mmm kinky,” Allen smirked, hearing Cross stamp his foot on the ground, threatening to come
back over there and make good on his threat. Allen yelped and slammed the bathroom door before
locking it.

“You chicken shit,” Cross yelled back before smirking. He left Allen alone to shower in favor of
calling Anita to see whether or not she thought she would make it home tonight.

~

Cross wished he would’ve listened to his sinking gut feeling. He wished he would’ve looked
deeper into Allen’s new friends. It was like a switch was thrown the day after Allen turned 13.
There was no waiting time before the teenage rebellion hit like Cross originally thought. To be fair,
it wasn’t like he could complain, his own teenage rebellion happened way before he even hit 13. It
only picked up speed when he turned 13 and thought he was the hottest shit ever. He thought he
was fucking invincible and that ‘the man’ was full of shit. To be fair, he still liked sticking it to ‘the
man’, but over the years he began to see that ‘the man’ wasn’t always full of shit like he thought it
was.

After that day, his relationship with Allen went south and they began to butt heads a lot more.
Their constant good-natured bickering was turning into arguments, and later on, full scale-
arguments. Junior was not even this bad when he hit 13, but to be fair Junior was a giant nerd. He
did stupid shit, but he wasn’t the type to go off somewhere without telling anyone. He was where
he said he was going to be and did most of his stupid shit with his friends. Allen was going off in a
whole different direction that Cross knew only too well.

It started with Allen going out with his new friends, which was no big deal until he began to come
home later and later. Once again, it wasn’t a huge deal. The first time Cross told Allen that it was
probably not a great idea to stay out so late and he felt better if Allen was home earlier especially
since it was cold outside. The brat didn’t have a problem with it, there was no yelling or fighting of
any kind. Cross felt like they had a pretty good understanding towards each other.

It sure seemed like it because the next couple of times Allen hung out with his new friends, he
came home when Cross asked him to come home. Well, lo and behold that didn’t last long and
Cross should’ve guessed it because ‘hey, I’m dealing with a teenager’ but in all fairness, he thought
Allen would be different. That was stupidity on his part because as far as he was concerned, all
teenagers were the same (although there was always select few that had good heads on their
shoulders, those kids rebelled in different, less destructive ways though).

So, Allen arrived home late the second time around. Cross gave him a warning and reminded him
of what they discussed before about arriving home on time. It was a different story if something
happened and he knew he was going to be a little late, in which case he could text on his cell
phone. Cross got an eye roll from Allen but a muttered apology and promise that he will come
home on time next time. Okay. Once again, not a huge deal but the kid was pushing it.

Well, third time rolls around the day after Cross gave him a warning which already pissed Cross
off. It wasn’t that hard to follow a simple direction. Come home before it gets dark, which was
around six at night in the wintertime. If Allen wanted to stay out later, he could’ve waited until summertime where curfew would be around nine at night. The kid sucked at directions and got lost easily, it was so much easier finding your way home in the light rather than in the dark. This kid was determined to push Cross as far as he could go. Well Cross was done playing nice and he was going to push back.

As he watched the sun slowly dip below the horizon, he texted Allen.

‘Where are you at? It’s getting dark. You need to come home.’

A few minutes go by. The sky is dark. No response. Cross felt his anger flair and he dropped his cellphone on the counter.

“No answer?” Anita asked who was sitting at the dining room table, watching Cross slowly get more and more angry.

“Nope.”

Anita sighed, “So, whose grounding him?”

“I’ll do it.”

“Are you going to be able to keep your anger in check?”

“Yeah, it’s not like he’s out there partying and getting wasted.”

“You don’t know that for sure,” Anita reminded gently.

“Let me keep that fantasy in my head, at least for a little bit,” Cross responded. He hated the thought of Allen being out there at some house party, surrounded by drunks and drugs. Adults and drugs was already chaotic, but teenagers with growing bodies and drugs? That was kind of a nightmare. Especially since they were all underage to begin with. He hated the thought because that was what Cross was doing at his age.

“Well, if you need me, I’ll be in the bedroom,” Anita said, kissing Cross before retiring for the night.

Allen finally came home around 11 at night and Cross was waiting for him, right by the front door, arms crossed. Allen’s eyes darted to the clock before looking back at Cross. He knew he was in trouble.

“You know what time it is?” Cross asked, playing dumb.

Allen’s eyes narrowed at Cross’s tone of voice. It sounded like he was talking to an idiot kid and Allen hated feeling like an idiot kid. I mean he was 13 now. Sure, he wasn’t in high school yet, but he was going to be after the spring semester! He knew how to take care of himself on the streets, he’s done so before in the past just fine! Plus, it wasn’t like they were living in a city! Cross was just overreacting because he was a police officer and he always sees the bad side of the town instead of the good side!

“It’s 11 at night,” Cross answered for him.

“I know that,” Allen said with an eye roll.

“Well, if you knew that then you should’ve known that the sun goes down around 6. You
should’ve been home by 6, but instead here you are at 11. That’s five hours since the sun went down,” Cross explained, feeling his anger flair again when Allen rolled his eyes at him.

“Sorry, it won’t happen again—“

“Yeah, you’re right. At least for the next week because you’re officially grounded,” Cross stated, watching as Allen glared at him. Oh boy, there it was. If teenage rebellion had a face, that was it. That was the look Cross saw every single time he looked at himself in the mirror after a pissing match with his old man. Even though his fights were more brutal. This was a lot more chill, although if Allen turned up the heat Cross would happily throw the same fire right back at him.

“A week?” Allen responded, strangely relaxed about this twist of events.

“Yeah. Would you like to make it two? Shit, maybe I should make it five since you showed up five hours later since you were supposed to,” Cross shot back, extinguishing any come back Allen had for fear of having his prison sentence lengthened.

“Anyways, since this is the first time you’ve ever been grounded, I’ll explain to you how this shit is gonna go. You will be grounded for a full week and it will end on the 7th day at 11pm. It will not end any earlier or later. You will not go out to hang out with any friends during that time or invite friends over. Lavi doesn’t count because the brat practically lives here when his grandfather is away. You will go to school, go to dance practice and come home. If you decide to not follow through with your sentence obediently, I will make it worse on you. Any questions?” Cross asked, stepping forward towards Allen. His eyes were narrowed into tiny slits and he was using his ‘police officer voice’ which meant it was civil right now, but it could turn ugly quickly if you desired. It meant no nonsense whatsoever.

When Cross was a couple feet away, he stopped, and his eyes widened a little bit in shock. Allen’s eyes were bloodshot, and he smelled the familiar reek of pot on him. Alright, so when it came to pot Cross was a little iffy on that. Pot was beneficial to certain groups of people and honestly there was a lot of harder drugs out there with nastier side effects. Still, even then, pot could fuck up your system, especially when you are on certain medications. It could cause bad side effects or make it, so those medications do not work. First of all, Cross was pissed because Allen used a drug that wasn’t given to him by anyone trustworthy, which meant it could be laced with other shit that he didn’t know about. Second of all, Allen was on antidepressants and though Cross did a lot of drugs during his days he didn’t know exactly how that would affect his antidepressant. Third of all, Cross was pissed because he could see his teenager, shit head, self in Allen’s eyes and he hated it.

“Mind telling me why your eyes are blood shot, brat?” Cross asked, his voice dropping an octave lower.

“Sleep deprivation.”

“Bull shit. I smell something on you and it sure as hell aint body odor. You got one more shot to tell me the truth.”

“Some of the kids were smoking some shit. It’s not that big of a deal—“

Cross raised an eyebrow and Allen trailed off.

“You’re really going to tell a police officer that it’s not a big deal that some of the kids you were hanging out with were smoking pot? Or that you were smoking it to and don’t even try to deny it because I can smell it on you. I wasn’t born yesterday. I know what that shit smells like. Fuck, even if you weren’t smoking it you can still get high off of the smoke. That is deemed an illegal
substance here, whether or not it is harmful. You are also putting another substance into your body without knowing what it would do to the shit that you already put into your body or how it affects you. Or even if they put other shit into it that you didn’t know about,” Cross growled and Allen looked down to the ground.

“You know what. I changed my mind. Two weeks. No cell phone. Anita or I will drive you to school and wait for you at the school to pick you up from practice. Go upstairs to your room and don’t you ever think of trying to lie to me again,” Cross responded in a low voice, his eyes blazing with anger. He put out his hand for Allen’s cell phone. Allen looked up, opening his mouth, ready to protest, but closed it when he saw Cross’s eyes flash in warning.

Allen dug in his pocket for his phone and slapped it into Cross’s hand before stalking upstairs to his room, stomping all the way up before slamming his door. Cross looked down at Allen’s phone and saw a text from a guy named Jake.

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Jake. A name that Cross would soon come to loathe hearing. A name that would strike such a murderous rage within him in the months to come. The first day of being grounded, Cross was at work and Allen tried to walk out, saying that he was going to hang out with his friends. He thought he would be able to get away with it because it was Anita, but Anita promptly reminded him that he was supposed to be grounded and quickly ruined those plans.

After that day, the next few days consisted of a very pouty, angry, bratty Allen who wasn’t used to being grounded. Sure, he got his ass beat a couple of times when he was younger and did something extremely stupid. He mostly got yelled at, even then, after a couple of yells or a warning pinch to the ear was enough to get him to knock it off. It wasn’t often that he saw Cross actually pissed off at him. To be fair, Cross was pissed at Allen’s behavior for a day, but to Allen he viewed Cross as being pissed at him for as long as he was grounded, which wasn’t true. Cross didn’t budge from ending the grounding period early, but that didn’t mean he was pissed off.

Other than that, the next two weeks went by uneventfully and it actually looked like the brat really wasn’t bothered with being grounded for two weeks. It helped that Lavi was considered a ‘household resident’ so Allen could hang out with someone, at least when it came time for Bookman to continue his travels. Cross felt that perhaps Allen learned his lesson about staying out of trouble.

Oh, he only fucking wished. It didn’t take long after Allen’s sentence for shit to start back up again. What Cross thought was just a lapse in judgement, a separate incident, turned out to be a war of Cross versus Allen. Cross was trying to protect Allen and telling him that he was still too young to be out roaming the streets at his age. Allen was trying to be more independent and seemed thoroughly convinced Cross didn’t know what he was talking about. Allen was pissed Cross couldn’t trust him. Cross was pissed that Allen was pissed at him for not trusting him when A. he wouldn’t have a problem if Allen didn’t give him reasons not to trust him and B. if the people, he was hanging out with were not untrustworthy to begin with.

Cross understood that Allen was on his own before he met Mana. He survived on his own. That was years ago though and those skills could be rusty, on top of that Cross didn’t want Allen to worry about surviving on his own! He wanted him to have a simple, normal (as normal as possible), childhood! Not only that but Allen was going to fuck himself up (at least that was what he was afraid of), like he did at his age, because he hung out with the wrong crowd! Sure, he had Mana, he had Neah, Komui, Bak, Reever, and Tiedoll when he was younger, but he was too busy thinking he was too cool for them. He was pissed off at the world and being a little shit made him feel better. He couldn’t be that way around them (well okay, with Neah, sure. But Mana usually stayed right beside him so it wasn’t all the time) because they weren’t interested in seeing how shit
faced, they could get. They weren’t interested in sleeping with a different woman every night, drinking so much you forgot your name, or going to school with a hangover.

A week barely went by before Allen started to come home late again, although the first few times he texted and did let Cross know where he was. After those first few times, he was back to doing the same shit again. Cross was back to grounding him again. First couple of times it worked, but then grounding wasn’t effective anymore and Cross and Allen began to argue almost on a nightly basis. Sometimes over the dumbest things like Allen forgetting to take out the trash, Allen not getting up right away for school.

It became harder and harder to keep Allen at the house, especially when Cross had a job to get back to as well as Anita. Lavi tried to keep him back, but he was spineless when it came to Allen. He didn’t want to have bad blood between the two of them and began to keep an eye on Allen in other ways such as tracking devices and social media. Lavi could find the information he wanted with ease and without detection, it was in his blood as a Bookman. Even if Allen was grounded, he began to sneak out of the house. Cross tried to stay up and few times to try and catch him in the act (and managed a couple of times but this resulted in more arguing and waking up both Anita and Lavi in the process), but he was only one man and he had to sleep eventually.

Jake. There was one time that Cross met that kid and that was just when shit was getting stirred up. Allen brought him over and Cross could immediately tell there was something more going on between them by the way Allen looked at him. Cross already knew of Allen’s orientation and was already fine with him dating guys, but whether it was guys or girls Cross already had rules for Allen the first two months he was under his roof at age 8. They could be in his room, but the door had to be open. No loud music. No making out on the couch. No inappropriate touching. Pecks on the cheek and mouth were fine, but full on making out was no okay. (this was more so because A. Allen was only 13 and this was his first actual relationship, there is plenty of time for further affections when they got to know each other more and B. Cross wasn’t ready to see Allen grow up yet and that was a little to much ‘growing up’ in his opinion.) It was a different story if the kid was nearing the end of high school, but even then, privacy is always a good thing. Especially since there are assholes out there who will hurt people for making out with the same sex, which Cross worried about.

Cross could remember the exact feeling he got the moment that brat set foot into his house. He could feel something was off with him. He didn’t know what, but he had that gut feeling that something wasn’t right with this one. He didn’t comment on it and he acted as civil as possible because he wanted to be supportive for his brat. That didn’t mean he wasn’t watching that brat like a hawk. He found out quickly that he wasn’t the only one, as Lavi was doing the same thing. However, Lavi was more open in his distaste by glaring at Jake when he thought Allen wasn’t looking.

Cross found out quickly how right he was because in only an hour that brat had his hands-on Allen and not in a way that Cross deemed ‘decent’. Especially if you’re just beginning a relationship with someone and you were in their parent’s home. This was no hand holding or arm over the shoulder touching type of shit. This was hand on the inner thigh, on the ass, kind of shit. Cross wouldn’t have been so pissed off if it wasn’t the looks that was going across Allen’s face that clearly said he didn’t like it.

Allen was the type of kid where he did not like being touched. His friends, people he knew well, could touch him. Cross could touch him. Anita could touch him. People like that could touch him, because they knew where he felt comfortable being touched and Allen felt comfortable around them. Their touches were friendly, platonic, in nature. These touches had sexual intentions and though Cross never could get a full story as to whether or not Allen was touched in that way when he was younger, those touches (even accidental in nature because sometimes those things happened
although it was mostly hip touches and his friends apologized profusely afterwards) triggered Allen. Cross knew this ever since he first adopted Allen because he refused to go into public restrooms alone and he still has problems going alone. Although, now he doesn’t need someone to actually be in the bathroom with him, he can handle it if someone is just waiting outside.

Cross was sitting on his chair, watching T.V., watching the two of them on the couch out of the corner of his eye when he saw Jake put his hand down on Allen’s leg. Right near the knee. He saw Allen jump, clear as day. That tripped Cross’s trigger and his eyes instantly narrowed. Jake’s hand moved up on Allen’s thigh and Cross had to bite his tongue. He didn’t want to unravel shit right away and get Allen upset at him because he yelled at his ‘friend’. Cross saw Allen shift uncomfortably, pretending he wasn’t that bothered, before grabbing Jake’s hand and moving it off of his thigh back to his personal bubble. It was clear from how far Allen sat from Jake that this little fucker had barely passed Allen’s ‘comfort test’ so the fact he was trying to touch Allen that way was astounding to Cross.

Several minutes pass and Cross thought maybe that little shit got the idea, but no, before Cross knew it that hand was back on Allen’s leg. It was slowly traveling up Allen’s leg, before resting on Allen’s inner thigh, very close to his groin. Allen was pale-faced, and his jaw was tense. Clearly, he was showing signs that this was not okay, and Cross was so close to knocking this fucker’s teeth in. Allen wasn’t making any move this time to let Jake know this wasn’t okay and this also presented a huge red flag to Cross. He had told Allen time and time again that if someone was touching him and he didn’t want to be touched that he should say no and make it very fucking clear. If they keep touching him then either knock that fucker on his ass or get help. Allen wasn’t doing it and that was concerning to Cross.

Luckily, Cross wasn’t the only one witnessing the exchange because Lavi made a cheerful entrance into the living room.

“Hey Al! Oh cool, I love this show, mind if I sit with you guys?” Lavi chattered away cheerfully, not waiting for an answer as he forcefully placed himself in between Jake and Allen. It didn’t matter that what they were watching was not a ‘show’ but was the news, Lavi played it off like it was nothing. Allen shot an apologetic look to the obviously annoyed Jake, before relaxing against Lavi who seemed absolutely serene. Behind that emerald green eye Cross could see something smoldering.

Cross wished he could say he kept his cool throughout the entire time Jake was over. He wished he could. Truth be told he didn’t. Lavi didn’t stay in between the two of them forever. He couldn’t because he had play practice to go to. Cross couldn’t stay in the living room forever because he had to make dinner. He could still get a look at the two of them from his place in the kitchen, but he wouldn’t be able to see where Jake’s hands were at all times.

Well, that little fucker decided to start shit up again, apparently not figuring out that Allen wasn’t okay with being touched, or that Lavi and Cross didn’t like to see Allen being touched in that way. Maybe he did know but didn’t care. Who knows. Either way Cross just about committed a fucking crime that night either way by murdering this little chuckle fuck. He didn’t quite know what he did or what he touched, but he heard murmuring. He was sure he heard Allen tell him to stop once. Then he heard a loud whimpering sound and whatever Cross held in his hand (which was a pan he later remembered through his blinding rage) was dropped with a loud clatter. Before he knew it, he was standing at the couch, seeing that fucker’s hand on Allen’s crotch and Allen trying his hardest to have a meltdown.

Cross grabbed Jake by the arm and yanked him away from Allen and towards the door.
“Dude! What the fuck man!”

“Get the fuck out of my house, right now,” Cross stated in a seething voice, his eyes a fiery, hellish red. His skin was burning hot with the amount of rage he had in his body.

“Dude we were only messing around!”

“Bull shit. My son was not okay with what you were doing earlier, and he wasn’t okay with what you did just now. If I ever see you set foot on my property again, I will shoot you on sight. Stay off my property and keep your fucking, grimey little paws off my son,” Cross growled threateningly, his anger only rising when he heard the choked sob that came from the couch. Cross slammed the door in Jake’s face before whirling around to look at the pale and shaking Allen on the couch.

Cross took one step towards Allen, but that only make him get off the couch and run up to his room. Allen didn’t come down for dinner that night.

Chapter End Notes

Hi so I've been working on this for awhile here and there....so some parts may be mehnh...anyways thanks for reading. Also I got a suggestion of Allen shifting into "Red" and his friends reactions to it...like seeing him go from calm, happy Allen to Red and I just wanted to let you guys know that chapter is in the making right now as well. I hope I made this a bit different than the previous chapters with this scene so that it's not as boring. Anyways onwards to part 2
Here we are part 2! Trigger warnings: Panic attack, mentions of the previous chapters incidents like the rape. POV switches at one point to Road and his other dance team members but that's it. Mentions of the videos. There will be a chapter more on the aftermath of this but Cross's POV instead of just Allen and Link.

Along with Allen acting out and not coming home on time, Cross began to notice a lot of things wrong with Allen and that kid’s face kept coming to mind. It didn’t help he soon figured out Allen was dating the fucker. Allen’s grades were failing, which when it came to English (the subject he struggled most with) it wasn’t a surprise. However, this time around he was beginning to fail a lot more than English. Cross was getting phone calls from the school saying he wasn’t coming to school on time or he’s skipping classes. He got phone calls from his coach expressing concern that he’s coming in late for practice. The rest of his friends were beginning to express concern towards Allen because he was withdrawing from them. It became the norm to call everyone trying to figure out where in the fuck he was. Allen began to have times were, he would limp or look like he was in pain. Sometimes he’d have strange bruises on his arms and would get angry if you tried to ask him about it. He flinched a lot more like he was afraid someone was going to strike out at him. Allen was having panic attacks, complete meltdowns and Cross was at a loss of what to do.

Most of his meltdowns occurred at night. He’d wake up in a panic, muttering about God only knows what like he was still half asleep, before being lulled back to sleep. Sometimes his meltdowns occurred at school which would result in him calling Cross at work and Cross assisting him in relaxing again.

The brat changed dramatically and became this angry, moody, teen that reminded made Cross feel like he was dealing with a younger version of himself than someone else. Mana’s mask completely dropped off, but instead of seeing Red as how he was with Mana (Like Cross wished they would see), they were seeing the Red before Mana. Cross was getting sick of being angry at the time with Allen. He missed wrestling around on the floor, jamming out with Allen, and their usual stupid bickering. Their yelling at each other with the same old argument of “I’m trying to protect you!”,” “Stop treating me like a baby!”, “If you don’t want to be treated like a baby than stop acting like one!” was beginning to turn violent on Allen’s end.

There was a night where the two of them were arguing where things got violent. It was the day Allen came home from Link’s house after going to a party, having his drink spiked by his boyfriend and getting drunk, then being videotaped. Cross and Lavi managed to find the house party, but no Allen. Cross was thankful that Allen managed to make it to Link’s house all in one piece and inwardly promised to make it up to the blonde brat for taking care of Allen. Cross was quite pissed off though. When Allen stepped through that door, they had an argument like always which ended with Allen going up to his room, slamming the door, and Cross standing outside yelling at it. After some time, Allen came down to get something to eat and Cross took away his phone before grounding him for the next month. Allen gave a bratty huff, texted his friends to let them know he wouldn’t have his phone for awhile before giving him his phone. He then went back upstairs to his room.
Cross wasn’t sure what happened or what switch was thrown but the second time Allen came down, all hell broke loose. The brat was obviously on edge about something. Maybe he went to bed and suddenly woke up in a panic, not understanding where he was or what was happening. Maybe he was mulling over some thoughts and they just got bigger and bigger before he began to meltdown. Cross didn’t really know until everything came to light to which he later found out; Allen didn’t have much of a clue what went on either. He just blanked out.

Allen wanted to go out to see Jake and Cross wouldn’t let him because he was supposed to be grounded, which Cross reminded him. Allen wasn’t accepting no for an answer and attempted to leave the house by force. Obviously, Cross wasn’t going to let him do that and then Allen got aggressive and shoved Cross against a wall. Their arguments at this time never went more than yelling and threats for further punishment (mostly on Cross’s end, which he never carried out because he didn’t want to be like his dad and try to beat the rebellion out of Allen. Though sometimes he tested him). There was never any shoving, hitting, punching, etc. Not until now.

When Cross felt his back hit forcefully against the wall. He blanked out for a moment. Next thing he knew he had Allen restrained in his arms, screaming at the top of his lungs. He was thankful to find out (from Anita watching the exchange) that he had not hit Allen at all while he was blanked out, instead his instincts took over and he restrained Allen as he proceeded to throw a temper tantrum that definitely wasn’t fit for a 13 year old. Lavi came running down the stairs to see what the commotion was about, shocked to see Allen writhing around and screaming his head off about needing to go check on Jake. About how he was going to hurt himself if Allen wasn’t there. It slowly morphed into him screaming about Mana and soon enough nobody could exactly tell what he was screaming. Most of this was a garbled mess as Allen screamed and sobbed incoherently.

Cross ended up dragging Allen to the bathroom, doing the same thing he did countless times since that time he lost his shit at that man abusing his dog. It came in handy when Allen snapped which was once in a blue moon, but it was also helpful if he was just on edge and just needed to feel something ease him back into reality. In fact, this method came to be very useful for brats other than Allen. He had used it on Lavi once, Kanda a couple of times (when Tiedoll trusted his ass to baby sit his kids or the times Tiedoll was too spineless to shove their heads under some cold water to get them to chill the hell out. Allen was not the only special case/ slightly fucked up kid after all.) and Alma quite a bit of times (some of those times the kid just liked the feeling of it other times his head was threatening to pop off in his anger). Least to say it was quite the religious experience for the brats. Cross sort of wished someone would’ve done that shit for him as a kid. So, Cross shoved his head under the bathtub facet and doused his head in cold water.

“Easy Allen easy! It’s just a little cold water!” Cross hollered over Allen’s screaming which amplified a little bit at the initial shock of cold water pouring on his head. Then the screams gave way to violent coughing and gasping as Allen remembered how to breathe. Lavi stood in the doorway, accustomed to seeing a much calmer Allen getting his head doused under cool water rather than a screaming, psychotic one. Cross could tell he was more than a little freaked out by this turn of events and honestly, who wouldn’t be? But Lavi and Allen had the type of bond where even to this day if one was upset the other would soon follow. Cross was a little surprised himself, but it wasn’t the worst thing he ever saw in the world.

As Allen began his descent into calm, Cross turned up the heat, massaging Allen’s head, “There we go. Breathe just like that. Just exactly like that.”

Cross noted the purple bruises on his neck and narrowed his eyes in disgust wondering just what the hell this Jake kid was doing to his son. Whatever it was, it needed to stop. This whole incident right here shouldn’t have happened. This whole entire thing with Allen staying out late, doing God only knows what and making his friends and family worry about him? That shouldn’t happen.
Cross was getting ready to start something and Jake was not going to like the way this ‘something’ was going to end.

Cross continued to ease the water temperature higher until it was a decent warmth. Not to the point of scalding your head, but enough where it was relaxingly massaging your head. As the temperature rose Allen’s breathing slowed, his shoulders slumping as he became a dead weight as the hysteria left him. Then Cross turned the water off and rubbed Allen’s head down with a dry towel before helping the exhausted teen off the floor and towards the living room couch. The idea was to help him off the floor but Cross saw quickly that that wasn’t going to happen as the brat was so fatigued by his breakdown he was barely standing on his own. Cross rolled his eyes, thankful that the brat was still tiny and light, as he carried him to the couch himself.

“What the hell was that about Marian? Is he on drugs? Do I need to kill a kid, because I will fucking do it. I’ll make orange look good,” Anita started, her eyes flashing with a danger that both turned Cross on and made his balls retreat into him a little bit in fear. When Anita’s inner mother bear came out, there was hell to pay.

“He’s not on drugs. At least I’m sure he’s not. I don’t know what that was about, but I’ll keep an eye on him tonight,” Cross sighed as he grabbed Allen’s legs, so he could sit down and rested them in his lap.

“Marian, we have to figure out what to do. Grounding hasn’t worked. Do we need to put him back into counseling? You know he’s been limping at times, right? I swear he’s wearing long sleeves every day now. You don’t think he’s hurt himself is he. This isn’t normal-oh my god what are those bruises on his neck?” Anita mothered, walking over to finger at the hickies on Allen’s neck, “Are those hickies?”

“I know. I know. Easy. You’re going to wake him up doing that,” Cross sighed out, clearly exhausted. Anita shot him a glare, annoyed at being told to stop when clearly something was wrong with one of her babies.

“I mean it Marian. We have to figure out what to do,” Anita growled as she continued to look over Allen’s body. A lot more hickies and some bigger bruises that definitely didn’t look like hickies. There was a bruise that looked like a thumb print on Allen’s hip bone when Anita brought his shirt up. Cross backed up a little bit in surprise at Anita’s growl. She meant business. Allen’s feet shifted in Cross’s lap and he whined, not happy his body was being messed with. That was all Cross needed to see though to figure out what this brat has been up to and what this Jake kid was all about. Anita eyes were dark, promising bloodshed, but she quit her investigation in favor of soothing Allen back to sleep.

“Go to bed. We’ll talk about this in the morning,” Cross sighed for the millionth time, exhausted and beyond stressed. Anita stood there for a few more moments before leaning down and kissing Allen’s forehead and then turning around to kiss Cross on the cheek. Cross’s eyes darted upstairs where he saw something move. Lavi.

“Check on him before you go to bed please,” Cross whispered.

“Already on it,” Anita said, before leaving the room. Leaving adult Cross and what seemed more like the younger version of himself by their lonesome.

Allen slept fine with no problem but when he woke up, he was confused to find himself on the couch with Cross who had his head tilted back against the couch, sleeping. Last time he was in his room or at least that was where he was supposed to be. A lot of things was blurred last night, but he remembered clearly that he was panicking. He needed to go see Jake which slowly somehow
morphed itself into wanting to see Mana and needing to save him before the car accident happened. It felt more like a dream than an actual event. He remembered coming downstairs and trying to leave, but after that all he could remember was the intense feeling that he was drowning in fear. It was a lovely spring day with summer break looming ever closer as well. The dance competitions at the end of the year was looming closer, but their work didn’t end after the school year, it continued well into the summer as well.

A lovely spring day…and he was grounded. Great. Allen carefully sat up to avoid waking Cross. He stared at his face. He looked almost as exhausted as Allen felt and Allen felt his chest squeeze a little in guilt. He’s been doing this to him. In the beginning, he thought Cross was just being too overprotective. Later on, after spending more time with Jake and his friends, he began to see that Cross had been right to be overprotective of him. Sadly, Allen was as stubborn as Cross and wasn’t ready to back down and admit that the older man was right. Allen wasn’t ready to admit that he was getting tired of Jake and his friends, that he missed being with his old friends. He missed not fighting with Cross every single day. It was so exhausting to be angry all the time.

Allen slowly removed his legs from Cross’s hands, inwardly cursing when he woke up Cross in the process. The moment Cross’s locked eyes with Allen, the younger glared back him, extracting himself fully from Cross and storming upstairs. Cross sighed and sprawled out on the couch. Damn being a parent was really a thankless job, wasn’t it?

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Then things seemed to have gotten better. Allen was grounded for an entire month for going out and drinking, but instead of running off and ignoring the punishment, he was staying home. He was focusing on his schoolwork, going to school and staying there, going to practice and being on time. As for trying to rekindle the relationship they lost, it was not going well. Any bit of small talk Cross tried was met with silence. Allen only communicated if he had to with Cross. However, the fact that Allen was staying home and focusing on school, Cross caved and let him have his phone back after the first week of his month-long punishment was over. It still wasn’t enough to get the kid to talk to him again, but the tension in the air seemed to dissipate at least a little bit.

As the days progressed and turned into weeks, the day of the dancing competition was drawing nearer, and Allen’s stress levels were spiking. This was pretty normal for him, but usually he didn’t have stress until a few days before. Allen was stressing weeks in advance and for some reason he just couldn’t stay off his phone. He was constantly grabbing it, checking it, messing around with it and Cross began to regret giving him his phone back so early. Sure, the kid was attempting to focus on his homework, but it was taking him longer to get through it. It already took quite a bit of time to get him through English homework or anything involving a lot of reading. Things that Allen was better at was taking longer though because he could not sit down and do it without checking his phone.

Sure, if Cross really wanted to, he could take Allen’s phone away and look into it to figure out what was causing Allen to compulsively check his phone. However, the brat was actually doing what was expected of him and Cross didn’t want to ruin that by being nosy. Even so, Cross didn’t have to do much guessing to figure out what could be going on. Still, he didn’t like the fact that the kid was staying up all night trying to finish his homework and couldn’t do so because of his phone, so he deemed that it should be fine if he stepped in a little bit.

After catching his brat looking at his phone for the zillionth time that day, Cross came around and wiped it.

“Hey! I was looking at that!” Allen yelped.
“I know. You’re looking at it instead of focusing on your homework. You can have it back when you’re done and don’t think of rushing through it because I’ll know if you do,” Cross said, raising an eyebrow at the scathing glare Allen gave him.

“You know, glaring at me all night will not get that homework done any faster. Get your ass in gear.”

Well, of course having your son’s phone in your grasp would make eavesdropping a little hard. It’s not like Cross opened up the damn phone and looked at his messages, but boy was that little fucker going off every minute or so. Surprise, surprise, most of the damn time it went off it was because of…you guessed it…the kid named Jake.

So, it became a routine. Allen would sit down and do his homework; Cross would take his phone and count how many times that thing vibrated or made a noise. Sometimes it went off 100 times an hour, sometimes 30, there was a couple of times where it was only a couple of times, but it was mostly going off at least once every few minutes like clockwork. What in the fuck was this kid’s problem? Didn’t he have a life? Did he keep texting Allen like this when he was supposed to be sleeping? What about when he was in class? As much as Cross wanted to unlock Allen’s phone and tell this stupid shit to knock it off, he didn’t want to already fuck up the ‘somewhat’ peace they already had.

Another week rolls around and Allen starts asking if he could go to Link’s place to practice. That’s where things got a little dicey for Cross. For one thing, he was still grounded. But, this was also for extra practice and he knew both Allen and Link worked their asses off for their stunning routines. It would make Cross out to be the bad guy if he didn’t let his brat practice with his dance partner, but he knew Allen could just be bluffing to try and seek freedom before his punishment was up. Cross was tempted to say no, very tempted. Well, then Twinkie decided to text him and proceed to tell him why he is qualified to make sure Allen keeps his butt at his house, practicing, like they planned. Then Cross was forced to say yes. He had no reason not to distrust Twinkie, especially when that kid almost single-handedly raised four other kids by himself and kept them in line. Plus, he promised to feed his black hole of a kid so of course Cross was all for that! There was a catch though, Cross would personally take Allen to Link’s house to practice. Link could drive him back home, but he had to drive him back at a specific time.

First practice day, Allen came back happy for once in a long ass time. His usual moods were ‘mehh’ or ‘pissed off at the world’. Allen was actually happy.

“How’d it go?” Cross asked, not expecting an answer. I mean that was Allen nowadays…

“It was great. We’re going to totally crush the competition. They won’t know what hit them,” Allen chirped happily. He was in too good of a mood to remember he was supposed to be angry and angsty around Cross. He wasn’t supposed to be happily talking to him as if this whole entire mess didn’t happen in the first place.

The fuck!?

“Well you usually do. I don’t know why you two always have to get so nervous and intense about it,” Cross responded, shocked that his brat was actually talking to him. And he was happy while talking to him. Cross actually texted Link in shock wondering what in the hell he did to Allen to remove the huge pole that was in his ass since Cross could remember.

The last week of Allen’s punishment came and that’s where things got a little bit hairy. Things were going good, better than what Cross was expecting. Hell, it seemed like this whole Jake thing was just a distant memory…but of course it was just the calm before the storm. It wasn’t long before Allen tried to beg Cross to let his punishment end early and to let him hang out with Jake
(although he didn’t necessarily throw in Jake’s name, but he wasn’t being truthful about who he wanted to hang out exactly. Cross could figure it out quite easily).

“No, you can hang out with your friends once your punishment is up."

“But that’s after the competition,” Allen whined.

“So? They’ll still be here when you get back. It’s not like we’re going on a month-long vacation or some shit. Another week will not kill you."

“But~“

“The answer is no and it’s going to stay as no,” Cross growled back firmly. He would not budge, no matter how well-behaved Allen had been during his punishment. Cross watched as Allen walked off in a huff.

Cross thought Allen was going to be able to last until the end of his punishment but the day before the competition, it became quite clear that he couldn’t. Cross was at work when he received a phone call from the school saying that Allen never showed up to his morning classes.

Cross was furious.

~

Cross waited for Allen outside of the school, his anger rising, ready to chew him out in front of all of his peers. Allen didn’t show up. Cross began to drive around the streets, looking for Allen. The more time that passed, the more that anger gave way to fear and concern. A minute turned into several minutes, several minutes turned into hours. Where was he? Where in the fuck was he?

He blew up his phone, questioning where he was at. No answer. He called his friends asking them if they had seen him. No one knew. He drove for hours and finally he got a call from Link.

“He’s at my house."

“Is he okay? I’m coming over there right now."

“No-well I mean he is now…he was just a little nervous about the competition and he wanted to go over a few things. I understand that’s not a good excuse for skipping school, but I got him to calm down. I understand you are angry at him and things haven’t been the greatest between you two. I understand he is still grounded, but I would very much appreciate it if he could spend the night here. At least for tonight. I think it would help him be more mentally prepared tomorrow,” Link stated in a calm, formal voice.

Shit. Cross knew there was something more to the story. There had to be. Why wouldn’t the brat call him up to let him know he was feeling nervous about tomorrow? He always did if he felt nervous or if things were becoming way too overwhelming. He couldn’t say no though. He knew he would be safe with Link. He didn’t trust Link’s father as far as he could throw him (which was to say not at all) but he could trust Link. He knew it the first time that brat came over that he had Allen’s best interest in mind. Sure, he was a little suspicious that he was being used to spy on Allen by his father’s requests, sure, some of his prim and proper shit came from the fact his father was Leverrier. It was expected from him. Even with all that though, Link didn’t come off as bad. Cross didn’t have a bad gut reaction towards him like he had with so many people.

“Alright. Just this once, but you better tell that brat that we’re going to have a nice little chit chat tomorrow night about the stunt he pulled today.”
“I very much appreciate it. I will let him know. Thank you.”

“Thanks Link.”

Cross got up early in the morning with Anita and a certain red-head gushing about seeing all the cute girls in leotards. Oh and seeing Allen perform to… but also the girls. It was a two day event which meant they had a hotel and that also meant he would listen to this idiot gush about all the hot girls for two whole goddamn days. Even though Cross was currently pissed at Allen, that would not stop him from being there to support him. Cross hadn’t missed a single competition yet and he wasn’t planning on it. The same went for Lavi’s play performances (and boy was that brat great at that shit, damn!).

They followed the school van down to the school hosting the competition and walked around aimlessly for a bit, trying to figure out where to sit and when their team was going to perform. As far as duets went Road and Riley were set to perform together in the morning, a couple of the girls on their team also had their dance solos (which Lavi was excited about because they were cheerleaders, Ava and Sarah.) Jasdero and Devit were set for the early afternoon while Link and Allen were set for a bit later after the twins. So, in other words, it was going to be a long day. It wasn’t all bad though. Sure, there were a lot of romantic duets and that got stale after a long time, but some were still pretty good. There was just something annoying about shoving a teen boy and a teen girl together, forcing them to dance romantically when they clearly had no chemistry to begin with. Hell, there was at least one where Cross could see the two dance partners outright glare at each other. Yeah. The romance vibe? Definitely not feeling it. There’s something there. Just not romance.

The good parts of the competition were the times you got to see a performance that was different than the rest, which Renny was good at doing. That’s why a lot of people knew the members on her team and always made time to watch the routines she was behind. Even if they can’t make it every single one for some reason, there was a select few that always drew in the bigger crowds (whether it was just to see what they came up with for the competition or simply watching them, figuring out ways on how to be better than them, Cross didn’t know). The twins were one of the hotter routines to see because they always had something creepy and sinister in store (which Cross liked especially). Road was another one who also had a creepy, doll-like flair to her which people loved. It also helped that they were apart of the wealthy and powerful Noah family. Of course, they would be one of the select few acts that everyone had to see.

Link also drew in quite a bit because of his status as Leverrier’s adopted son, but most of the crowd he drew in wasn’t just because of that. Link was quite the talented dancer. He did plenty of graceful routines over the years, however, that popularity only grew more when Allen was added to the mix. Link may have been a graceful dancer, but with Allen he told a story. Link always performed alone before Allen was thrown in. After their first performance together, they became one of the best duet performers within the competitions. Cross found it both amazing and sad. Amazing, because ‘holy shit that is my kid up there and people actually really like to see him perform’. Sad, because ‘this is a high school competition and there are times these kids are acting like this is life or death instead of having fun’. That was one of the things Cross was afraid of when he first agreed to let Allen join the dance team. So far, there didn’t seem to be a huge problem though. Sure, he got nervous here and there. Anyone would. But it wasn’t controlling his life and making it difficult for him to function.

After sitting through several other performances, finally, it was Link and Allen’s turn. Lavi, who had been gushing at girls, was silent. His eyes open wide and staring at the stage with such
intensity Cross was afraid it would burst into flames. Anita meanwhile was squealing and hopping up and down in her seat. None of them knew what Allen’s routine was about. He was quite secretive of it in the beginning, which was strange, because in the past the kid wouldn’t stop talking about it the moment Renny gave them their song and routine.

Allen was the one who walked out first, and he looked like a completely different person. People knew it was him because of the scar on his face. It became his signature of sorts. He also had the white hair, but to be fair a few other kids had dyed hair as well. He looked quite feminine though standing up there and there were still plenty of people who were confused as to whether this Allen kid was a guy or a girl. Either way, the kid danced remarkably, and people always loved to see him dancing with the kid with the golden braid. It was hard to believe that one day they wouldn’t be able to see them paired up anymore since Link was two grades ahead of Allen.

For now, Cross focused on the brat’s performance. He’d deal with the inevitable heart break of Allen not being able to dance with Link at a later time. The kid was intense. He was always intense, but today felt different (maybe it was just because of what’s been going on recently?). There was something there that Cross couldn’t put his finger on. It felt like desperation. It wasn’t long before Link joined his partner on stage. They moved like they were one of the same person, which always enamored Cross and creeped him out. It always creeped him out how people were able to move in sync like that. It was unnatural.

Soon the two were dancing together instead of copying each other. That’s when the air buzzed energetically. Each of them matching the other in intensity and movement. It was like there was a showdown going on between white and gold until soon they were mixing. When the lifts inevitably came in Cross began to flinch a little bit in fear. In the past when Allen was such a little pipsqueak he would openly cringe because he was afraid. He was afraid he was going to watch his kid get dropped. Now he just flinched. He couldn’t help it. He swore the two of them did it to fuck with him. He knew Link wouldn’t drop him (he also knew there was a few times where Link did drop Allen, though he never did it during a performance), but still did he really have to get his head that fucking close to the floor!? Sweet Jesus! You don’t get extra points for seeing how low you can go before you bash your head into the floor. Showoffs!

Then the performance ended. White and gold were not two separate colors anymore. They were mixed together as Link held Allen in his arms, their foreheads touching. Staring into each other eyes. Cross could hear Anita choked up beside him and Lavi trying so hard not to cry or freak out. Cross had to admit he was also choked up; he could feel tears stinging in his eyes. What he saw up there wasn’t two stupid little brats dancing. For a split second he saw Allen as an adult, going off and getting married to Twinkie below him. That both terrified Cross, because he swore to God Allen was a silly little pipsqueak yesterday! He could’ve sworn he was this little boy still, with freckles and spaces in his mouth where he lost his teeth, scared of thunderstorms and carrying Timcanpy who was almost the size of himself. It also amazed the shit out of Cross because ‘oh my god this brat is growing up so fast and I’m proud of him, but I also don’t like it. Shit is this what Tiedoll goes through?’ (Cross is having a major dad moment, give this man some tissues).

As the two exited the stage, with Allen in Link’s arms Anita was glowing with motherly pride, “Oh my god that was the best performance they ever had yet! That’s the most expressive I’ve seen him be in months!”

“Yeah. Lenalee is losing her shit,” Lavi responded through tears as he sent her a live stream video of the performance so everyone else could watch it back home as well.

“Yeah…” Cross could only say. He didn’t trust himself to say anymore. He was dazed, wondering what in the hell just happened. Maybe he’d ask Tiedoll about it later.
Several minutes passed before Road ran up to them, alarm written on her face. While she was hanging out with her dance partner Riley, waiting for the awards ceremony, she saw Allen walk outside, playing with his phone, looking worried and stressed. He was so distracted he actually bumped into someone without sparing them a second glance (which was weird because Allen was a gentleman and he usually apologized). Then she saw Link walk towards where Allen walked off to, but he stopped by the two of them to apologize for not watching their performance. Road couldn’t help but pry a little bit.

“Any idea why Juliet looks like he’s going to lose his damn mind any second?” Road asked.

Link looked confused at that, “What?”

“All’s up with him?” Road asked.

“Uhhh well he’s been having problems with Jake-“ Link responded, trying to shrug the incident off like it was just a small fight between boyfriend and girlfriend. Well in this case, boyfriend and boyfriend.

“No surprise. The guy is an asshole. When the hell is going to dump him?” Riley scoffed. Then everyone down the hallway near the entrance stiffened when they heard angry screaming and cussing come from outside.

“I think we’re about to have our answer,” Road said in shock as she saw Link run off towards the entrance.

Next thing she knew Link carrying the hysterically crying Allen with him. So, of course she decided to run off to go find Cross. There was only one other time she saw him ever cry like that and that was the time he still performed even though his ankle was injured. Everyone was treading carefully around Allen that day because he seemed off. Well he seemed off for quite a long time (since he started showing up late to practice or not at all, which he never did before), but today it was even more so. Road tried to do her own make-up today because she didn’t want to put more stress on Allen, but he insisted on doing it. She saw how shaky his hands were but pretended not to notice. The rest of the team insisted that they could do things on their own, but Allen seemed determined to keep himself busy, to keep his mind off of something.

Cross’s phone vibrated as it received a message from Link just around the same time Road came running up to them.

“Hey Road, awesome performance up there!” Lavi chirped, and the alarm slipped off of her face for a moment to give Lavi a sweet smile as thanks for his compliment. Then she directed her attention to Cross who was reading the text he received from Link saying that he was in the bathroom with Allen who was very upset.

He looked up at the little girl and showed her his phone with Link’s text on screen, “Let me guess, you know about this?”

“I saw Link carrying him to the bathroom and he was crying his eyes out. I don’t know why,” Road reported.

“Was he on his phone?” Cross asked, getting up and storming over to the boy’s bathroom, both alarmed and pissed off. He had a very good feeling he knew what was going on and he was ready to make the drive all the way back home to murder a certain kid for hurting his son.

“Yeah,” Road squeaked, trying to catch up to Cross who was turning scarier by the minute.
“I can take a guess why,” Cross growled as he marched his way over to the boy’s bathroom.

Riley watched him until he was out of sight before holding up her phone to Road, displaying a long list of videos that seemed to all involve Allen, “Dude, look at these videos my friend sent me-“

“Road! Hey Road, where’s Allen!?” Devit shouted as he ran towards the two of them, Jasdero running behind him.

“Bathroom.”

“Did you see the videos? What kind of fucked up shit is that!?”

“No, I haven’t seen them yet! Will you keep your voice down? We don’t need to attract anymore attention,” Road growled, sighing in annoyance when the drama queens also decided to make their way over.

“Guys, where’s Allen?” they started.

“Doesn’t matter. What matters right now is that he doesn’t see them. Got it?” a voice called out. Road spun around to see it was Lavi charging his way over. He was the angriest she had ever seen him, “Jake and his fucking friends got them plastered all over the school’s website and I’m gonna try and get them down before the whole school knows about it. No one show him these or tell him about it.”

“Dude, this is so fucked. I mean I know I’m fucked but I am not this fucked,” Jasdero questioned.

“You watched them!?” Ava exclaimed.

“Yeah…I mean I didn’t think it was real at first…”

“Will you guys shut up about it!? The last thing we need is for this to spread even farther. Just keep your traps shut about it. We can discuss it later at the hotel room!” Sarah snapped. Well. She had a point.

Meanwhile Cross entered the bathroom, his alarm and anger peaking when he heard how hard Allen was crying. As he slammed open the door to the bathroom, he took one look at Allen and gone was the grown-up Allen he had seen up on stage. Here, Allen was transformed back into a little boy, stage make-up running down his face, bawling his heart out. This was both heartbreaking and relieving to Cross. Heartbreaking, because it hurt to hear him wailing like that. Relieving, because it meant Allen was still a kid. He was still his brat and still doing brat things. It also pissed Cross off because “I swear to God if it is who I think it was that made you cry like this I will break his fucking neck!”.

Cross went straight to Allen, demanding answers. No more hiding. No more guessing. He wanted everything out right now.

“What the fuck happened? You will tell me everything,” Cross demanded, narrowing his eye. His tone reflected full parental authority and concern. Cross would not leave without the truth and they could do this the easy way or the hard way. Allen was too much in hysterics to form a coherent answer, so Cross whirled onto the next best target. Link Howard.

The blonde instantly took a step back in fear as he saw Cross’s red eye bore into him. He felt like he was staring up into a demon.

“The blonde instantly took a step back in fear as he saw Cross’s red eye bore into him. He felt like he was staring up into a demon.

“Okay, let’s try you twinkie. What the fuck happened?” Cross growled. Link opened his mouth, seeming to try and protest at the nickname, but thought better of it due to Cross’s mood.
“Uhhh…I don’t know the extent of it but last night when Allen got to my house he had blood trickling down his legs and only wore a big shirt-” Link started and Cross felt his anger flare dangerously. Allen was injured and this fucking brat didn’t tell him about it? That was a pretty big fucking detail to not tell someone! Especially if that description meant what Cross thought it meant—Oh he will rip this poor kid's balls off he swore to God he would—

“And why the fuck didn’t you tell me that when you texted me the first time!?” Cross yelled, releasing some of his pent-up anger. He winced when he heard Allen’s crying go an octave higher. Shit. Reel it back Cross. Yelling at one of his friends when he helped him in his hour of need was not going to make things better.

“It was something Allen should tell you, not me! I asked him if he wanted to do anything about it and he said no,” Link spluttered, taking another step back away from Cross. His reddish-brown eyes were wide and apologetic.

“I’m his father! I should know about that regardless kid-Gah whatever! It doesn’t matter now!” Cross yelled, trying once again to reel back his anger. He decided to shift his focus to Allen since he was quite pissed off at Twinkie at the moment. He understood the brat wanted to stay loyal to Allen, but God damnit! This was rape! His child was raped! He felt that would be something rather important to tell someone’s parents (that is if the situation called for it, Cross thought this situation called for it!)

Cross was even more pissed off at himself. He should’ve prevented this from happening! There had to be something that he could’ve done better to prevent this from happening! Allen wouldn’t be in this much pain, he wouldn’t be crying like this, if Cross did something better.

“Who the fuck raped him,” Cross said, his voice cracked in anger and guilt. He hated the way that word tasted. Rape. But he wasn’t going to sugar coat shit. It is what it was. Rape.

“Jake.”

Cross fucking knew it, but he wanted to be sure.

“I’m going to kill that bastard. Dumbass kid should’ve been locked away a fucking long time ago,” Cross spat. He should’ve locked him away the moment he was at his house laying his hands-on Allen. He should’ve locked him away after that house party, but he held his tongue because he didn’t want to hurt Allen by locking his boyfriend up. Cross should’ve done it regardless.

Then Cross heard Allen’s phone buzzing beside him. He looked over and his blood turned cold when he read that vile, repulsive name across his phone. Jake. Cross felt his ice-cold blood begin to burn with an unquenchable rage. He wanted bloodshed. Murder. This kid was going to pay for touching his brat like that and making him cry like this. Cross picked up the phone and answered it, turning strangely calm when he heard that annoying voice on the other line shout, “Allen you son of a bitch I’m going to fucking kill you and your family! You will not break up with me!”

You’re going to fucking what kid? Over my dead body, I’d love to see you fucking try, Cross thought as he responded in a venomous voice, “Wow you must have big fucking balls threatening a cop and his family! I was a dumb fucking teen back in my day but not that fucking dumb.”

“Tell you what junior, you think about showing up to my house and I’ll put a bullet through your skull and make it look like an accident. I’m not afraid of going to prison when it involves my son. Better yet, you threaten my son, touch my son, text my son, call my son, or so much as look at my son, I will kick your ass so hard that you’ll have to unbutton your collar to take a shit. You think your hot shit? Well you picked the wrong fucking son to mess with. That goes for his friends too. I’m sending my friends to you and they can deal with you until I get there. The party is just getting
started princess and if you think I’m scary you haven’t seen Tiedoll,” Cross continued, his voice
turning scarier and angrier with each syllable that passed through his lips. Cross smiled an ugly,
evil smile that promised never-ending suffering, relishing in the silence he got over the phone,
before hanging up. Leaving the kid to the quiet. Cross had become Lucifer himself, but the
moment his attention returned to Allen, that persona dropped off the face of the planet. Cross, the
father to Allen, returned. This time the anger was gone, and it was replaced with concern, pain, and
love.

“Alright little bird you're okay, I’ll handle it,” Cross soothed, not caring that Twinkie was seeing
him pull a massive effing Tiedoll moment here. Why should he even give a fuck? For one thing, he
was pissed at Twinkie for not telling him earlier what had happened. For two, Allen was hurting.
Badly. So, anyone deeming him unfit for his man card? They could take it and fuck off to the
seventh circle of hell. Cross didn’t care that a few moments later, Link was walking out of the
bathroom. His main focus was Allen.

He wrapped his arms around Allen, guiding him to rest his head on his shoulder as he began to
rock him like he was eight all over again. It had been quite a long time since he held him like this.
He just wished it was under better circumstances. This was not what Cross pictured handling
Allen’s first break up was going to be like. This was not how it was supposed to be. He was
picturing tears yes, but not in this context. Not with this amount of pain.

“I know it hurts right now but you’ll get through it. It’ll get better. You’re a Walker, you can get
through anything,” Cross soothed, rubbing down Allen’s back where he was sure it probably
ached, “You don’t need to worry about him anymore little bird. He won’t lay a hand on you ever
again. I’ll make damn sure of it. You don’t have to worry about anything. Dad will handle it.”

Cross continued to rock him, whispering to him for several long minutes. He wondered if Allen
would ever stop crying. Eventually though, Allen’s crying did slow down to whimpering and then
finally the occasional hiccup

“I’m sorry…” Allen whispered; his body sagged against Cross in exhaustion.

“I’m sorry too. Shit shouldn’t have gotten this much out of hand,” Cross whispered back, his
attention pulled away when he found that his phone was exploding with missed calls and text
messages from Tiedoll and Anita. Anita was wondering what was taking Cross so long and if Allen
was alright. Tiedoll was wondering why his kids had received videos of Allen being…was Cross
reading that right? They filmed it? How far have the videos gotten?

Cross sent a quick text to Tiedoll, telling him that he would talk to him later, before shutting off his
phone. He didn’t want Allen to read that text message. There was already more than enough shit
going on in Allen’s head right now and he didn’t need more things to worry about.

“You feeling good enough to get going back to the hotel? You got a big day tomorrow. We’ll talk
more about this later,” Cross asked. Allen sighed but slowly pulled away. They couldn’t stay in the
boy’s bathroom forever after all.

“I look like trash,” Allen croaked, getting a good look at how puffy, red, and make-up streaked his
face looked. Allen grabbed some paper towels to try to scrub off the ruined make-up, which was
pretty much futile.

“It’s not that bad just put on a hoodie and keep the hood up. Nobody will notice ya.”

Allen gave him an unamused glare that said ‘Are you dumb? Of course, they’re going to notice.’
Cross raised his hands in surrender. Allen sighed moodily before deciding to hide behind his hair,
he then began to walk out of the bathroom.

Cross rolled his eyes, sighing as he followed his brat out of the bathroom so they could find his team members, Anita, and Lavi. They ran into Link who had been apparently looking for them to, and he held out a golden medal towards Allen with as much of a smug look the brat could manage.

“First place. Perfect score. How are you feeling?” Link asked with a small smile. Allen shrugged and took the cold, metallic medal in his hand. He wasn’t up to talking right now. He was beyond exhausted.

“Good job. You two earned it. You had Anita crying in the audience and I think Lavi was damn near close,” Cross said, putting his hand on Allen’s shoulder pridefully.

“Lavi’s here!?” Allen croaked.

“Yeah, but he left to go see if he could get some girl’s number,” Cross said, not knowing what Lavi was truly up to.

They found the others before they found Lavi. Other than Anita wrapping Allen up in a big bear hug after hearing he broke up with Jake, nobody else acted strange around Allen. They knew what happened. Well, a big part of it, but they also didn’t want to stress Allen out. He already looked like a total wreck with smudged make-up and red-rimmed eyes. Lavi soon appeared out of seemingly nowhere with a huge smile on his face. On the outside he seemed cheery as he walked around to throw his arm over Allen’s shoulders like he normally did. Cross wasn’t stupid though. He could see how forced that smile looked, how close Lavi kept himself to Allen’s body, or how he kept making lame wise cracks to try and get Allen to laugh or smile. He knew that his ‘big protective older brother’ mode was at an all-time high.

Once the group was together, they headed back to the hotel. Once there Cross and Anita lingered near Allen and Link’s hotel room. On the one hand they wanted to give Allen space but on the other hand they wanted to make sure he would be okay on his own. It took some annoyed glares and convincing from Allen that he would be fine for the two adults to leave. That didn’t stop Anita from dropping by with a tub of ice cream for Allen to help with the sting of the breakup before they fully left him in the care of Link.

Once Cross was in his shared hotel room with Anita, he finally let the weight of all that had happened crash down on him. Allen was raped. That for sure, but he knew that wasn’t the extent of it. Oh hell no. With how that rat bastard acted in his house that day Allen invited him over he knew for a fact that there was more than just that. He wondered if it happened multiple times before he finally found out because he finally broke down. He wondered how else Jake talked to him based on the way he sounded during his latest phone call. Did he physically abuse him as well? Just the thought of that Cross’s vision turn red and his fingers itch to close around that shrimp’s fucking throat.

“I know you’re mad but we both knew he was going to experience his first break up eventually,” Anita said, breaking the silence as she saw Cross trying to burn a hole into the wall with his hateful gaze. Oh that’s right. She didn’t know what had fully happened.

“Yeah, well he wasn’t supposed to experience it like this,” Cross growled.

“What do you mean?”

Cross decided to clam up after that. It wasn’t necessarily his story to tell. However, they were both Allen’s guardians/parents and it was never good to keep secrets from your partner, especially when it dealt with one’s kid. Cross instead turned on his phone to return to Tiedoll’s message, not
surprised that his phone was now filled with Tiedoll’s persistent questioning. He couldn’t blame him. Over the years they all became like family. If one member of the family was hurting, everyone else jumping up to go help them.

“Cross, what happened in the bathroom with Allen?” Anita asked, her tone switching from one of light conversation to ‘Mama bear’ in an instant. Shit. He wasn’t going to get away with this one.

Cross sighed, “I’m not exactly sure on the details. He didn’t tell me much of anything yet. According to Link, Allen showed up to his house in nothing but an oversized t-shirt and there was blood trickling down his legs.”

Anita’s eye flashed in rage. One moment she was standing there, the next she was already attempting to storm out of the room and towards Allen’s hotel room, but Cross grabbed her arm to stop her.

“Excuse me!? What the hell do you think you’re doing!?” Anita snapped, whirling around to look at Cross in incredulous anger.

“Look, I get you’re pissed, and you want answers right now. I am to. But now is not the time to pursue it. The brat has been through enough today. He needs a break. The last thing he needs is one of us to start raising hell and stressing him out even more. We need to figure out how we’re going to approach this shit,” Cross explained in a strangely calm tone, even though that was definitely not what he felt inside.

“Cross, our child is hurting! That little asshole hurt him-“

“And he’ll be fine for now. He’s with Link. If he needs anything we’re just down the hall.”

“Link!? Why should we trust him!? He didn’t even say anything to us!”

“So? He was the one who took care of him last night. That’s a hell of a lot better than what most people would do. I’m pissed to but knowing Allen he probably didn’t want anyone to know about it anyways. Link would be the type to instantly report it if it was his choice. The kid acted in Allen’s best interests.”

Anita look back at the door, still wanting to storm right up to Allen’s hotel room to demand where and how that boy hurt him before shielding him away from the rest of the cruel world. Cross was right though. Allen has been through enough right now. They could figure this out after the competition was said and done. They also had to figure out just exactly how they were going to approach this problem and what things they could expect in the future in the aftermath of this disgusting act.

“Fine, but if he comes to our door in the middle of the night, I swear to God Cross I will drive all the way back to town and give that clown a fucking lesson he will never forget,” Anita stated sternly.

“If you can get passed the police. Apparently, him and his buddies were arrested after word got out about the videos according to Tiedoll.”

“There’s videos!? Cross what if Allen sees them!?“

“He won’t. I took his phone when the brat tried to call him to rant about breaking up with him. I don’t think he’s going to miss it that much. At least not tonight.”

“How far has the videos gotten?”
“I wish I knew.”

“Cross what the hell are we going to do? If the whole town sees that-his school- he’d be so devastated!”

“The only thing we can do now is keep those fuckers behind bars and away from Allen until we figure out what he wants to do next. Obviously, the kids are going to be in some shit because of the videos, but it’s Allen who needs to figure out how he wants to deal with the rest of this. This is something that happened to him. He deserves the right to make the choice of how this issue should be dealt.”

~

The second day of the competition went fairly well, the group managed to win second during their group performance and the rest of kids managed to score high on their individual/duet performances. It was after the group performance that things began to turn, setting the stage for the aftermath that was going to come because of Jake. Cross didn’t get to see Allen a lot that morning, so he wasn’t sure how he was feeling. He didn’t get much answers from Link either since he was equally busy, but the kid said Allen seemed fine and that he’d keep an eye on him. Allen was good at pretending he was fine when he truly wasn’t. Anyone who knew him well enough knew to second guess how he was acting.

The brat did good during the performance, he seemed totally normal on stage. When their performance ended, and they went backstage was when Cross got a text from Link saying that Allen had nearly passed out backstage the moment they got back there. Allen managed to push himself until the end of his performances before his body finally gave out. Cross knew he should’ve stopped him from doing his group performance. He should’ve driven him home so that he could rest, and they could figure this Jake shit out. Any other parent would. However, he also knew that Allen wouldn’t budge. He’d have to drag him out of the hotel kicking and screaming and while it was easier to do that shit when Allen was younger, it was a whole different story now that he was bigger. The only thing he was able to do was to let the brat push himself until his body gave out and be there to support him for the inevitable crash.

So, Cross made his way to the group just in time to see Renny lecture his brat about pushing himself too hard. Not like Allen was paying attention to it though. He looked absolutely fried. Cross could already tell he had a fever from his red cheeks and glazed over eyes. Cross waited patiently until Renny finished her lecture (she scared Cross sometimes with how intense she could get) before deciding that it would be better if the brat rested back at the hotel. Link stayed with the group, even if it wasn’t what he wanted, but Cross figured that he needed a break from keeping an eye on Allen. So, he took Allen back to his hotel room and forced the kid to sleep off his fever.

When the next morning came, Cross managed to grab Link before the drive home in an attempt to patch things up. Even though he was still a little angry that Link didn’t tell him anything, he had to admit that he was thankful for the kid taking care of Allen this whole time. He couldn’t imagine what would’ve happened if Allen was left wandering around all night. If it wasn’t for him or for the rest of Allen’s friends watching out for him all these years, shit would’ve been a whole lot worse. Even if shit wasn’t all that good now, the brat had a hell of huge support system backing him which will be sorely needed after what happened. He didn’t want to destroy that support system all because he was pissed.

However, he also wanted to give Link a very specific talk, especially after that performance they did. He knew for a long time that their relationship was something more or at least could change into something more. He figured with the recent events and not giving Jake a good man to man talk, that he would give Link a good man to man talk (even if he wouldn’t do anything), ya know
to fulfill his parental deed or some shit. He left Twinkie flustered as all hell, so he wasn’t sure how effective that talk was or if it had made any sense, but it wasn’t like he had time to worry about it right now. He had Allen to worry about.
Allen Goes To His First Concert

Chapter Summary

I honestly was not planning on writing a happy fluffy chapter but it was something that was sorely needed and I thank my inspiration for that. I was waiting until inspiration hit me to finally write this drabble and here it is so please enjoy!

Chapter Notes

Allen is 8 in this one. I kind of got a bit tired of writing dark stuff so I wanted to try my hand at light-hearted stuff. I’ve debated which band should Allen’s first concert be for so many months. I’ve thought of Imagine Dragons, which was my first concert though I wanted MCR to be. I’ve thought of Five Finger Death Punch because some of the songs give me strong Cross vibes and I headcanon his singing voice to match the singer of that band. I’ve thought of Florence and The Machine my headcanon to how Allen would sound reflects heavily with her voice, only in a male perspective. I wanted something that seemed to be Cross’s style which is mainly rock, but I wanted something soft, a band whose music can just take you away so easily like Florence’s. Live shows tend to be quite loud and I thought a band who does screaming would be a little too much for a first band sensory wise, especially for Allen. In the end, I thought Of Monsters and Men would be a perfect match. Anyways I’m super proud of this because it’s literally just a huge thing of fluff and it’s perfect.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Allen had always been a huge music fanatic ever since Cross could remember. Even before he figured out that Allen could sing. Even before he used music to calm him down. He knew it the moment he turned on his car radio when he first took the brat home that this kid had a thing for music. Though he was as quiet as a mouse on the way home, eyeing the cars around them with wide, nervous eyes, that brat’s body moved with the music whether he knew it or not. Didn’t even matter what song played. The brat’s eyes also seemed to brighten up a bit and his body would relax, and Cross was sure that the first trip home would’ve been more disastrous had he not had the radio on. Not that this was all surprising to Cross. Mana was a huge music nerd, especially his brother Neah. Of course, that dorky clown would also pass his love of music down to his son among other things.

Once Allen knew that Cross could play and sing, their house became a fucking concert itself every single day. One could assume it was the end of the world if there wasn’t music playing at least once a day throughout their household. Sometimes they’d stick to one band that day, other times it was a variety of different genres. Cross made sure that brat knew every single word of the classics, especially rock classics. If either of them was feeling sad, they played angry, sad, or uplifting music. If they were having a good day, they blasted happy music. If the brat was feeling inspired, it was classical music. If Cross was inspired, it was rock music. Music was life. Music was an essential on car rides. Devices to play music had to be fully charged before they left the home. They triple checked to make sure they had chargers. They had extra pairs of headphones stored
away in case a pair randomly broke and all the stores were closed. CD’s were all over the damn place and later on as Allen grew older, sheet music would be strewn about with the CD’s. Like food, if there were no resources to play music, Allen would become quite bitchy.

So of course, it was inevitable that Cross would have to take his music loving imp to his first concert. The brat had always stayed on top of who was playing nearby and where his favorite bands were playing at all times. Cross sometimes wished the brat paid the same amount of attention to his reading and writing homework. Cross would be lucky to go a week without Allen gushing about what it was like to go to a concert or what it would be like to see his favorite bands play right in front of him. He was downright obsessive sometimes in hearing about Cross’s own concert experiences. However, the brat knew those things cost money, so he never actually begged. He would gush about it yes, but he would never beg to go to a concert.

Well after ruminating for several months and trying to save up money, Cross was finally going to indulge his brat and take him to his first ever concert. He looked through countless of possible concerts, trying to figure out which concert would be a good first concert to take Allen to. Concerts were a highly stimulating environment, not to mention there would be a lot of people. Allen already had issues being around crowds of people and there were times where he’d freak out from sensory overload in some environments so Cross had to keep that in mind. Though he couldn’t control the number of people showing up at a concert, he could try to control how much stimuli would be hitting Allen all at once. He decided against heavy metal concerts because he was afraid that seeing grown men scream on stage may be triggering to Allen. Sure, he’d have headphones covering the brat’s ears during the concert, but those guys could look quite aggressive while performing and he didn’t know how the brat would react. He also wanted to find a band that the brat liked, obviously. Finally, after going through the massive list of bands that Allen liked, he found a concert that would nicely and that was Of Monsters and Men. It was near enough where it wouldn’t destroy his budget, but it was far enough to need a hotel room which meant some good ol’ father and son bonding time.

So, during one of Allen’s gushing moments Cross decided to finally tell the brat of his plan.

“Ooo Panic at the Disco is gonna be in Las Vegas! I watched some of their live show last night! Brendon Urie was so amazing!” Allen gushed, laying on his stomach on the couch and scrolling through Cross’s phone instead of doing his reading for school. At least it wasn’t spelling homework tonight. How did he manage to get his phone? He didn’t know.

“Did I say you could use my phone?” Cross asked, his eyebrow raised as he turned away from the T.V. to glare at his brat. Allen looked up, seemingly surprised that he forgot he had stolen Cross’s phone when he wasn’t looking and wasn’t supposed to let the older one know that. Whoopsie.

“No,” Allen responded before sticking his nose up in the air, “Too bad I have it now. By the way, your selfie to Anita was trash. I never knew someone could have so many nose hairs-“

“You’ve been looking through my messages!? Doesn’t privacy mean anything to you!”

“Five Finger Death Punch will be in Ohio in a couple days!” Allen announced, turning his back towards Cross to ignore him.

“Oi don’t you ignore me when I’m talking to you! You still got a shit ton of reading to do before bedtime ya know!”

“Reading is too hard,” Allen whined, pouting as he continued to scroll through Cross’s phone.

“I told you to try before I helped you,” Cross said sternly, not willing to let Allen get away with not
reading that easily. He had to practice to get better at it. Although he had to agree with Allen’s frustration, it’s not like his teachers were going easy on him. He wondered if they actually cared that Allen was further behind than his peers. How could you expect a kid who had never touched a book not even a year ago to be moving at the same pace as his peers? Allen took almost an hour and a half, with assistance to read something that was supposed to take his peers perhaps twenty minutes at most to read and that was on a good day. So, Cross would force Allen to do part of the reading or at least attempt to get part of the reading done on his own before he would take over and read the rest for him. Spelling homework was a team effort and easily frustrating to Allen. That sort of homework took a lot of encouragement and little breaks to avoid giving the kid information overload. But more on that later.

“I did try,” Allen huffed as he continued to scroll. Then he suddenly sat up, his eyes lit up and excited, “Of Monsters and Men released a tour and are gonna be four and thirty minutes away from here a couple months from now!”

There was the opening Cross was looking for.

“Is that so?” Cross asked, feigning disinterest.

“I hope I’ll be able to watch a live stream of the show!”

“Wouldn’t it be better to actually be able to watch them in concert though rather than through a screen?” Cross asked, looking over at Allen to watch his reaction.

“Maybe one day I will, but for now watching them through a screen isn’t that bad,” Allen responded. Jeez couldn’t he act like a normal kid and just beg for Cross to take him for once? The only thing Allen ever begged for was food and even then, it was subpar compared to the fits he’s seen kids throw for a dumb $1 toy at the store.

“Well what would you say if you didn’t have to wait? What if there was a way to actually go to that concert?” Cross asked, looking back at the T.V., once again feigning mild disinterest.

“That would be fun,” Allen simply stated, not wanting to get his hopes up. Cross could detect wistfulness in his tone though. His eyes also seemed to take on a sort of dazed look as well.

Cross hummed and nodded his head. Then he got up out of his chair to walk to the entryway to his jacket where he retrieved the piece of paper that he had printed out at work. Then he made his way back to Allen who was still scrolling through his phone. Cross leaned over and plucked the device out of Allen’s hand, earning himself a squeal of, “Hey!”

“I was looking at that!” Allen whined, reaching for Cross’s phone.

“I’m just taking back what is rightfully mine. After all, I’m the one who pays for the cell phone bill,” Cross stated before he gave the piece of paper to Allen, “Stop your whining and read this for me.”

“Why? Can’t you read?” Allen asked, pouting at the idea of reading.

“Well yeah, but I can’t seem to read that paper. Maybe you can help me?” Cross suggested. Allen pouted at Cross, seeing through his bullshit.

“Come on kid just humor me for once,” Cross stated bluntly.

“Fine,” Allen huffed as he opened up the folded piece of paper and squinted at it. It looked sorta like the tickets they handed out at the circus, but it wasn’t cut out. Allen could easily recognize the
“What is it?” Allen asked.

“I don’t know. That’s why I’m asking you. Keep reading it.”

Allen squinted at the piece of paper some more. Okay so it had Of Monsters and Men on it. It also had a date listed on it like the one he saw scrolling through Cross’s phone…and he could also recognize the place it said they would be in…

No…no this couldn’t be…. there was no way…they couldn’t afford it could they?

“What is it?” Allen asked again blinking owlishly up at Cross.

“Well what does it look like to you?”

“It looks like a ticket…”

“Yeah…what kind of ticket?”

“A band ticket…to a concert…Of Monster and Men…”

“Is it really? Well would you look at that,” Cross said, acting amazed that such a ticket could suddenly pop up out of seemingly nowhere, “Oh yeah, now I remember…I bought two of them a couple of weeks back. Jeez, my memory must be failing me. Oh well, we shouldn’t let them go to waste. Why don’t we go?”

Cross looked over to see the look of shock written across Allen’s face. Cross gave the brat his signature smirk.,

“Y-You’re kidding…”

“Why would I kid? You got the ticket in your hand. Don’t you?”

“We can’t afford it…”

“You’re too young to worry about affording shit. I already have plenty enough for us to afford it.”

“Seriously?” Allen asked. Cross could feel the excitement beginning to build, vibrating through Allen’s entire pipsqueak body.

“Yeah. I’m dead serious. So do you want to go or no-“

“Yes! Yes, yes, yes, yes! Finally! Finally!” Allen shrieked at the top of his lungs, his hands in tiny fists as he pumped them through the air. Well there’s the enthusiasm that Cross liked to see.

“It was about damn time. Jeez. Waiting to get an answer out of you is like watching paint dry,” Cross complained before Allen attacked him in a hug.

“Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I love you and your very strange nose hairs and weird body scent!”

“Your welco-Hey!”

~

Boy was it a long couple of months to wait. Cross had to give the kid credit though, he didn’t talk
about the concert as much as he thought he was going to. Although it was still quite a bit. A day had barely passed since he mentioned it to the kid before the kid began to create a long playlist to play on the car ride up and back from the concert. It became a routine of Allen constantly asking for Cross’s opinion over whether or not a song should be added or deleted from the playlist. As they grew closer to their departure day, Allen began to obsess over what he should wear the night of the concert.

“Jeez sometimes I wonder if you were supposed to be a girl with how much you obsess over your appearance. We still got like two weeks kid,” Cross complained. Allen was holding up two Of Monsters and Men t-shirts and having a hard time deciding which one he wanted to wear during the concert.

“Yeah but a lot can happen in two weeks! I still don’t know if I should wear eyeliner to the concert or not!”

“Just do what you want to kid. Look just take those two with you.”

“Should I wear regularly jeans or black jeans?”

“I don’t know! Just take both of them!”

“But I have several pairs of jeans!”

Oh my god it was going to be a long two weeks, Cross thought to himself.

~

It was absolute hell trying to get the kid to relax and go to bed the night before they were set to leave to go to the hotel. Allen wouldn’t stop worrying about whether he packed everything he could possibly need, a huge opposite from Cross who threw together a duffle bag haphazardly and had not even double checked everything once. That night it took everything in Cross’s arsenal to get Allen to sleep. While he was taking a bath, he sprayed down his room in lavender. No dice. He tried warm milk. Nada. He tried reading him a boring story. Not even a yawn. All the kid wanted to talk about was the concert. Then he tried soft music. The kid only wanted to listen to Of Monsters and Men. It took several bathroom trips, several back rubs, several reminders to shut the fuck up and go to sleep that it made Cross’s head spin before Allen finally passed out. God it was hard to imagine what it would be like at the hotel where Cross’s sleeping aids would lessen because there would be less resources.

Allen snapped to attention so fast the moment Cross’s alarm blared that it made Cross jealous because he wished he was that motivated in the mornings. By the time Allen was dressed Cross had just sat up, blinking blearily at Allen’s bedroom wall because he fell asleep while trying to get his ass to sleep.

“Hurry up, hurry up! Move!” Allen yipped, climbing on his bed to push at Cross’s back to get him moving.

“Isn’t that my line?” Cross asked, not at all perturbed by the child pushing up against him. Not like he was really moving anywhere anyways.

“Who cares! Ugh you’re so slow! Move your big, old body. Come on mooooveee!” Allen whined as he pushed back against Cross by using his feet against his headboard as leverage.

“Are you done?” Cross asked as the brat collapsed with a whine, seeing that Cross wasn’t moving anywhere, “I don’t know why you’re in such a rush. We have the whole day to get to the hotel.
Besides we’re not moving anywhere until I had my coffee.”

“By the time you’re ready it’s gonna be nighttime again!” Allen whined, leaning against Cross.

“Good, then I won’t have to listen to your constant squeaking because you’d be busy sleeping,” Cross shot back as he suddenly got up, causing Allen to squeak as he fell backwards on the bed.

“Rude!”

So, as Cross slowly got ready for the day he had a certain little imp following him around telling him to move faster and groaning in annoyance.

“Instead of bitching and whining maybe you should load up the car,” Cross suggested.

Allen paused his pushing on Cross’s legs to make him move faster and thought that that was pretty good idea. Cross smirked as he heard the sound of retreating tiny footsteps. Finally, some peace.

“Make sure I packed my phone charger brat!”

“Haven’t you double checked anything at all!? Ugh you’re hopeless!”

Sadly, that didn’t last long at all and soon Cross was sitting at the table, sipping his coffee with a pouty Allen sitting right in front of him. Allen swore the man was just going slow to piss him off and if you asked Cross…Cross would confirm that yes, he was purposefully being slow to mess with Allen. Allen rested his head on the table, watching the wall clock that seemed to mock him with every minute that passed by. Finally, after what felt like eons, Cross was done with his first cup of coffee.

“Are you ready now?” Allen asked, hopeful.

“Nah I think I’m gonna have a second cup of coffee,” Cross stated, watching as Allen inwardly imploded.

“Oh my god, seriously!?”

Cross laughed, “What do you mean seriously? You don’t have to drive four fucking hours straight. Did you even have breakfast yet?”

“I already did! I had cereal while you were getting dressed!”

“Well then I better not hear you whining about being hungry on the ride there,” Cross said sternly as he got up to wash out his mug and Allen’s cereal bowl. He had already prepared snacks to combat Allen’s lightning fast metabolism as he learned to do when taking Allen anywhere. Most parents may think that would be spoiling the kid, but not in Allen’s case. The kid needed to eat more to keep himself at a stable weight because he burned it off so fast. Apparently, the school thought differently and always kept their portions small, which always resulted in a crabby Allen coming home ravenous for food.

“Alright, we’ll go once you go to the bathroom,” Cross announced.

“What!? But I don’t hafta go!”

“Did I stutter? You and I both know you’re gonna need to go the moment we leave the house.”

“Ughhh” Allen groaned
“Ughhh I know how dare I act like a parent,” Cross groaned back as he watched Allen slide off his chair and run off to the bathroom. Meanwhile Cross did a once over of the house making sure they had everything before he grabbed his car keys. At the jingling of his keys, Allen was once again summoned almost out of thin air it seemed.

“Did you wash your hands?”

“Yes!”

“You sure you got everything?”

“Yessss!”

“You better put on a jacket before you leave- “

“I have it in the car! Let’s goooo!”

“Well fuck okay then,” Cross said, raising his hands in surrender as he watched his Allen take off outside in a blur of white. As Allen sat bouncing around in the passenger seat, Cross locked up the house and got into the driver’s side of his car. Cross got in and started up the car, setting a hand on Allen’s head to stop him from bouncing. “Okay you little imp, take a deep breath and calm down. Make yourself useful and get the music started.”

Allen happily obliged and before they knew it, they were cruising out of town singing without a care in the world and continuing even after their throats grew sore.

~

“You still alive over there brat? We’ll be there in a little bit,” Cross asked, noticing Allen beginning to doze off in the passenger seat. There’s no way in hell he was going to let the brat get a nap in before they got to the hotel otherwise, he’d never fall asleep tonight. Well, at least there wouldn’t any hope for him to fall asleep tonight. Allen didn’t respond, instead he continued to doze off.

“Oi, you better not be dozing on me. I need you to stay awake so that I can stay awake,” Cross said, reaching over to mess around with Allen like poking his face and side.

Allen whined, batting his hands at Cross.

“Nope, nu-uh no sleeping on the job kid. You’re in charge of music so you better wake up,” Cross said as he wiggled his fingers against the brat’s stomach.

“Stop it I’m tired,” Allen whined but he couldn’t stop from giggling and squirming.

“Well you should’ve thought of that when you kept asking for water and needing to go to the bathroom last night,” Cross said, leaving his brat alone once he was awake once again. However, this only made Allen want to be annoying.

“Are we there yet?” Allen asked.

“We’ll be there in a half an hour.”

Five minutes later.

“Are we there yet?”

“Has it been a half an hour yet?”
“No.”

“Then know we are not.”

A couple of minutes later.

“I’m hungry.”

“We can order pizza at the hotel.”

Fifteen minutes later

“I need to pee.”

God damnit, again, Cross asked himself.

“Can you hold it for at least ten minutes?”

“Maybe”

“Alright,” Cross said, deciding he was willing to take the risk, especially since they were on the interstate.

By the time they arrived at the hotel Allen was on the verge of exploding but hadn’t complained at all until they reached the hotel. That was both surprising and concerning to Cross.

“You didn’t piss yourself, yet did you?” Cross asked in concerned.

“No but I’m gonna in a minute,” Allen reported, looking like he was on the verge of tears.

“Sweet! Let’s go,” Cross said, happy that his risk taking was proven successful, or at least so far. Allen practically sprinted to the hotel entrance, leaving Cross to jog after him because he knew he probably only had a minute before the brat pissed himself and he absolutely refused to use a public bathroom by himself. Plus, the brat got lost easily and God knows he will find a way to get lost while finding the bathroom.

“Hi, can I help you?” the nice receptionist lady asked, taking one look at Allen before interpreting exactly what was going on. She smiled and stated, “It’s down the hall on the right.”

“Thank you!” Cross responded as Allen took off sprinting.

After taking the brat to the bathroom, Cross got their hotel keys and then they got their luggage before dragging it to the hotel room. The instant Cross dropped his duffle bag to the ground, he walked over to the hotel bed and collapsed on it. Well apparently Allen thought that was a great idea, but Cross’s back was a lot more plush than the bed. Cross groaned, hearing his back pop as he felt the extra weight on his back. Allen sighed, not at all concerned by now at the weird creaking and popping noises Cross’s body made.

“Can we go swimming?” Allen asked. God Cross was waiting for that question, especially since he already told the brat that there was a pool. Cross ignored him in favor of shutting his eyes.

“Hey! I wasn’t allowed to nap! You don’t get one either!” Allen responded, jumping up and down on his back.

“Alright, you wanna fucking go brat!” Cross growled, grabbing Allen’s leg and flipping over to pin Allen to the bed. Allen squealed in surprise, squealing louder when he felt Cross wiggle his
fingers under his armpits.

“What’s wrong? Aren’t you gonna fight back? Huh? Huh? It’s not funny now huh? Come on Allen,“ Cross growled playfully as he continued to tickle Allen. Allen continued to squeal and giggle, trying to kick himself away from Cross. Cross dodged his kicking easily although there came quite a few times that Allen came close to kicking him right in the crotch.

“Hey what did we say about nut shots? We don’t do those in this household, remember,” Cross scolded lightly, continuing to tickle him relentlessly.

“Y-Y-You’re a-a-a m-m-“ Allen stammered through his giggles.

“I’m a-a-a wha-what?” Cross mocked.

“M-Meanie!” Allen squealed his face turning red as he couldn’t stop laughing.

“Really? Is that the best you could do?” Cross taunted as he flipped Allen over and put his hands behind his back. He already had his legs restrained between his legs, “Where were you on the day before two years ago?”

“What!? That makes no sense!” Allen yelped.

“Wrong answer punk!” Cross responded before he proceeded to tickle Allen senselessly once again.

Allen squealed again, squirming and laughing as Cross attacked him with no mercy.

“U-Uncle! U-U-Uncle!” Allen cried breathlessly.

“What!? Tha-That makes no sense!” Allen yelped.

“Wrong answer punk!” Cross responded before he proceeded to tickle Allen senselessly once again.

Allen squealed again, squirming and laughing as Cross attacked him with no mercy.

“Really? You think that’s gonna work? Weak,” Cross said, but stopped anyways before Allen could pass out because that would suck. He got up and left the maniacally laughing Allen on the bed in favor of looking for swimsuits so that Allen could compose himself. Swimming was a great way to get the kid to burn off some energy and Cross was gonna need it if he ever hoped to get the brat relaxed enough to sleep tonight.

“Okay brat get a move on before I change my mind,” Cross said, throwing Allen’s swimsuit at him which consisted of a long-sleeved shirt and swimming shorts because Allen was self-conscious about his left arm.

“Yay!” Allen squealed happily as he ran off to go change.

Once the two of them were changed, Cross released his wired son out of the hotel room where he proceeded to sprint only God knows where.

“Oi brat, where do you think you’re going?” Cross yelled, his brat already on the other end of the hall.

“The pool?”

“Really now? Cuz it’s not down that way.”

“Oh.” Allen said, blinking owlishly before he ran back down the hall. Cross rolled his eyes before following his brat. He had to admit it was great to see the brat actually act like a brat, even if Cross wasn’t used to handling one that was wired like he had just eaten buckets of candy.

“Don’t run brat you’re going to slip and fall,” Cross yelled out at Allen as the carpet turned into
tile. Cross picked up a bit of speed, just in case the brat didn’t listen to him and ended up busting his head open or whatever. It’s a good thing he did because the moment Allen got to the pool, he would’ve done just that if Cross wasn’t there to catch him, “See now what did I tell ya? God forbid you ever listen to me.”

Cross picked up Allen who squealed and began to kick. Cross rolled his eyes, walking him over to the 3ft deep area of the pool where he would be able to stand in.

“Shall I drop you? Perhaps that’ll fix your cheekiness, huh?”

“No! It’s gonna be cold,” Allen squealed.

“Should’ve thought about that before misbehaving. Enjoy your dip,” Cross said, throwing Allen into the water and relishing in his scream.

“Ahhh it's cold,” Allen shivered before making shivering noises.

“You’ll get used to it,” Cross said as he walked over to one of the lounge chairs and sat down.

“What are you doing!?” Allen squeaked indignantly.

“What does it look like I’m doing?”

“Well aren’t you going to come in?”

“Why would I wanna do that?”

“Cuz I want you to play with me!”

“Can’t you play by yourself?”

“There’s no one else here!”

Oh yeah. That’s right. Cross sighed and rolled his eyes but got up and walked over to the deep side of the pool before sliding in.

“Hey! That’s no fair! I can’t go over there cuz it’s too deep,” Allen said, crossing his arms with a pout, unaware that Cross was swimming underneath the water, towards Allen. Allen tilted his head a little bit, a bit concerned when Cross didn’t rise to the top right away like he thought he would. Then he saw shock of red move under the water towards him and unleashed a squeal when Cross popped up right in front of him roaring. Cross laughed at Allen’s reaction, earning a huff from the child and an annoyed splash at him.

“Oh, excuse me little man, you really wanna start something you know you’re not going to win?” Cross asked, his eyes narrowing threateningly. Allen backed away but giggled cheekily.

“Well come on tough guy,” Cross said, his eyes shining with mischief as he pulled himself back under the water so only his nose and red eye was above water, glaring at Allen. Allen stood there, not exactly sure what to do other than to splash at him again, barely even hitting Cross. Cross blinked unamused at Allen before he splashed a huge wave back at him, smirking at the squeak that left Allen’s lips. Allen whined and smacked the water angrily only for the water to splash back into his face. Cross laughed and grabbed Allen, deciding to drag his prey into deeper waters. He didn’t go too far, but it was far enough where Allen wouldn’t be able to touch the floor. Allen whined, not really liking it.
“Oh relax. I’m not gonna let you drown,” Cross reassured before an evil smirk went across his face, “Hey wanna do something cool?”

“Ohhh…I don’t know…” Allen mumbled, not liking the look that was on Cross’s face.

“You ever been thrown across a pool before?” Cross asked, watching a look of horror come across Allen’s face. Okay poor choice of words, “Look, I’m not going to literally throw you that far across the pool and I’ll make sure you can touch the bottom to. Come on you might like it.”

“Fine, but don’t throw me far,” Allen pouted.

“I won’t,” Cross said, moving a bit closer so he was sure Allen would be able to touch the bottom of the pool when he was thrown, “Okay, are you ready? 1….2….3!”

With that Cross launched Allen who made a shrill squeak a little bit into the air a couple feet away from him back into the water. Allen popped back up to the surface giggling, “Again!”

“See? I told you it was fun,” Cross said smugly as he waited for Allen to come towards him before taking him in his arms and launching him again. They did that for a bit before moving on to Cross teaching him once again how to swim and float on his back before the brat got bored and decided it was fun to try to ‘dunk’ Cross’s head under water. This mostly involved Cross pretending that the child was strong enough to even push his head underwater, but Allen still seemed pretty entertained with it. Even if he knew he couldn’t actually dunk Cross if he wanted to. Then Allen discovered the hot tub which he apparently had never seen before.

“Why do they call it a hot tub?” Allen asked, his head tilting in curiosity.

“Why don’t you go in and find out?” Cross asked, waiting until Allen got into the pool of hot water.

“It’s like the bathtub at home,” Allen commented, sighing in contentment at how warm the water was.

“Not exactly. You see that button over there near ya? Why don’t you push it?” Cross asked, curious to see what kind of reaction the brat would make because it was the button to turn on the jets. Allen being like any other curious child, impulsively pressed the button.

“Ahhhh! It’s alive! It’s gonna eat me!” Allen screamed in fear.

“Calm your shit it’s just the jets,” Cross laughed as he slowly got in, sighing in relaxation as his lower back hit up against one of the jets.

“Jets?” Allen questioned, admiring the way the pool was bubbling, “It’s like we’re in a witch’s cauldron.”

“Really? I don’t think we’d be that great for any witch potion,” Cross commented, watching Allen play with the jets which mostly involved him commenting how they felt weird against his body and giggling at making himself look fat by trapping water under his shirt.

After screwing around in the hot tub Allen finally decided that his stomach outweighed having fun, so they left the pool with Allen running down the hallway, dripping water everywhere because he didn’t take his towel with him. Whatever, the kid was actually having fun and acting like a kid so Cross wasn’t going to take the wind out of his sails too much. When they got to the hotel room and Cross slid the card into the card reader on the door, Allen thought that was the coolest thing in the world and insisted that he needed to try it. Several times. So Cross let himself into the room to get
into dry clothes while letting Allen have at it.

Cross watched at Allen opened the door with the card. Closed it. Opened it again. Closed it. And
Opened it again for nearly the hundredth time before he finally decided to break the endless cycle
by walking up and taking back the hotel card and sternly saying, “Alright you weirdo, why don’t
you dry off and get some dry clothes on so I can order pizza yeah?”

Oh right. Allen forgot he was hungry.

“Okay! I want a pepperoni pizza and a supreme one- No wait we need one with pineapple on it!”
Allen said, instantly beginning to ramble off what he was hungry for and running around the hotel
room to do what Cross asked.

“Really pineapple on pizza?” Cross asked in disgust, although he really didn’t care, he just wanted
to see the absolutely disgusted awestruck look the brat shot his way because ‘how dare he react in
disgust about pineapple being on pizza’.

“Yes really! It’s good and if you don’t like it that’s fine! You can have your peasant pizza and I
will have all the pineapple pizza myself!” Allen announced with enough sass that put most teenage
girls to shame.

“Peasant pizza?” Cross blurted out, trying hard not to laugh.

“Did I stutter?” Allen shot back, using Cross’s comeback from earlier this morning.

“Get dressed. You have way too much sass this evening for someone that small,” Cross said with
an eyeroll as he ordered pizza.

Once he got off the phone, Allen perched himself on the window to watch all the cars go by asking
every few minutes when the pizzas were gonna get there.

“Allen, I swear to God if you ask me one more time when the pizzas are gonna get here…” Cross
started after he asked for the billionth time but was interrupted by a knock on the door.

“Yeah! Pizza!” Allen chirped happily as he ran over to the bed to wait not so patiently for Cross to
get up and pay the pizza guy before bringing the pizzas in.

“Alright you little monster, here’s your fancy ass pineapple pizza. Don’t make a mess,” Cross said
as he set three different large pizzas on the bed. Cross ‘tsked’ as Allen proceeded to do the opposite
of making a mess, but at least all of it was on his face rather than the bed. Allen proceeded to down
one and a half large pizzas alone before he finally collapsed on the bed sighing contently at his
stomach being full.

Allen had just begun to doze off before Cross attacked him with a napkin to try and clean his face,
“Hold still, God you are way too messy for a brat.”

Allen whined, trying to fight Cross but he was too worn out to put up much of one.

Cross finished cleaning the brat’s face, before smacking his behind lightly, “Go brush your teeth
before you start dozing off.”

Allen whined at that.

“Don’t you whine at me or I’ll give you something to whine about,” Cross shot back, watching as
Allen slowly dragged himself to the bathroom to brush his teeth. After he was done, Allen flopped
back down on the bed dramatically.

“That wasn’t so tough now was it?” Cross asked as he grabbed the tired child to pull him up further in bed and got him under the bedsheets. Cross was inwardly celebrating that his plan worked and that he wouldn’t have to suffer a second night of trying to get the brat to sleep. Hoping that he would stay asleep was Cross’s next concern, but quickly dissipated when he heard Allen snoring and cuddling his arm.

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“Okay brat listen to me,” Cross responded as they arrived at the concert venue. He grabbed Allen’s chin and forced the excited brat who was decked out in eyeliner and band t-shirt, to look at him, “You stay by my side through the entire thing. Got it? If you get scared, you better let me know. Got it?”

“Okay!” Allen chirped

“I mean it brat. It’s gonna be loud in there and there’s going to be a lot of people,” Cross warned.

“Okay. I get it. I know,” Allen groaned, giving him an annoyed look.

The two stared at each for a few moments before Allen was the one who broke the silence with, “Take a picture, it’ll last longer.”

“Okay get the fuck out of my car you little sass master,” Cross said with an eye roll before getting out of the car. Allen also got out of the car giggling before running on the other side to reach up to grab Cross’s hand. Cross reached down to ruffle up Allen’s hair before taking his hand and walking up to the building the concert would be in. There was already a long line of people waiting to get in. Great, Cross thought to himself in annoyance. Allen didn’t seem to mind the wait as he stood there swaying back and forth and using Cross’s arm to keep from falling on his face or behind. Thankfully, they didn’t have to stand in line too long, which was great because Cross didn’t know how much longer he could suffer being Allen’s personal jungle gym.

As they got in the building and became surrounded by more people, Allen’s grip on Cross’s hand tightened and he saw that familiar wide-eyed fearful look go across the kid’s face. Well that wasn’t a good sign. So Cross bent down and picked up Allen because he was sure it was super scary being a little kid and be surrounded by big people. At least by being in Cross’s arms he could sort of look over the crowd of people or be at the same height of the crowd instead of being smushed against people’s legs. Once Cross showed the officials their tickets and went through the security scanner, Cross set out to look for a place that was more on the outskirts of the crowd. Sure, being up, close, and personal towards the stage was always the best spot for a concert, but he didn’t know how much longer he could suffer being Allen’s personal jungle gym.

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“Okay, you’re gonna put this on,” Cross responded as he pulled the noise isolating headphones, he had hanging around his neck and put them over Allen’s ears. It would at least dim the noise to a more tolerable level so he wouldn’t have a child freaking out because it was too loud. Allen instantly pouted at Cross at being forced to wear the headphones. Cross simply frowned back him. Then Allen stuck his tongue out at Cross, which Cross oh so maturely stuck out his own back at the brat. This apparently started a whole new game of making faces at each other as they waited for the show to start.

After going through his arsenal of faces several times, the show had finally started. Allen damn near jumped out of Cross’s arms, when he felt the first vibration of the bass go through his body
and leaned back against Cross fearfully, unsure of what to make of the sensation yet. It was definitely a hell of a lot different than listening to it from a screen or CD. It was a bit of a scary rush to feel the bass thud in his chest for the first time and he swore he could feel the air move as noise pulsed through the stereo.

“You okay? It’s a lot different than seeing it on a phone, huh?” Cross laughed, seeing how huge and confused Allen’s eyes were.

“It’s weird! I feel it in my body!” Allen yelled out.

“This is why you are wearing headphones. It’s loud as fuck!”

“Then why aren’t you wearing any?”

“It won’t do much damage if it’s just for a little bit, even if it does my hearing is already screwed from all the times I’ve been to these things!”

Allen blinked, pulling one side of the headphones off in curiosity to see how loud it really was in the room. Allen jolted, his heart lurching up to his throat in surprise and fear. The drum and bass sounded reminded him of thunder.

“Really? I told you to keep them on your ears brat! What? You didn’t think I was telling the truth?” Cross scolded as he readjusted the headphones over Allen’s ears.

“Do you ever tell the full truth though!?” Allen asked.

“Excuse you!? Do you want me to drop you!?” Cross retorted, giving Allen an incredulous look.

“You won’t drop me you coward!”

Cross gave Allen a ‘you sure about that punk?’ look before he acted like he was going to drop Allen but kept a hold of his legs so only his top half was hanging towards the floor, earning a huge squeak from the brat.

“You’re mean!” Allen squealed out in peals of laughter as Cross pulled him back up

“You started it! Now stop yapping and listen to the music. That’s what you came here for, yeah?” Cross asked as he readjusted Allen in his grip.

Cross didn’t know who the opening bands were and judging from the fact Allen wasn’t singing along he also had no idea, but they were pretty good if Cross said so himself. Allen didn’t start getting really excited until Of Monsters of Men actually walked up the stage and started their song which Allen instantly recognized (of course he did, he played all their songs over and over so that he would).

Allen’s eyes brightened and Cross swore he could see stars in those little gray eyes as the brat almost jumped out of Cross’s arms in excitement, “I know this one! I know this one! Yay, they’re playing this one!”

“Which one is this one?” Cross asked, playing dumb.

Allen snapped his head back at him in awe and insult, “It was in the playlist and we played it in the car!”

Cross feigned innocence, “Hey there was a lot of songs we played in that car kid. I’m old I can’t
remember everything.”

“It’s Crystals,” Allen stated like it was the most obvious thing in the world, his head whirling back to watch at the female vocalist began to sing. Cross rolled his eyes for the umpteenth time at the brat’s sassiness, but he was glad for it. It meant Mana’s mask had slipped off over the past couple of days and the real Allen was showing through. At first Allen listened to the singers, his eyes bright and unblinking as he tried to absorb every part of the song. The lyrics, the piano, bass, guitars, the stage lights. Cross swayed with the music, checking on Allen every minute or two to make sure he was still doing good. Allen was just totally enamored with the whole entire thing and Cross found it to be absolutely adorable.

Then Allen began to sing along with the vocalists, his eyes sparkling happily. Every time a song ended and a new one began Allen would get all excited and shout, “I know it I know it!” or “I love this one!” and tell Cross that he knew it. Cross stopped asking which song it was because Allen would end up shouting it out before happily singing along to it. The brat was on Cloud Nine, his attention on nothing but the band on stage and the music pulsating throughout the room. He had never seen the kid so happy about anything before in his life and his joy only grew when Cross began to sing along with him (for the songs that he knew). Pretty soon Cross’s arms got tired, so he ended up putting the kid on his shoulders to give his arms a break. Allen didn’t mind at all; he’d just lean down and excitedly scream at Cross some more that he knew this song and how much he loved it and all that shit. Cross didn’t know if he’d go deaf first from the brat screaming in his ear or the concert at this rate.

Of course, with most concerts, there would be that one song that touched the inner recesses of one’s heart so extensively that one could not help but stand and watch as the emotion washes over you. That happened to Allen when the band began to play I of the Storm. Cross, being surprised by the lack of movement up there looked up to see Allen crying. Cross took Allen off of his shoulders in alarm, thinking that perhaps he was having a sensory overload.

“Hey, what’s wrong? You need a break?” Cross asked the child in his arms that sniffled and shook his head as he laid his head on Cross’s shoulder.

“Well why are you crying then? This is supposed to be fun,” Cross said.

“This song makes me sad,” Allen sniffled.

Ohhhh, Cross thought to himself as he understood the situation.

“Ohhh you’re okay. It’s okay to be sad,” Cross hushed, trying not to laugh at the kid but he just found it so adorable that the kid would just be so intensely into this that he got emotional. Cross wiped away Allen’s tears, swaying gently to the music as he waited for the song to end. Once the song ended and a new one began Allen was back to being his excited self.

Overall the concert lasted a little over a full hour and by the time the band was on their last couple of songs Allen was already nearly falling asleep and sucking on the knuckles of his hand. At least Cross didn’t have to worry about him not sleeping tonight seeing as the kid was already so tuckered out. Allen was practically lulled to sleep by the end of the concert.

“Did you enjoy yourself kid?” Cross asked, smirking at the tired moan he got in response. Allen could barely keep his eyes open and Cross could hardly blame him. He had never seen the kid so expressive and energized away from singing or dancing, so there was no doubt in Cross’s mind the kid would have to take a couple of days to recover from this.

The ride back to the hotel was quiet. No matter how much Cross poked at Allen he just couldn’t
keep his eyes open. He partied hard, but that was okay because all the best concerts are ones that you partied to hard in. Cross had to help Allen get in his pajamas and out of his eyeliner because Allen was so dead to the world. He slept like a rock throughout the night though which was a major win in Cross’s book.

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Concerts became a huge thing to go to for both Cross and Allen after that experience. Sure, it wasn’t something like hunting or fishing like most fathers did with their sons (although Cross did teach Allen how to shoot his gun, so I mean that counted as a manly thing to do right?), but it was something both liked and could easily bond in. Sure, Cross couldn’t take Allen to every concert that came near them, but they tried to plan to go to one at least once a year, sometimes two and at most three if time and expenses allowed. Allen way of contributing was making the playlist for the ride to and from the concerts, which Cross didn’t mind because the kid was great at it. As Allen grew older, he learned about crowd surfing which concerned Cross greatly. The kid got lost easily and crowd surfing was dangerous. He should know, he has done it plenty of times. Least to say Cross forbid him to do it, though it didn’t stop him from wanting to try it. I guess that would be a story for a later time though. Even though Allen wouldn’t admit it, in the future when he hit the stage producing his own music and singing in front of hundreds to thousands of people, he would always look back to the first time he saw his first concert. As he looked up at all the lights, felt the music in his chest and all the dazzling stage lights he just knew he had to be the one up on that stage.

Chapter End Notes

(Hope you guys enjoyed it. This was super fun to write! I have some Aftermath stuff written out on the Jake stuff but for now I think I’m gonna stick with lighter hearted stuff while adding to it every once in awhile. I also got an intro done for some more appearances of Red that I will add here and there. Next up I’d like to explore Allen’s first time taking standardized tests, which always freaked me out as a kid. I’d also like to focus on Cross trying to teach Allen how to read and him struggling through that. I may try to include a small drabble of Cross teaching his kid to shoot his gun in the mix and I definitely want to explore Anita being pregnant. I think it would be super adorable to see Allen become a big brother. Also I can't wait to explore Allen coming out to Cross that he is gay which may be our next stop as well *wink wonk*! See you guys later!)
Allen's First Time Taking the Standardized Test

Chapter Summary

Basically, the summary is what the title says. Allen is taking the standardized test for the first time which is basically this huge test they force kids to take (at least in the United States which is where I am getting my info from) to test their intelligence level and shit. That is what it is in a nutshell. I guess possible trigger warning for panic attack although it's not really a panic attack. It's just high stress levels and what not. Like what us college kids will be going through soon for finals yayyyy! Not.

Chapter Notes

(I don’t know if every school system does this, but I know the U.S. does this, especially for kids in elementary school. You have your ACT tests which tests how well you’ll do in college, same with SAT but that’s usually for high school students. Every year they do a big test for almost all the grades in American schools. I say almost all grades because I can’t remember if we ever took it in middle school, but yeah, this is where the inspiration stems from. Public schools really suck like that and a lot of little kids get stressed with these tests. I thought it would be interesting to explore how Allen will handle the stress and how Cross would react to that stress.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Allen and school always seemed like a love-hate relationship from what Cross could see. Allen loved music class, he loved dance practice, hanging out with his friends, loved math, loved physical education and he, of course, loved lunchtime. Allen, however, hated reading, hated spelling, hated science (mostly because it involved reading), and hated writing. He absolutely hated reading out loud in class and refused to do so. Basically, anything that had an excess of reading in it, Allen hated it. He hated it because it was hard, and his teacher only made it harder. Reading was not introduced as a fun thing, although Cross attempted to try and make it fun before enrolling him in school because he liked to read himself. His teacher just couldn’t get it in her head that Allen was behind the rest of his peers. She expected him to be able to perform at the same level as everyone else.

Even though school did hold some frustrations, Allen seemed to deal with it reasonably well. Although part of the reason he was dealing with it well was that Cross and his friends helped him with his homework. It’s not like Cross did the brat’s homework for him, but he did knock the load down into a size that was more suited to Allen’s academic level. Most of it was just the reading part that screwed the brat up. It took forever for the kid to do worksheets all because it took him a while to read.

So, in other words, school was sort of a pain in the ass, but they learned how to work around it. Er, well, with it. At least Cross thought they were managing quite well, but I guess not by the school’s standards judging by the fact his ass was sitting on a stupid plastic chair with Allen’s second-grade teacher glowering at him. Cross was trying very hard not to start screaming at her. He knew being
a teacher wasn’t all that fabulous. He knew because he dated women in the past who were schoolteachers. There was only so much they could do with what little budget and time they had, and they always had that asshole parent they would have to deal with. Cross didn’t want to be that asshole. However, this woman was pissing him off. She was acting like Allen was simply not trying hard enough, and Cross was helping him too much. His homework was decent, but when it came to tests or quizzes, the brat was failing or near failing them.

The reason why Cross was sitting in the classroom was because of the dreaded standardized test that they make all the kids at every grade take at the end of every year. This test was given figure out how well the teachers are doing their jobs. The test also analyzed how smart and successful the kids were going to be in the future. He was here because the test scores came back and Allen’s tests scores were awful in everything except math. The only subject Allen excelled in compared to his classmates. This was something Cross had forgotten about since the only time he’s ever heard of it was when Tiedoll was complaining about how it always stressed out his kids. They didn’t have that back when they were in school! He had totally forgotten to warn Allen about this and to adequately prepare him for this. How on earth was he supposed to even help the kid get ready for this anyway!? He told the school and the teacher countless times of Allen’s situation! He knew they couldn’t accommodate for everything, but it’s not like they even tried! Instead of blaming it on the lack of resources, they were blaming Allen for something he had no control over! Cross wished they could only see how hard Allen tried and continues to try at home after school. He wished that they could see the frustration he went through every night, the meltdowns, the tears, the low self-esteem, the struggle Cross would have to make him take a damn break before he drove himself crazy. He wished he could see the three days of hell he had to deal with because of how they were administering the standardized test to him.

Allen sat in a room, by himself away from the other kids, for hours struggling to read through the damn test (he went into a different classroom with every test the class had to take because he had test anxiety). He was stressing about choosing the right answer for three fucking days. Sure, there were break periods here and there, but after struggling for an hour or more to answer a portion of questions in a set time limit, the kid was already fried. The test overall took about 20 to 25 fucking hours. This all took place in a span of three days. That many hours spent trying to even understand what it is they were asking him.

Cross remembers the couple weeks before. He didn’t know what was up with the brat because he wouldn’t say a single thing until about three days before the testing was supposed to begin, but the kid was restless as all hell. He was getting less and less sleep every night that passed, and his meltdowns were getting worse when he sat down to do homework. Headaches were becoming a constant complaint. Cross had to physically remove Allen away from the table to get him to stop and take a break when he began to frustrate himself. Cross could quickly figure out when Allen was about to explode. He would sigh a lot, pout, and hold his head in the early stages. Then his face would get red, and tears would begin to fill his eyes before the child would get to the point where he was totally unable to focus because he was too busy worrying about not understanding whatever he needed to. Usually, Cross would get him before it got to that point because he would keep track of the amount of time Allen spent working on homework. There were days where his fuse would be too long or too short, and Allen would already be in tears.

Usually, it only took Cross telling the kid once to go off and get something to drink or whatever for a few minutes before coming back to it. Sometimes it took Cross several times to encourage him to stop working and take a little break from it. It was occasional that Cross had to literally pull Allen away from his homework, and one of those times was when he figured out just what was plaguing the brat.

It started with Cross doing his usual ‘Alright, take a few minutes, go piss, get something to snack
on, whatever.’ He did it sooner than usual because he knew Allen was starting with a short fuse due to the lack of sleep and restlessness. The brat’s cheeks were already at a light pink, and he had long before started his sighing problem. Allen refused to move though, so Cross just kept an eye on him. He wasn’t going to push him unless he started to get really frustrated.

It didn’t take long for the red on Allen’s cheeks to darken and begin to spread across his face. That’s when Cross started to pester a bit more.

“Hey, you’ve been stuck on that problem for a while. Take a break. It’ll still be there when you get back,” Cross said as he walked over, ruffling Allen’s hair lightly. Allen jerked back and swatted at Cross’s hand. Definitely a sign he’s getting frustrated. Allen ignored him and continued to stare down at the worksheet in front of him. It looked like he was trying to burn a hole through it. It was a spelling worksheet. Of course, he would get flustered.

Cross let Allen stare down at the worksheet for another minute before he tried again, but he was sterner this time, “Hey, I mean it brat. Take a break. You’re getting too frustrated. Maybe the answer will come to you if you leave it be for a while.”

“Leave me alone!” Allen responded brattily, trying to hide his face because he had begun to cry in frustration. He didn’t want to take a break. He had to learn this. He had to be able to do this because his teacher said that he had to. If he couldn’t figure out how to learn and perform like the rest of the kids, especially on this upcoming test, he would fail. He would fail the grade; he would amount to nothing. He would be left behind. He would never pass second grade. The teacher said this test was going to determine their futures. It didn’t matter that Allen was at a disadvantage. He had to take this test along with the rest of the kids in his class.

Cross sighed and pulled Allen’s chair back before kneeling in front of him, “Allen look at me, trying to work on homework when you’re frustrated is just going to do more harm than good. You need a break. Now you can either take one willingly, or I will make you take one. What do you wanna do?”

Allen kept his eyes down on the floor and wouldn’t look at Cross. His face was dark red, and he was shaking.

Cross went to slowly grab Allen, “Allen come on it’s okay-“

Allen tried to bat and kick the older man away from him, “No, it’s not okay!!”

“Okay. Yep. It’s definitely time for a break,” Cross responded as he dodged Allen’s attacks in favor of picking the screaming and crying boy up and taking him away from the table.

Cross took the child to the living room where he sat down in his recliner and sat Allen on his lap.

“I’m an idiot! I-I’m a t-total idiot, and I’m g-gonna fail and be ho-homeless and-“ Allen sobbed uncontrollably.

“Hey. Nu-uh. Nope. We don’t put ourselves down in this household. You’re not an idiot. You are a very talented little boy, and just because it takes you a bit longer to understand stuff, it doesn’t mean you’re an idiot. Everyone has things they’re really good at and things they’re not good at. Nobody is perfect,” Cross said, interrupting Allen’s tirade as he reached up and wiped away the tears streaming down his face.

“B-B-But I’m g-gonna b-be too dumb to p-p-pass the t-test!” Allen continued to wail.

“Test? What test? Why didn’t you tell me you had one I would’ve helped you study,” Cross asked,
beginning to connect the dots. So that’s why Allen was so restless.

“N-N-No,” Allen continued to sob before he tried to talk some more but was crying too hard for Cross to understand.

“Oh, okay, let’s calm down a bit here first. I can’t understand you when you cry like that,” Cross said, rubbing Allen’s back as the child continued to wail. Cross grabbed a couple of tissues near his chair (he learned to keep them there for Allen’s bad times) and wiped the child’s face, hushing him and whispering sweet nothing Ggs down at him as he waited for him to calm down.

“Okay, so what’s this test you’re talking about? Is it spelling?” Cross asked when Allen calmed down enough, just taking a guess.

“N-No…a little bit…it’s a big, long test that everyone’s gotta take. It’s gonna take at least three days. It’s supposed to go over everything we learned a-and she said it’s gonna affect our futures. I’m gonna fail it cuz I can’t read, and it’s timed,” Allen said, slowly becoming more and more upset again the more he thought about the colossal test he would have to deal with.

Oh shit. That was a thing. Standardized testing in which the main concern was less about learning and more about if kids can remember and spit out the correct answer without fail. Like a fucking machine. Tiedoll had problems with this in the past with his kids, especially with Alma, because it’s not like they’re star students. They struggled through school as well, although they weren’t as far behind as Allen was in the beginning. Tiedoll managed to get them in near the time everyone else was learning how to read and write, but they still struggled because of their own traumatic and abusive pasts. Some schools could let certain kids opt out due to a disability, but it was very seldom they ever allowed it.

“Well, you don’t know that you’re going to fail,” Cross stated. Immediately Allen looked at him with a pout that said, ‘you and I both know that’s probably going to happen.’

“Okay, look, I know that this test is huge, and it’s going to test you on everything you know, but one stupid fucking test can’t tell you how successful you’re going to be in the future. This test doesn’t figure in how talented you are as a dancer, or how talented you are at singing. It doesn’t figure in how caring you are towards your friends; it doesn’t figure in your street smarts which excel that of even a normal fucking adult. You’ve managed to survive nearly on your own for the first part of your life. Some college kids barely know how to survive on their own! I mean this is the first year you’ve ever been to school, you’ve just begun to learn how to read and write this year! Cut yourself some slack kid! Intelligence isn’t and shouldn’t be measured based on whether you can blurt out the correct answer to every teacher’s question. There are many different types of it and trust me, kid, you’re not a fucking idiot. Just because you struggle to read and write doesn’t mean you’re an idiot, it means you’re human. There is more to life than having book smarts!”

Cross lectured sternly as he wiped away stray tears from Allen’s face.

Then Cross came up with a plan of action, “Alright. So, I can’t get you out of taking the test. The only thing you can do is to try your best on this test. I know it’s not gonna be fun and it’s gonna be difficult, but when you get home, I’ll have some mitarashi dango for you, and you can relax. Okay? We’ll get through this. For now, let’s get your homework done. I’ll help you, and we’ll get ready for bed. We just gotta take this one step at a time. Cut yourself some slack and don’t be calling yourself an idiot anymore, cuz it’s not true. Okay?”

Allen looked up at him, still looking unsure, but he didn’t want Cross to worry, and he didn’t want to talk about this anymore,” Okay…”

“Alright, so no more tears. Let’s kick your spelling homework’s ass.”
It didn’t matter how much Cross reminded Allen to just try his best and understand that this test wasn’t a perfect measure on how smart or dumb he was, that kid was thoroughly convinced his world was going to end if he didn’t do good on this test. Cross blamed his teacher for this. They’ve butted heads before when Allen attempted to do a presentation that involved showing off what he learned while being in the traveling circus and being with Mana. The teacher told him off in front of the whole class, thinking that it was just some ridiculous prank. So, when the day came around, Cross was at a loss of what to do other than to repeat what he told Allen before. To try his best and that no matter what happened, it was just one test, and he would love him regardless. As much as Cross would love to hide Allen away from the test and the school, he knew eventually that they would force him to take it. Instead, Cross watched as Allen walked into the school building, pale-faced, and shaking.

Cross spent the entire day worrying himself sick over Allen and how he was doing and with perfect reason. There’s no way the kid was able to sit through a whole hour or more reading, especially under time constraints. Just in case Cross tried to maneuver his work schedule in a way where he had the three days off and one day extra so he could make sure Allen would be okay. He’d be able to send him to school with words of encouragement (at least Cross hoped they were encouraging), he would be home if something happened. Cross would also be here the moment Allen came walked in through the case Allen needed him. He wished he would’ve thought this through better. Four days without work and wondering obsessively over how Allen was doing. Usually, he complained about work, but he actually found himself wanting it because at least he would’ve been kept busy. Cross cleaned the house, which didn’t take long. He tried watching T.V., but nothing would hold his attention. He tried playing a few chords on his guitar but just wasn’t feeling it today. So, Cross tried to busy himself by making dinner and tried to force himself to stop looking at his cellphone. He was half-expecting a phone call from the school about Allen, but Allen managed to get through the school day. Cross didn’t know whether to be extremely concerned by this or relieved. Did this mean Allen was okay or not?

When Allen finally walked through the front door, he looked like death. He could barely walk properly, and Cross could tell his little boy was absolutely put out. Allen was absolutely exhausted. He knew he did awful. They put him in a different room, and when they set that test packet right in front of him, Allen could feel his brain fizzle out. He already had a headache by the time he struggled through the first question, and his vision was swimming. Allen just couldn’t understand the problems, no matter how hard he tried to sound out the words. They said he was supposed to fill out all the bubbles to every question, even if he just guessed, but his panic was too high to even try guessing. Allen only answered half of what he was supposed to before time ran out. He was just too slow. He was thankful he didn’t have a total, massive meltdown in that room, but he came close several times. All he did was sit there and cry frustrated tears as silently as he could. The whole experience was pure torture.

So, Allen couldn’t help but to totally break when Cross knelt down a few feet in front of him and held out his arms before asking, “Do you need a hug?”

Allen’s face scrunched up as he felt all the tears and stress, he had felt that day bubble to the surface, and with a little whine, he ran straight into Cross’s waiting arms. Cross picked Allen up, who began to cry hard enough for his tiny body to shake and jolt violently.

“I am so very proud of you for toughing through today, you know that right?” Cross asked, his chest hurting at how fatigued and hurt the little boy sounded. School was never supposed to be this stressful for kids. Learning was supposed to be fun; kids are naturally curious and are eager to learn. It wasn’t supposed to be a place where they were forced to sit still for hours at time, pressured to give the right answer every time in fear that if they don’t that, they’ll never be successful in their life. Cross rocked the child back and forth and rubbed his back, surprised as how
tense his tiny body was. So, Cross grabbed some pajamas and headed to the bathroom to get Allen to take a warm bath. Allen really liked baths, and it was Cross’s go-to method of getting the brat to sleep. He figured Allen would not be doing anything too much tonight other than eat and sleep, which Cross couldn’t blame him for.

After filling the tub up with warm water, helping Allen get undressed, and setting him in the tub, Cross could see Allen was definitely not able to focus on doing the simplest tasks. So, Cross ended up washing the child up himself. Allen’s brain was utterly annihilated, and it’s like he reverted to being a toddler rather than an eight-year-old. It made Cross was nervous to see what the second day of testing will bring. He wondered if Allen would be able to handle it, seeing as today was already so overwhelming. He didn’t want Allen to push himself too hard, but he also knew he didn’t have that much control over what happened at the school. Cross didn’t have the resources to really homeschool the brat, and he knew it would be a massive disservice to him. He wouldn’t be with his friends; he wouldn’t be able to do dance team or choir. Allen needed to interact with kids his own age, and he needed to have hobbies and shit to keep him preoccupied, so he didn’t end up doing stupid shit like Cross did at his age.

Cross took a small cup and filled it with warm water before pouring it over Allen’s shoulders. Allen released a shuddering sigh, some of the tension already melting away by warm water cascading down his back. His head was pounding with such a ferocity that he could barely open his eyes. His shoulders and neck ached and burned as they began to unlock and relax for the first time in several hours. In a few minutes, Allen was absolutely calm and resting his head up against Cross’s arm, his swollen eyes closed. Cross spent several minutes just pouring warm water over Allen’s body, just getting him to relax and get into his happy place.

Of course, Allen couldn’t spend forever in the bathtub, and when Cross decided he had to leave the nirvana that was the bathtub, the child immediately began to whine and threaten to start up another fit.

“I know, I know kid. I’m sorry, but you can’t stay in there forever, the water is gonna get cold,” Cross said softly, taking out his usual gruff tone of voice. Sure, nobody liked a whiny little brat, but it was a different story when you understood why the brat was being whiny. Cross would probably be the same way but more aggressive rather than whiny. Cross quickly got Allen dried off and in pajamas before he took him to the kitchen. The kid was whimpering and whining the whole time and holding his head.

“Your head hurting you, brat?” Cross asked, already going through the medicine cabinet for children’s Tylenol. He already knew Allen’s answer was probably yes, and with how tense he was before, it was obvious the kid was gonna ache something fierce. Allen’s response was a high pitched, pathetic little whine.

“I’ll take that as a yes,” Cross responded as he set Allen on the counter to measure the dose in a little measuring cup. Allen whined, not wanting to be set down, very much like a needy toddler that insisted on being carried everywhere by their parent. Cross ignored the whining and grabby gestures Allen made in favor of pushing the dosing cup against his lips, “Take this. It’ll make you feel better. It’s not the nasty shit either.” At least I hope it’s not, Cross thought to himself. Allen was in too much pain to really put up a fight like he usually did with medicine, so he drained the medicine cup with ease.

“Good boy. Are you hungry? I made your favorite, mitarashi dango,” Cross said, hoping the sound of food would perk the kid up a little bit. Allen didn’t seem very partial to wanting food at the moment. Damn that test really whooped his ass, Cross thought to himself as he picked up the whiny child again. Allen’s head was pounding too much to even think about food right now. All he
wanted to do was to curl up and sleep.

“Okay, I think it’s nap time, huh,” Cross said as he grabbed an ice pack and wrapped it in a towel before walking over to his recliner with Allen trying to doze off in his arms. He already had a thumb in his mouth, sucking away. Cross grabbed a small blanket before getting situated in his recliner, leaning back so the brat could stretch out against his chest. He pulled the blanket up around Allen and put the ice pack against his eyes to hopefully help soothe his headache. Allen was out in less than a minute.

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The next day Allen woke up feeling a lot better. Cross was still wary of sending him to school to go through the same bullshit again, but Allen did not take no for an answer. While anyone could admire such ambition, he also knew the kid had a terrible tendency to push himself way too hard, even if he knew he hit his limit. So Cross let him go, preparing himself for the worse, and boy was it needed. When Allen came home from school, he was a little monster. He was absolutely inconsolable, and Cross would've lost his temper if he hadn't known just why in the hell Allen was acting like this. The kid's nerves were absolutely frayed, and he was pushing himself beyond his limitations.

The instant Allen came home, he threw a temper tantrum that was fit for a child five to six years younger than him. He refused any sort of comfort from Cross or Timcanpy. Allen actually threw Tim violently across the room in a fit of rage. The only thing Cross could think of to do was to let him scream and cry like a banshee while making sure he didn't hurt himself in the process. Allen proceeded to do so for a full hour before beginning to run out of steam. Cross decided there was no way in hell he was sending Allen to school tomorrow. The kid was in desperate need of a mental health day, and he didn't give two shits what anyone else had to say.

Cross walked over and sat on the ground near Allen's shaking, sobbing form, "Well, that was quite the explosion you had there. Do you feel better now?"

Allen whimpered, turning over on his side, so he didn't have to look at Cross. No, he didn't feel better. He hated school. He hated this test. He didn't want to go back tomorrow to do this all over again. He felt like an utter complete idiot, his head hurt, his stomach hurt, everything hurt. He felt like a total jerk for hurting Timcanpy and a dummy for screaming his head off like a baby on the ground, but he wasn't really thinking in the moment. He was just so tired, angry, sad, and confused, and he didn't know how to process it.

"I think you need to apologize to Tim. Even though I get where you're coming from, it wasn't really cool that you threw him across the room like that when he was just trying to comfort you," Cross mentioned, watching as the little yellow golem crawled his way hesitantly to Allen's form, as if wondering if he was gonna get thrown again. Timcanpy climbed up on Allen's side, peering down at the tired child.

Allen sniffled and looked up at Timcanpy before croaking out a soft, "I'm sorry."

Timcanpy made a soft noise that sounded very much like a purr before hopping onto Allen's wet cheek and nuzzling him to show he forgave him. Allen pet the golem on his cheek with a finger in response.

"Alright, get off the ground. Let's get you something to eat and get you washed up. I'm gonna tell the school you're sick tomorrow- Ah! No buts! It isn't a suggestion. You've shown more than enough that you can't handle another round with this testing bullshit. You are gonna take a day off," Cross responded sternly, interrupting Allen before he had a chance to say anything when he
saw the child's mouth open in protest.

Allen pouted, looking like he was gonna start crying again.

"No, don't you start waterworks on me. There is nothing wrong with taking a break, especially when you're dealing with a huge ass, stressful test. No fucking test is more important than your physical and mental health, I don't give a fuck what anyone else says," Cross lectured, having a staredown with Allen.

A few moments went by, with the two of them staring heatedly at each other before Allen finally looked away in defeat with a tired sigh. Once Cross was sure of his victory, he got Allen to take a bath, and made him chow down on some mitarashi dango. Cross had to continually remind the kid to wake up and finish eating because he was dozing off. Once Cross was satisfied with how much Allen ingested, the man grabbed the child, wrapped him up like a burrito, before settling on the couch to watch T.V. while Allen snored away. Yes, he was snoring. Loudly, in fact. Allen slept away through the rest of the evening with Timcanpy firmly under his arm, also snoozing away and mimicking Allen's sleeping sounds. When Cross got bored of television, he took both brat and golem up to his room so he could keep an eye on Allen while he slept.

Allen slept through the night with no problems, thank god and was still asleep by the time Cross woke up, which was pretty late in the morning. As much as he hated to wake him, Cross knew if he let him sleep through most of the day that he wouldn't fall asleep tonight. He still had one more day of testing, and he needed all the good sleep he could get if he were going to get through it.

"Oh, sleeping beauty, it's time to wake up," Cross cooed, trying to tame the mass amount of white hair that was sticking up by patting it down. Allen stretched out and whined for a long moment, but other than day decided he wasn't moving. Well, okay then, guess Cross was going to use some force.

"Alright, go ahead and be like that, but you're coming with me. I might get lost on my way to the kitchen," the man said, making up the most dumbass excuse as he picked up the reluctant child who proceeded to be dead weight. Cross lugged a sleepy child and a sleepy golem who decided to take refuge on his head, down to the kitchen in hopes that maybe the smell of coffee would awaken the two little beasts. Once Cross got the coffee pot going, one of the monsters began to stir. The one in his arms was determined to slumber away. So as Cross waited for the coffee pot to fill, he began to poke Allen randomly to try and get him to wake up.

"Wake up already. It's boring if I'm the only one up," Cross whined childishly, continually poking the child who had begun to grumble and bat at his hands tiredly, "Come on, do something entertaining."

Allen squeaked at a particular poke at his ribs before placing both hands on Cross's face and pushing him away with a whine of annoyance.

"Ooo…someone is crabby this morning. Do you need a sip of my coffee to wake up?"

Allen ignored him in favor of continuing to try and sleep. Cross rolled his eyes before pouring himself some of the bitter-tasting bean juice. He took a long sip, thinking about his next course of action to get Allen up.

"Hey, Al, you want some pancakes?"

No response.
"Waffles?"

Cross was met with cricket noises. Actual cricket noises. What the fuck? When the fuck did they let another freeloader come in here? "Shut up, I wasn't talking to you," Cross huffed at the cricket, wherever it may be. Timcanpy decided to go float off of Cross's head to search for the annoying little insect.

"Allen, what do you want for breakfast?" Cross tried again, but Allen was determined to stay passed out for as long as possible.

Well, fine then. Cross would just make something, and maybe by the time Allen smelled the food, he'd wake up. So, Cross walked around the kitchen, trying to get out ingredients for eggs, toast, and sausage, with Allen in his arms. One of the greatest but also most annoying things about Allen is that he is a pro at clinging to things, even while asleep. If he is determined to stick to something while he is asleep, he will do it. This was useful for Cross because he had more freedom for his arms to make breakfast. He didn't have to worry about dropping the kid because he knew he'd hang on, even when passed out. This was also super annoying during times where Cross would need to take a leak in the middle of the night or needed to do something where having an extra thirty or forty pounds was a bit awkward (shit that reminded him that he needed to weigh the brat again to make sure he was still gaining and not losing). It didn't matter how light or small the brat was, it was still awkward sometimes to carry him around during these moments.

So Cross moved Allen (with some difficulty) so that he was clinging to him from his back around the neck; that way, the brat would have less of a chance burning himself. Then he started to break eggs and throw some sausages into the pan in front of him haphazardly. As the smell of eggs and sausage filled the air, Allen began to open his eyes a little bit.

"I wanted pancakes…" Allen rasped out before unleashing a squeaky yawn.

"Well, you should've said something when I asked earlier," Cross stated, knowing very well it didn't matter what the hell was made because Allen would eat it regardless.

"I did…"

"Really? Cause all I heard out of you was radio silence…"

"…Okay, then I dreamt I did…" Allen responded, looking very much that he was trying to fall back to sleep. Then the phone decided to ring, which made Allen jerk violently and almost choke out Cross.

"Okay, it's okay. It's just the phone, loosen up, "Cross said, tugging at Allen's arms around his neck as he left the stove to go try to find said phone.

Once he found the phone, he looked at the caller I.D. to see it was the school calling. Oh yeah, he forgot to call them and let them know of Allen's absence…whoops.

"Yo." Cross greeted, not at all concerned with professionalism, especially when he knew who would be behind the phone.

"Cross, have you forgotten to drop off your kid for school again?" a familiar, older woman's voice said over the phone. Martha.

"That only happened once, and you know it."

"Just because it happened once doesn't mean it can't happen again. Alright, so what's your excuse this time?" Martha asked.
"Excuse? I'm hurt. I was a good student, and you know it."

"Sure, Cross. Sure."

"I know they don't do this sort of thing at school, but I decided to let my brat take a mental health day, but if you need a good excuse, then just say he has explosive diarrhea or something. You know, make it creative," Cross said with a smirk. Allen decided to make dramatic, gagging noises to try and pull off the whole 'sick kid' role.

"Okay, okay, I can pull some strings just for you, but don't make this an everyday thing," she said with a sigh before her tone turned serious, "The kid could definitely use it."

"Was it really that bad over there?" Cross asked, nudging Allen off of his back as a signal to him to 'go play.' Allen got the hint and slid off in favor of going to find Timcanpy.

"They put him in a separate room away from the kids like they usually do with his tests and had someone watching him to make sure he didn't cheat or whatever. That's basically it. I only sat in for an hour or so yesterday because there was no one else to watch over that room for that period of time. It was awful, Cross. I thought his little head was going to explode with how red he was. God, if it were allowed, I would've sat down with the poor thing and went through that stuff with him. You'd think they'd have something or someone that could just read to the kid so he can make sense of it! I can't believe they honestly expected him to read pages and pages when they know very well, he isn't at the appropriate reading level for it! Is he doing okay?"

Cross sighed in annoyance. Oh well, he knew that the school was going to pull some crap like this.

"Well, he had a massive meltdown the day before, and yesterday, so I finally decided he needed to take a day off. I think he's doing a lot better today, but that's probably going to change tonight. He has one more day left, I guess."

"I'm surprised he didn't have one in the room. That kid has some pretty good self-control. Anyhoo, as much as I would love to chit chat on the phone with you all day, I do have work to do. As crazy as it sounds."

"You have work? Sounds like bull shit to me. You and I both know you didn't do a whole lot of work when I was in high school."

"Well, I was better at multi-tasking when I actually had you sitting there, waiting to talk to the principal for the third time that week rather than talking to me over the phone."

"I wasn't that bad."

"You're right…you were worse. Anyways I hope Allen feels better soon!"

"Well, that's not very nice, and you dare call yourself a school secretary. Jeez. Whatever. Talk to later." Cross said with an eye roll as he hung up the phone and walked back to the stove. Cross stopped dead in his tracks when he smelled the charred remains of breakfast. Shit, he was away from it too long.

Allen looked up innocently from his spot on the floor with Timcanpy before piping up, "Timcanpy caught a cricket! Also, I would like a stack of blueberry pancakes, please!"

"Yeah…on it," Cross huffed in defeat as he shuffled off to go find some pancake mix to attempt round two of breakfast making.
The two spent the day doing literally nothing. Well, okay, not literally nothing. They watched a lot of T.V., which isn't really considered nothing. They had a jam session or two. Ate a bunch of junk food. Lots of cuddling on Allen's part, which wasn't shocking considering he was clingy in the morning too. There were just days where Allen required lots of cuddling and affection, which Cross didn't complain too much about unless he had shit to do like get ready for work. There were also days where Allen was not in the affectionate mood, which Cross did have moments he complained inwardly about because he had come to the realization that he was also touch-starved like Allen. Some days he just craved cuddling up to something or someone, and it sucked when the kid wasn't into it when Cross was.

Then it became time for bed, and Cross could feel the nervous energy being exuded from Allen once again. It started with him not following Cross's orders, which was typical kid behavior, and there were times Allen acted this way. It usually didn't take him long to end up doing what Cross asked though. In this case, it was consistent and deliberate. This kid was adamant about not doing a single thing, Cross asked. He was avoiding going to bed.

First, Cross asked him to go take a bath. Allen decided it was more fun to play hide and seek with Timcanpy. Cross attempted again by reminding him that he should finish playing with Tim soon and go take a bath. Allen blatantly ignored him. So, Cross started to veer into stern/threatening territory.

"Oi, if I don't hear the water running in two minutes brat, there's gonna be hell to pay."

Two minutes went by. There was no water running.

"Allen, I'm serious. If you don't get your ass in the tub right this second, I will throw you in their myself, and you're not gonna like it."

Allen made no move towards the bathroom. He was going to call Cross's bluff.

Alright then. If that's the way the brat wanted to do things, then Cross was game. So Cross stalked around the house until he found Allen, who tried to look cute and innocent. Once he found Allen, he threw the brat over his shoulder and made his way to the bathroom.

"Hey! That's mean! I still gotta find Tim!"

"Tim, the game is over now, and if you know what's good for you, you better come take a bath to!" Cross called out, ignoring the kicking and whining child on his shoulder. It was customary for the golem to take a bath with Allen, even though he really didn't need one.

"But we were tied! Now we won't know who won!"

"Shame. You should've thought of that before you decided to ignore me four times." Cross said, setting Allen down.

"I didn't hear you!"

"I call bull shit. Where the fuck do you think you're running to?" Cross asked as the brat tried to dart away again.

"To pee. Unless you want me to pee in the tub, then I can do that too!" Allen back sassed.

"Excuse me? You better watch that snarky mouth of yours kid."
"You watch your mouth," Allen shot back.

Cross gave a look that basically said, 'you can't possibly be serious right now.' Cross rolled his eyes and got the water started before he whipped his head around at Allen, who was standing there, doing nothing.

"Well? I thought you said you needed to pee."

"I do."

"Then go."

"I ain't gonna go when you're here!"

"You do it when I'm in the shower or when I'm getting ready for work, what difference does it make now!?"

"It does make a difference! Get out!"

"Oh my god, are you fucking serious right now?"

"I'll pee my pants!"

"Oh my god! Fine! Have at it brat!" Cross said in irritation as he was shut out of the bathroom by Allen. Well, at least he was in the bathroom now. But that didn't mean Allen wasn't going to take his sweet ass time in the bathroom.

"Dude come on, it's been like ten minutes," Cross bitched.

"Timcanpy isn't clean yet!"

"He's a golem! He doesn't have to be cleaned!"

"Yes, he does! He's all dusty and gross because of hide and seek!"

Cross groaned in response. At this rate, the kid wasn't going to fall asleep until midnight. He already had a hard time falling asleep as it was. Cross's goal was trying to get the kid to fall asleep at least by ten or ten-thirty, and it usually took him more than an hour to finally relax and sleep.

A few minutes later, Cross was back at the bathroom door.

"Brat, come on."

"I don't have pajamas!" Allen shouted back, making another excuse. Well, okay, this was actually a good one because he didn't have clean clothes in the bathroom.

"I'll get you some then!" Cross sighed as he went off to do just that.

When Cross finally gave Allen some clean clothes, he had to wait another five minutes for the brat to dry and clothe himself. Then another five minutes to brush his teeth. All the while, Cross was complaining and telling him to move his butt faster. But Allen wasn't done yet, not by a long shot.

"Okay, bedtime," Cross stated the moment Allen walked out of the bathroom.

Allen immediately whirled himself around back into the bathroom with another excuse, "I gotta pee again!"
But this time, he locked the door.

"Allen, come on! Let's move!" Cross said after a minute or two, "At this rate, you're going to be super exhausted tomorrow going to school."

"I can't! I have explosive diarrhea!" Allen said, using the excuse Cross used earlier.

"Seriously?" Cross deadpanned before trying the door handle only to find out Allen locked it. God damn it. Of course.

"Yeah, it just started now. See?" Allen responded before proceeding to make fart noises with his hands. Cross almost made his vision spin with how hard he rolled his eyes at Allen's stupid excuses.

"You're not fooling anyone, kid. Get the hell out of the bathroom," Cross sighed in annoyance.

"But, it's true..." Cross swore he could hear the little one's voice start to waver a bit.

"Why don't you tell me the real reason why you're doing this," Cross sighed again as he sat on the floor in front of the bathroom door.

Allen was absolutely silent on the other side of the bathroom door, but Cross thought he could hear sniffling.

"It's because you have to finish taking that stupid test tomorrow. Right?"

"I'm too stupid to take it," Allen sniffled, "I never finish it on time, and it makes my head hurt! It's too hard!"

"Allen, I get that it's too hard, but all you have to do is try your best. It's supposed to be hard, they're testing what you know-"

"I don't know anything though!"

"You do too! It's just reading and writing that you're not good at, and that test has a lot of reading in it. If you didn't have to read it, you'd probably pass in flying colors! Look, kid, you can't just run away from it. The moment you go back to school you'll have to take it. They're not just gonna forget something like that," Cross explained.

"Then I ain't gonna go back! I hate school!"

"Allen, sometimes we just have to do the things we hate to do. You need to get an education. It's against the law for kids to not go to school unless they are homeschooled, and I can't homeschool you. I can't afford it, and I can't afford a tutor to do it for me. Look, it's just one more day. After it's done and over with, I swear we can do something super fun next time I'm off," Cross said, trying to sweeten the deal. He knew this was not a fun experience at all for Allen. He knew he was getting frustrated and with good reason, but Cross's hands were tied. He couldn't force the school not to test him. He couldn't just take Allen out of school because that would be doing him a major disservice.

"No! I'm not gonna go back!" Allen yelled out, stomping his feet. Oh boy, guess Cross was in for a treat. Apparently, that temper tantrum yesterday wasn't enough to get everything out of his little system.

"Well, what about Lenalee, Junior, and everyone else? What about Twinkie and the dance team?"
"I don't care! I ain't gonna go!" Allen wailed, before setting himself on the floor of the bathroom and proceeding to throw a temper tantrum. Cross sighed and rested his head on the bathroom door, trying to figure out what his next course of action should be. Should he just let Allen tire himself out, or should he scrounge around for the spare bathroom key and attempt to comfort the kid? He was hurting, and he had every reason to throw a temper tantrum. Plus, Cross was a little afraid the kid may try to hurt himself in there. That was where he kept his razors and shit after all.

So, Cross decided to get up and dig around in an old drawer for his spare key. Once he got his spare key, he walked over to the bathroom, quickly unlocked the door and swung it open to reveal the child laying on the floor crying. Cross bent down and picked up Allen before carrying him to his room with the child hollering away. Then Cross laid down with Allen next to him, watching as the little boy buried his face into a pillow to continue crying. What else was he supposed to do? He couldn't just take the kid away from his education and hide him away from this scary thing forever. There were going to be scary and stressful things that he would have to face in his future. It was a part of life. He couldn't just turn around and run from them. He would have to learn how to deal with the stress head-on. Granted, he would hope he never felt he would have to face these things alone.

As much as he hated watching this kid cry himself to sleep. It was the only thing Cross could think of to do. At least he wouldn't have to be alone doing so.

~

Eventually, Allen did fall asleep curled up against Cross and woke up the next morning relatively ok. At least he looked ok to Cross. The brat was moving pretty slowly, and Cross knew he didn't have the usual pep he had for the school day. He knew he was nervous, which was probably why he was moving slower than usual. He knew he wasn't looking forward to taking the last bit of his test and stressing about it, but at least today was the last day. He'd be able to come home, cry and eat as much as he desired, and sleep without it looming over his damn head anymore.

So, before they left the house that morning, Cross went to his room and opened up his cross-necklace collection. He always had a strange fixation on crosses, even though he was never the religious type. He had come across many over the years, some very basic, some very unique. Some were given to him by past lovers, or he bought them himself. He carefully perused the necklaces he had before his eye landed on one in particular that screamed Allen to him. This one was part of a pair, apparently. He originally was going to wait on giving the kid one out of his collection because he didn't know if the kid was all about body jewelry to begin with. He thought maybe it would be more meaningful to hold off on it and wait to give one to him on his 16th birthday like some weird rite of passage, becoming a man thing.

He figured the kid needed a lucky charm of some sort. Timcanpy didn't count, although Cross was going to eventually give Tim to Allen permanently when the time came. The reason why Cross didn't feel that Tim counted is because Tim was sort of more like a pet…well no more like a human…but not quite. Tim was a family member. Not some family heirloom or some shit. So, before the brat got out of his car, Cross presented him with the necklace.

Allen looked at the necklace and then back up at Cross with a 'so what is this all about' look. It wasn't that he didn't like it. No, that wasn't it at all. The necklace was actually quite unique. It was silver and pointed at the end like a sword. Instead of the two sides that usually branched out of a cross in the middle, it was wings with a black gemstone in the center. If Allen looked hard enough at the wings, it sort of looked like a mask of some kind because there was an eye-shaped hole near the end of each wing.
"Uhhh…I thought that you would want a lucky charm or something of the sort. Something to fuck around with your hands whenever you felt stressed or whatever," Cross explained awkwardly, as he nudged it towards Allen a bit more, "It's from my collection…I was gonna give one to you eventually, but uhhh…I couldn't really settle on a good time for it. It's very expensive so take good care of it, yeah? That is if you want it. Dunno if you really like necklaces."

Allen carefully took the cross necklace in his hand, turning around gently and rubbing his thumb against the cold silver.

"T-Thank you…. it's very pretty," the little boy stated, feeling a bit dumb at his choice of words. It was more than pretty! It was stunning! He just couldn't voice any other word but pretty.

"Yeah…" Cross nodded before asking, "Did you want help putting it on?"

Allen nodded, and Cross quickly helped the child put on the necklace. It wasn't very heavy at all. Allen couldn't stop touching it when it was around his neck. It was strange to have something around his neck, but it was also comforting to have something that he could touch that was…well, Cross. Sure, he had Timcanpy, but Tim couldn't fly around or sit on his desk at school. He was there as a means to keep watch over Allen, but he mostly stayed in his backpack. It was sort of like a child bringing his blanket to school but keeping it hidden out of sight. The comfort item was there when he needed it, but not precisely obtainable. This was obtainable.

"Ok…so I'll see you tonight. Alright? Just get through today and try your best. It's your last day dealing with this dumb fuck test, and you don't need to worry about it for a long time afterward. If you get stressed, just mess around with the cross on your neck. If that doesn't work, then go to the office and call me. I don't give a fuck how pissed they get, I'll handle it," Cross said, trying to be encouraging for the brat, but God was it hard at this time of the morning.

"Ok…"

~

When Allen got home, Cross was waiting right at the door with arms wide open.

"Congratulations, you're done with that stupid test! Now you can stop acting like me every time I go to work!" Cross greeted with the dumbest, dorkiest smile he could muster just for Allen and only for Allen. He would die if he showed this side of himself to anyone that wasn't Tim, Allen, or Anita. Allen could only muster a tiny smile as he walked into Cross's arms, relieved that this nightmare was finally over.

Cross picked him up and carried him inside, "I am so proud of you. Even though that test was super shitty, you still stuck with it and got it done."

"But I didn't finish all of it…I just ran out of time…"

"Ah, but you still stayed there and took it for the full amount of time you had to when all the odds were against you. So, to me, that's fucking finishing it, and you should feel accomplished," Cross stated matter of factly. Allen sighed and nuzzled up against Cross's neck tiredly.

"What's for dinner?"

"It's my famous, 'what the fuck is that!?' stew," Cross responded enthusiastically. Basically, it was just random shit he threw into a pot that he thought sounded good together. Most times, it was good. There were times when it was terrible. It was the few things Cross still maintained from his days of 'living life on the edge.' It was a little hard to live life on the edge with a child under your
roof, so this is one of the few things he did to still have that excitement in his life.

Allen made a face at that. Oh god, this is either going to turn out super terrible or super good. There was no in-between.

"Don't make that face. I know last time was trash, but it smells pretty good this time around. I'm sure it'll be fine," Cross said defensively.

"You know when someone says they like to experiment with cooking, I don't think they meant literal science experiments," Allen responded, still making a disgusted face, wondering just what the hell Cross managed to come up with while he was away.

"Cooking is literally science brat. How else do you think bread rises or where the whole baking soda volcano shit comes from? Of course, they meant literal science experiments."

"One of these days, we are going to die from your cooking."

"Well, then I hope we go down eating a great last meal."

~

While Allen's nightmare of taking the tests was over, it was continuing for Cross now that he was seated in a tiny, hard, plastic chair in a colorful room filled with children's books, names, letters, cartoons, etc. Cross knew that he would be expected to have parent-teacher conferences when Allen was enrolled in school, but he didn't think it would be so often. Well ok, that was a lie. He knew that Allen would have some issues, mainly with catching up to his peer's grade level wise. He knew he was probably going to have to sit in dorky little classrooms in stupid plastic chairs that made his lower back and ass hurt not even five minutes in upon sitting in them more than twice a year. Still, ...it seemed like it was a lot more than necessary, but that may be because he hated how stubborn his fucking teacher was. She always made parent-teacher conferences a grueling hell.

So, Cross sat, staring at the old bat that was Allen's second-grade teacher who was glowering down at him.

"So, as you may not have known, we have administered the yearly standardized tests that every student has to take to get a good idea of where they stand academically," she started out. Cross was already tuning her out after the first phrase that flew out of her mouth. Bitch, I knew about it. I may look like I don't give a rat's ass about my kid's education, but it doesn't mean I actually don't. She continued blabbering on about what the standardized tests were, what it measured, and all that ladi da bull shit.

"Allen has scored below average on everything besides the math portion on the standardized test," she stated.

Well, that wasn't much of a shocker. That kid was better at budgeting that Cross ever was. Math was the kid's strong subject, which was weird, considering it was usually everyone's weakest. Or at least everyone bitched about it when he was a kid.

Cross stared at the teacher in front of him with a blank look, but his rage was smoldering underneath unbeknownst to her.

"You don't seem very concerned about this at all, Mr. Cross."

"You're right. I'm not because I think your standardized test is bull shit," Cross stated.
"Language please-"

"Lady, we had crossed the boundary between common decency a long time ago. Look, I know I'm not a teacher, and I can't imagine the amount of bull shit you have to go through watching over 20 or more little rugrats in a room for eight hours a day. I can't imagine the amount of bull shit you still have to deal with when it comes to the rugrat's parents, and I can respect that. However, I have sat here numerous times this year listening to your criticisms on my kid. I have tried to implement new strategies to try and get my kid to be more successful in the classroom, but your fucking teaching methods are bullshit-"

"I have been teaching for almost forty years. Your son isn't trying hard enough-" she interrupted.

"I have tried explaining to you over and over again that Allen isn't like other kids. This is his first year actually sitting in a classroom with kids his own age. This is his first year learning how to read, learning how to write, and learning how to interact with other kids. You may not be able to see progress, but I do! You are not the one that has to watch him sit there every night, struggling to do something that kids his age can get done in thirty minutes or less. You don't have to watch him get frustrated to the point of tears because he feels like he's stupid only because he thinks he's not progressing at the speed you think he should be! You didn't have to watch him have meltdown after meltdown because of your dumb, standardized test that was already setting him up for failure! He worried himself sick over this stupid fucker! He's only a kid!" Cross snapped, having had enough of this woman tell him Allen wasn't trying hard enough. That was utter bullshit!

Before she could open her mouth to answer, Cross continued, "Of course I'm not shocked that he scored below average in everything but math! I know my kid is phenomenal at math! I know my kid can't read well! I know he can't spell well! I know because every damn assignment you give him, I have to help him with otherwise he will be stuck there all night struggling through it! I'm just proud of him for sitting through this hell of a test and continuing to try to learn this shit after all the work you and everyone else did to try to discourage him! I am not like you, where I expect him to be performing like everyone else in his grade! I know he's behind because he hasn't had any prior schooling until this year. While his peers were busy learning the damn alphabet, he was busy trying to fucking survive!"

"If you can't get that through your head, then I'm sorry I can't help you. But I'm not going to sit here and listen to you tell me over and over again that Allen isn't trying hard enough or that he isn't progressing enough. I know my kid is doing what he is supposed to do, and I'm not going to let one teacher ruin his motivation to learn because they can't wrap their heads around the fact that not all kids can be held to the same standards. That kid is an intelligent and talented little boy. He may not be book smart, but he's smart in other ways that your test can't account for. So, if your main reason for calling me here was to continue to bitch and whine about my kid or my lack of engagement with my kid and his schooling, then I'll let you save your breath. I already know because it's the same stuff you prattle on about every time I come here." Cross finally finished.

"With that, I think we're done. Thank you for your feedback and have a nice day," Cross huffed as he walked out of the classroom. He wasn't too worried about any repercussions, though. It was nearing the end of the school year, and who knows, maybe Allen's third-grade teacher will understand him better than this old bat. As far as Cross was concerned, Allen's efforts were enough to get him into the next grade level. He didn't pass with flying colors, but for the brat's first year in school, Cross couldn't have asked anything more out of the kid.

Chapter End Notes
Hello again! Long time no see! Just a little update, I have started on Krory and Miranda’s date draft so that will be coming eventually. Apparently as I was writing that, this idea popped into my head and it took off. I actually had both chapters out side by side and was alternating between the two for awhile before this one took over. I’ve been in a strange Link mood lately as well so I may end up writing more on his side of things. Although Cross will be incorporated through that as well because I view him as a potential alternative father figure for Link. I also now have Grammarly, so I don’t have excuses for terrible grammar anymore. Go us! Finals week is going to be here in two weeks, and I have a secret santa fic to do soooo…don’t expect an update for awhile okay? Sorry sorry, but my winter break starts early so I’ll be back before too long! Anyways, hope you enjoyed. I know we said we were gonna lighten shit up, but I guess some daddy Cross fluff and angst will do! FYI the cross necklace in this fic is actually a real thing and quite expensive. It actually reminds me heavily of Allen’s mask in the anime so if you’re interested this is where it’s from: https://www.idream-jewelry.com/blue-sweet-couple-necklaces-wing-sword-cross-necklaces-for-women-and-men-sterling-silver-vintage-pendants-set-with-gemstone-matching-his-and-hers-jewelry-for-couples-p-1133.html. See you next time!)
Cross Accidentally Buys Sausage Party for the Brats

Chapter Summary

Exactly what the title says.

Chapter Notes

(This is from an ask I received in my ask box on Tumblr about Cross buying the movie Sausage Party for his brats, thinking it was a family-friendly movie. This was such a perfect idea that I just couldn’t help but write some sort of chapter/drabble on it. Note, I haven’t watched the full movie, and I was unable to find it on the streaming services I have so sorry if it is vague. I hope you guys enjoy it, though. Don’t worry, I am still working on the Krory and Miranda date drabble, on top of a Tokyo Ghoul chapter and everything else. I am finally on winter break as well, so hopefully, I will be able to write more. I want to try and get through as many chapters as I can before my break ends because I will be quite busy this semester, so…yeah. Anyways, I hope you enjoy this and you as well dear anon, wherever you may be. FYI there is a lot of swearing in this because it’s Cross! There is a little bit of sexual stuff/terms in here because it is Sausage Party, but I tried to make it more vague and general audience friendly. Sadly, no Timothy because…well, I’ve mostly written about Lavi and Allen so far, and that’s what I’m comfortable with.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Cross trusted his kids. Well, okay, his brat and Bookman’s brat whom he watches over when the old man was on a business trip. Now when he said trust, he meant that he trusted his kids to do the right thing, to not lie to him (most times). He trusted Lavi to take care of Allen when he wasn’t around. You know that kind of shit. Loyalty and shit. They were family, after all.

Cross didn’t trust the brats to know everything that was good for them. I mean, why should he? They were kids. They were going to get into shit, get hurt, and push his buttons like all kids do. Cross was there to nudge them in the right path. Although Cross sometimes felt more like it was shoving those two imps back onto that path rather than a nudge. However, sometimes Cross trusted their judgment a little too much, which naturally caused bad things to happen. The severity varied with each situation, but it always ended badly for all parties involved.

One of these moments was when Cross decided to buy the kids the movie Sausage Party during a trip to the grocery store. Thing #1 and Thing #2 had disappeared after Cross started getting irritated at Thing #1’s (Allen) constant begging for food as he was always hungry. Thing #2 (Lavi) decided to do Cross a solid and take Thing #1 somewhere else so Cross could finish the grocery shopping in peace. Well, of course, those little imps had to bring something back from their adventure. This time it was a movie, and Thing #1 seemed really really excited about it. Thing #2 seemed indifferent, but as long as Thing #1 was happy, then so was he. As Cross’s narrowed eye looked down at the dumb, dorky ass weenie staring back at him, Cross didn’t get any ‘this is not for fucking kids’ vibe from it. Thing #2 informed him that it was an animated movie about the lives of
food that apparently could fucking talk. Of course, Allen would be excited about this movie. Seemed innocent enough for him. So, with a ‘fuck it,’ Cross dropped the film into the cart, hearing a joyful yelp from Allen. He didn’t check the back of the damn movie disc to see the rating of the movie. That was his first mistake.

Cross continued to shop for a little bit longer, making sure they had enough resources to survive for the next three days, at least. This required a full fucking cart of food and other shit as one of the little imps was a black hole in disguise (at least he was to Cross). As Cross waited for the cashier to ring up his items, he felt himself die a little more on the inside the higher the number climbed on the fucking till. Oh the joys of adulthood. Anyhoo, the cashier paused when she came across the movie. She frowned and stared hard at it, before looking back up at Cross. Then she looked down at his little imps before returning her gaze to the movie. She repeated this process a couple of times before she scanned the item, glaring at Cross as she did so. Her eyes did not move from him, not even when she scanned the rest of his items. That should’ve been his wake-up call that something was wrong in the force, right? Well…at the moment the force could go fuck itself because Cross was not in the fucking mood to try and analyze any aspect of today. That was his second and final mistake.

As they left the store Cross could feel the cashier glaring holes into his back. Jee, wonder what crawled up her ass, he thought to himself.

“That lady didn’t seem to like you,” Allen chirped, apparently observing the woman’s disgust.

“Is she an ex-girlfriend?” Lavi asked.

Cross paused his loading groceries in his old as shit car for a second to think about it. He couldn’t recall ever seeing that woman in his life. So, unless he met her on a drunk, one-night stand, he didn’t know her.

“Nope. Can’t recall. Get in the car losers, we’re going home,” was the man’s only remark as he finished loading up groceries to begin the drive home.

Once they got home, Cross started on dinner and let the two brats roam free to wreck his house even more than it already was. His thoughts of the cashier woman glaring at him at the store were just a distant memory. After yelling at the brats a few times over their antics and feeding the two little psychopaths, he found himself sitting on the couch with his two little nincompoops in front of him. Lavi was putting the new movie into the disc drive, and Cross was preparing himself to nap through this boring piece of shit kid’s movie.

As Lavi skipped through the ads and press play on the start menu, Cross had settled himself into half awake, half asleep daze. This lovely daze was interrupted the moment he heard the first cuss word uttered, which didn’t take fucking long at all. Cross’s eye widened, suddenly fully alert. Oh. This wasn’t a fucking kid’s film after all, was it. Well, would you look at that.

Slowly Cross turned his head to look at one little white head tilted to the side in confusion, while the red-head sat up, totally straight, intrigued by this turn of events. Cross let it go for a bit as understanding hit him like a fucking brick wall. Oh, so that was why the cashier was glaring at him. Cross sat up and leaned forward, both surprised and horrified as these food items continued to cuss and use such foul language. Surely this was a joke, right? No way in hell would something this child-like could contain such foulness. However, as Cross grabbed the DVD disc and flipped it over, he saw the rating. Oh fucking damn it. Anita was going to put his ass six feet under.

As the movie continued, Cross began to notice sexual implications being said and shown on the screen. He also saw Allen’s head tilt impossibly further to the side in utter confusion. Lavi’s head
had slowly turned to look at Cross, deadpanned. As his green eye bore into Cross’s soul, he understood the message behind that look. It said, and I quote, “you are an absolute, fucking moron.” Lavi was old enough to know…well, things…but Allen was…well, Cross didn’t know how much Allen knew. Cross could feel his soul leave his body as he thought about what this movie was going to possibly entail. A sex talk. To Allen. All because of his dumb ass mistake. Fuck his life.

“Where’s the fucking remote control?” Cross asked, deciding to end this shit show before it got too far.

“I don’t know,” Lavi deadpanned, only having it a moment ago.

“What do you mean you don’t know!? You know you two can’t watch this shit! Anita will kill me!”

“You should’ve thought of that before you bought it.”

“I didn’t think it was going to be something like this! I thought it was just some dumb, crappy kid’s movie about food! How was I supposed to know it was something like this!??”

“You should’ve checked the rating,” Lavi continued to deadpan.

“Why would I!? It looked innocent!”

“You should always check the rating.”

“Seriously, where the fuck is the remote!” Cross cursed, trying to look around for. It was literally just here a moment ago! It was literally right there! Where the fuck was it!? Then he looked up at Lavi again, who had the most evilest look imaginable come across his face. Oh, this little fucking demon child. Before Cross had the chance to ask him, he was interrupted.

Of course, showing this movie to little boys was going to prompt some questions, especially when one of them did not quite understand what was going on. Well, Allen chose this moment to pipe up in the most sweetest, innocent little voice.

“What does cum mean?” Allen asked, his silvery eyes wide and curious.

Lavi whipped his head around with a shit-eating grin on his face, “Yeah. What DOES cum mean?”

“Shut up. Both of you. Where is the damn remote?”

“I don’t know. Lost it. Guess we gotta watch this movie until the very end,” Lavi shrugged nonchalantly, wanting Cross to suffer for his mistake.

“The fuck you will!” Cross retorted.

“What does just touching the tips mean!?” Allen screeched.

“BOTH OF YOU SHUT UP! You are not watching this anymore! Little boys like you can’t watch this!”

“But we can’t stop it when we only watched the beginning! That’s not fair! I’ll die if I don’t know how it ends!” Allen whined.

“Yeah. We’re already in this together. Might as well finish it,” Lavi said, sounding sinister.
Cross growled as he looks at Allen pouting up at him and Lavi smirking at him. Cross felt himself cave.

“Fine, but don’t you dare tell Anita I fucking showed you this. When it’s done, we’re burning this fucker! Also, not one little peep or fucking question during the movie, or I’ll throw the television out the window! Got it?” Cross growled.

“Okay!” both of them chirped as they turned their heads around to continue looking at the screen.

The boys kept their word, though. Not one peep through all the foulness that was this movie. Even through all the sexual shit and the dirty sex scene at the end, which had Cross squirming. He knew Lavi knew more than he let on, but God how he wanted to cover Allen’s wide little eyes at he stared at the T.V. in wonder.

When the hour and thirty minutes of hell was finally over, Allen turned around and stated.

“They made noises like you and Anita make in the bedroom!”

“Yes…yes they did,” Cross said wearily, trying to wrap his head around how the fuck to explain all of this to the youngest brat.

“What’s a douche?”

Cross heaved a huge sigh and look at the clock. It was already past their bedtime. Welp looks like nobody’s getting sleep tonight because Cross was about to ruin some child’s innocence.

In the end, Allen took it rather well…at least Cross thought. He wasn’t sure just how much information actually made it through that tiny little skull, but he made sure to answer every question to the best of his ability. He also made the boys promise not to tell Anita of anything that they saw tonight.

Cross thought he was in the clear. After all, they kept their word and didn’t say a damn word. However, Cross forgot to throw away the movie…

And a month later, Anita had found it.

“Cross, what is this?” Anita asked, holding up the DVD. Cross could sense her anger hidden under her veil of innocent curiosity. He looked down at the object in her hand, and he felt a cold sweat start-up as he began to have war flashbacks of that night. Fuck. My. Life.

“Uhhh. I have no idea love,” Cross stated, feigning innocence even though he was mentally cursing himself out because ‘GODDAMNIT I ONLY HAD ONE JOB! TO THROW THE DAMN THING AWAY!’

“Really?” Anita deadpanned.

“Really,” Cross stated back.

“Alright fine,” Anita shrugged before walking off, but not before turning around and saying, “I’ll just ask the kids.”

Aw fuck, better start writing my will, Cross thought to himself sadly. He knew Lavi wouldn’t tell a soul…but Allen…oh Anita had her ways to make him talk. Food was what usually done him in. Cross got up, deciding to watch the scene before his untimely demise unfold.

“Lavi, do you know where this came from?” Anita asked.
“Never saw it in my life,” Lavi said with no hesitation. His face betraying nothing.

Next came Allen.

“Allen, where did this come from?”

Allen looked at the DVD and then back up at Anita before blurtling out, “It has a weenie on the cover.”

Looks like Allen chose to play totally dumb.

“Yes. It does. Do you know why it’s in the house?” Anita asked, patiently. She knew with enough patience, she could wheedle any information out of the small boy.

“The demons in the house decided to give us a gift,” Allen stated.

“And particular demon?” Anita asked as she shot a look towards Cross. Uhm. Ouch? I mean, Cross praised himself on being a demon but having his girlfriend insinuate he was one was a little…ow.

Allen gave her a blank stare in response.

“Tell ya what. If you guys spill the beans, right now. I’ll take you out to get ice cream,” Anita bribed. Fuck.

“Your creamy dessert can never make us talk! What do ya take us for!” Lavi yelled, raising his fisted hands up in protest.

“It was Dad,” Allen responded bluntly.

Lavi dropped his hands, “Wow Allen. Way to kill the mood…”

Allen looked up at him as if to say ‘but Lavi…Ice cream!’ and Lavi rolled his eyes with a sigh before fessing up to Anita.

“Yeah, it was the trash man over there that bought it for us. He didn’t look at the rating on the back. We watched the whole thing too cuz we couldn’t find the remote.”

Way to leave out the part of you hiding the damn remote to make yourself seem innocent, kid! Was telling her that you watched the entire thing necessary, though!? Cross sighed and hung his head. After everything, he had done for the boys…they sold him out for fucking ice cream. Fucking great.

“Kids. Go to the car,” Anita responded sweetly, but her eyes glowed like the fiery pits of hell themselves.

“Kay!” the two brats chirped as they ran off, leaving Cross to fend for himself.

When the two brats exited the house and closed the door, they heard screaming for a minute or so. One of the screams sounded like a girly one from Cross. Then absolute silence. Finally, Anita exited the house, humming happily.

“Alright, you two! Let’s go get some ice cream!”

Meanwhile, Cross was tied to a chair with the movie set on repeat until their return.
Chapter End Notes

(Sorry this one is so short. Actually, it’s been a while since I wrote something this short, so yeah, go me! I also wrote this all last night so...if it's cracky that is why. Hope you enjoyed it and I will see you guys again soon!)

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