An Unlikely Bond

by Anart617

Summary

You're just a normal girl, like everyone else trying to survive the big city. One day an ink demon appears in the street on the way home, causing a ruckus. Later, you meet the ink demon again, but he's not out for blood; rather, a home. Distrustful, but without any options, you let him into your home...and from there our fun begins.

Notes

So...I wasn't planning on making a BATIM fanfiction, yet here we are. The idea just popped in my head and I started typing. At first I wasn't even planning on publishing this, I was just writing it for myself, but then I started thinking, Hey this is pretty good, why not publish it?

I know it's a little late to jump on the bandwagon, but I've been a fan of this game for a long time, and I would only publish a fanfic if I thought it were anyways decent. So I hope you guys like it, too! Enjoy!
Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

You meet a demon. What could possibly go wrong?

Another day, another dollar. I accepted my meager pay and sighed down at the bills in my hand. It was barely enough to make it to the end of the week, but it would have to do. I stuffed the bills in my pocket and left the bookstore, stuffing my nametag away in a back pocket and clutching onto my purse. Crime can happen anywhere, but this corner of the city was a lot tougher than most. Figured I had to live here.

Already I could sense the vagrants watching me from their street corners, chuckling and whispering amongst themselves about getting a taste of that sweet ass. I was far from attractive: short, with too-large boobs and a face that should belong to a fourteen-year-old girl. But they'd take any solo gal on the street to get high on their pleasures.

My grip tightened and I walked faster. My other hand slipped to my belt and wrapped around a hidden pocket knife. I had never had to use it, and I prayed I never would, but I knew it was only a matter of time before one of those rats laid their stinking paws on me.

My apartment was only a few blocks away, but the trek seemed to take much longer because of my fear, and because it was overcast, turning the mid-afternoon into night with dark clouds that rumbled with the threat of rain.

Rain after I get inside, I pleaded as I took another turn.

There weren't many people about due to the foul weather. Those who were outside walked quickly; few were on their phones, as no one who lived in these parts was stupid enough to get distracted and make themselves easy targets.

Only one more turn, I thought, eyeing the next street sign. My heart pounded with relief, but anything could still happen between now and the relative shelter behind my front door.

And sure enough, something did.

A loud crackle filled the air. I assumed it was lightning, and cursed my luck before beginning to sprint, thinking that the rain was only seconds from pouring down.

But it wasn't lightning, and I figured that out a moment later. A huge flash lit up the street, temporarily blinding me. Cries of surprise and fear rang into the air all around me. I skidded to a stop and nailed my face into a lamppost. I wrapped my arms around it to keep from falling and squeezed my eyes shut against the light, waiting for it to fade away.

Slowly but surely, it did. I opened my eyes and looked around. The street and buildings looked unharmed; it had been no bolt of lightning from the sky, to slam into the earth and cause an inferno of destruction. But then what had been that light?

People were gawking and pointing at something in the street. They were gathered around it, but kept their distance. Most of the onlookers' faces were etched with fear, and a few held their hands in a
religious stance, some crossing over their hearts, some with their hands clasped and their eyes pointed skyward.

What's got them all so riled up?

Curiosity overcame caution. I unwrapped myself from the post and walked over to the crowd. I stopped at the back of it and raised myself onto my toes. It was still hard to see over the elbows and shoulders of those in front of me, but I managed to get glimpses of what they were looking at...and my heart nearly stopped.

It was some sort of creature, the likes of which I'd never seen before. It seemed to be melting...no, it was dripping with ink, yet it somehow managed to retain its form. It was tall--only crouching, yet it towered over the spectators. It looked around, growling at them, its fangs bared in a sneer. Its horns wagged as its head moved, and as I looked at them, I suddenly understood the religious reactions.

This was a demon, but an odd one at that. For one, it was made of ink. It also wore gloves and boots that reminded me of one of those Disney shorts--especially the gloves. They seemed...cartoony, somehow. The demon's tail licked the air as it surveyed the crowd, as though silently daring anyone to venture nearer. But no one was that stupid: it was obviously strong, going by the crater it had made when landing in the street, and no doubt those large hands could snap a human in two as easily as a twig.

I wanted to go home so badly; my knees were knocking together, shaking with the rest of me. But I was afraid that if I moved, I would attract its attention. Even though its eyes were covered with dripping ink, leaving only the lower half of its face exposed (it had no nose), it could still see, somehow.

The demon let out a loud snarl, and everyone, including me, scrambled back several paces. The demon suddenly stood, exposing its full height, which had to be in the twenty to twenty-five foot range. Several people screamed, and the crowd dispersed, quickly fleeing the site.

I was jostled and shoved to the ground as people pushed past me for shelter. I groaned and stood up. Assholes.

I turned to run with the rest of them, but I paused when I realized the demon wasn't giving chase. It was just standing there, watching everyone run away. I frowned. Surely that wasn't typical monster behavior?

Then it was looking at me.

I yelped and abandoned all curiosity for fear. What was I thinking? It had probably just been orienting itself to its new surroundings. If I stood around any longer it was going to kill me!

I turned to run again. But as luck would have it, I ended up tripping over my own foot and landing face down on the pavement.

I can't believe I just did that, I thought as I quickly pushed myself up, ignoring the red tainting my cheeks.

Suddenly I heard laughter from behind me. I turned around and saw it was the demon. My face heated up even further. For some reason, that only made it laugh even harder.

I stood up and glared at it, and almost said something rash. But I caught myself in time, remembering what I was dealing with: a demon, not some common thief or drunk.
I decided to run while it was distracted, but not believing I was going to make it. In any second, one of those hands would be wrapped around my waist and it would snap me in half, or devour my soul. I was dead.

Except I wasn't. The demon never gave chase.

I wasn't about to look over my shoulder and check, though. I ran full tilt to my apartment building, and thoroughly locked my door before peeking out the window, expecting a rampage, more screams, maybe even another flash of light.

But nothing happened.

Later, when I was watching the nightly news, I learned that the demon had disappeared from the area minutes after I had left, and had not been sighted since--seemingly vanishing without a trace.

The demon was all the talk for the next four days. When I was at work, when I was shopping, on the news. No one had ever seen or heard of the likes of this happening before. The government said it had no affiliation with the bizarre incident, but of course they would say that. People were in a state of panic. What if it returned? What if more of them came? It wasn't just our city that was worried, but everyone around the entire globe. It was among popular belief that these creatures (if there was more than one of them) could teleport wherever they wished, which explained the flash of light.

Priests were saying that the end of times was here. More people seemed inclined to believe them, though there were always the doubters.

As for me, I didn't know what to believe. I was there when the demon appeared. It had laughed at me when I tripped. But it hadn't chased after me, or anyone else, and it had simply gone away without harming anyone. Was this truly the end of the world?

I frowned. There were a lot of pieces to this story missing.

But why should I worry about it? I told myself as I tied up my kitchen trash bag. It wasn't my problem. I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time, there was nothing more to it. Besides, I had other things to worry about, like work and paying bills. If the world ended, then it would end. Nothing I could do about it.

I shouldered the trash and went outside. One thing I hated about the apartment building I lived in was the policy that all renters must take their own trash out back to the dumpster. And because of my work schedule, most days I could only take it out at night, and no one wants to be out at night all alone in the city.

But it was my only choice, and I'd done it loads of times before, so I wasn't too worried. I hauled my load down three flights of stairs, took a minute break at the bottom to complain about the weight, and then heaved it back up and went around to the back.

With a grunt, I threw it into the dumpster. I wiped the sweat from my brow before slamming the lid down.

"I can't wait to get out of this city," I muttered.

I turned around to go inside. A snort came from behind me. I spun around, eyes widen heart pounding. I didn't see anyone, so they had to be hiding somewhere in the shadows.

"Who's there?" I demanded, barely hiding the tremble from my voice.
There was no response, not like I expected one. Still, I wasn't about to turn my back and leave myself and easy target if anyone wanted to try something. My hand went to my pocket knife while the other balled into a fist. I glared into the shadows of the neighboring buildings.

"Who's there?" I said again.

The response startled me. "Well if I told you, you'd run off again, and that won't be much fun."

I spun in the direction of the voice, which came from an alleyway right across from where I stood, just beyond the fence that marked the end of the apartment building's property.

I glared, and said in as brave a voice as I could muster, "Who are you? What do you want?"

"I want a place to shelter, some food, and above all, a companion. One who won't run away from my face."

The speaker was male. His Brooklyn accent meant he didn't come far from here, yet something about him seemed off. I couldn't tell what, exactly.

"Buddy," I sneered into the darkness, "I don't know who you think you are, but if you think I'm foolish enough to let a stranger spend the night in my apartment, you've got another thing coming."

He chuckled. "Please, darling. Your threats are absolutely adorable; you're killing me over here."

My eye twitched. Adorable? Adorable?! Oh, I'd show him who was adorable, all right.

"Come out and say that to my face!" I challenged.

"Promise me you won't run." His voice was suddenly low and deadly serious.

It sent a chill down my spine, but I didn't let my fear show. "Whatever. You're the one who'll be running if you try anything, punk."

There was a pause, then he said, "If you insist."

And the demon slithered out from the darkness.

All my bravado disappeared. Every cell in my body went cold. My hand fell from my pocket knife and dangled loosely at my side.

*No way. I just mouthed off to a freaking demon. I am so dead.*

Every instinct was screaming at me to run. The demon must have sensed this, for he said, "You promised not to run from me."

But technically I hadn't. I hadn't said the exact words. And if this thing thought I was going to stick around...

I decided to stop thinking and start running.

"Hey!" he yelled, startled. "Come back here!"

I heard him step over the fence, but I didn't dare look. In every horror movie that only jinxed the victim, and I wasn't about to die that night.

I darted around the corner and was suddenly torn. I couldn't go inside, that would show him exactly
where I lived. But the streets were even more dangerous, littered with dangerous character all around. But then again, I was being chased by an even more dangerous character, and so I decided to take a chance.

I darted into the street, across the road and between two buildings. I heard him pursue me but ignored that, instead pouring all my attention and power on running as fast as I could. I wasn't a very athletic person, but if there was one thing I prided myself upon, it was my running.

I figured I could lose him amongst the many streets and buildings. To the untrained eye they all looked the same, a maze of steel and concrete. Having lived there long enough I could navigate this place easily, and so losing him should be a cinch.

But what if he found my apartment again? I gritted my teeth. Why oh why did he choose to come after me of all people?

Luckily, I didn't have to stress about this for much longer because my plan began to fall apart. I should have known better about trying to outrun him. It was no contest between a twenty-something foot demon and a mere five foot human.

I could hear his growls getting louder, his heavy footfalls and the occasional crash when he slammed into a building or knocked something over.

Suddenly, he was upon me.

One of his large gloved hands wrapped around my waist and lifted me up. Panic surged through me. I pushed against the hand, struggling to free myself with all my might. He pushed me against his chest, pinning me there. I grimaced at the cold, wet feel of his skin. What made it especially eerie was that it was not quite solid, which made sense, due to what he was made of.

"What did I warn you about running?" he seethed.

I gulped. So much for that. "I-I'll scream," I warned him. I knew it was a stupid attempt before he even replied.

"Oh yeah? And who will come to rescue you? They would just run off...just like you did."

I gritted my teeth. He was angry at me for taking off? He didn't have the right to be mad, and who cared that he was a big and mighty demon?

In a brief and probably stupid moment of spite, I forgot to be angry and spat at him, "Buddy, you don't have any right to be mad at me. You're the one who instigated this by stalking me home and then kidnapping me!"

Instead of retaliating, as I expected, he looked shocked. "Stalking...? No, I haven't been stalking you. And I'm not trying to kidnap you, either." He sounded genuine, but I didn't buy it. I craned my head up to look at him and meet the ink where his eyes should have been.

"Oh yeah? Then why are you bothering me of all people?"

"Because I recognized you from the other day," he said. "I've been exploring this city, and I can't say it's the nicest place I've ever been."

"Yeah, it must be a real drag next to Hell," I muttered.

He frowned. "I've never been to Hell."
I raised an eyebrow. "Oh really?"

He sighed. "Look, I'm not your stereotypical demon, okay? I really do just want a place to stay, along with the company. I don't ever want to be alone again."

I studied the demon. His expression and his words seemed to ring with truth, but how could I trust him? It was hard to trust other humans, especially here. Anywhere, really, even in the places where the grass was green and the stars weren't always hidden behind smog.

But I supposed it didn't really matter whether or not I trusted the demon. He could kill me otherwise, or really kidnap me (if he wasn't lying about that), or force me to along with what he wanted. Besides, he was literally hugging me to his chest right now, so I couldn't escape. Trepidation flooded through me as I realized I would have to play along with him, for now.

"All right," I said reluctantly. "You can stay."

He looked shocked. "Wait, really?"

"Yes," I sighed. Then added, in a firmer tone to both appear and feel more in control of my situation, "But on one condition."

"Alright?" he asked, cocking his head to one side. The subtle movement reminded me, for some reason, of a curious child, especially the way his horns waggled to the side, too.

I shook the ridiculous analogy from my head and answered him. "You will put me down now, and you won't ever do that again."

I immediately berated myself. What was I thinking?! He wasn't going to listen to me... My thoughts trailed off as he did exactly what I asked. "Okay," he said, carefully setting me on the ground. I resisted the urge to back away from him when his hand fell away.

"All right," I said, more to calm myself down than anything else. So I was going to have a giant ink demon living with me. That was fine. No big deal. Absolutely no reason to be panicking right now.

Stop it! I told myself. It took me a minute to calm down--not entirely, not even close, but enough to assess the situation at hand. A huge problem struck me.

"Um." I looked up at him, fully taking in our immense size difference. "So you want to stay with me, huh?"

"Yes!" he said eagerly, than added, "Please," almost as an afterthought. I raised my eyebrows at this, but didn't know what to make of it and so left it alone.

"Well," I asked him, "how do you plan on fitting inside?"

I thought I had him stumped, but to my surprise he grinned. "Oh, that's easy! I've got a little trick up my sleeve." He laughed as though sharing a personal joke.

Before I could try to understand it, or even think up a reply, the demon suddenly collapsed into himself, becoming a formless blob of ink. I instantly stepped back, wondering if this had all been a trick, and cursed myself for letting my guard down, even a little.

But he wasn't after me. Instead, the ink that made up his body, his literal life essence, was focusing on forming into a body that was much smaller than his previous form. I suddenly understood the joke, though I wondered how he could fit all that ink into such a tiny body. When he finished he
grinned up at me, eyes twinkling.

"What do ya think, toots?" he asked me.

The oddly shaped gloves and boots made a lot more sense now, because all of him looked like he could have stepped right out of a 1920s cartoon. Black and white, his pie cut eyes glistened excitedly over a broad grin that took up most of his face. He was no longer runny with ink, and his tail was gone. His bowtie, which before had been lopsided from the ink dampening it, was now straight and stain-free. He also had no neck; his head floated above his shoulders, and I tried not to stare at the empty space between. To top it all off, he now achieved a whopper height of roughly three feet, reaching just a little past my waist.

It took me a few seconds to find my voice.

"I think it's a good time for me to faint."

The demon's easygoing and rather smug expression suddenly morphed into a panicked one.

"Oh, please don't do that, miss! I won't be able to carry you all the way back in this form!"

For some reason, that struck my funny chord and I began to laugh.

His widow's peak furrowed in confusion. "What's so funny?" he asked.

"Nothing, just the stress of the evening," I said, quickly composing myself by reminding myself what I was dealing with. He might have looked like a cute, innocent cartoon, but I could never forget that tall, misfigured form. If he thought I was going to let my guard down now, he was dead wrong.

"All right then," he said, rubbing his hands together excitedly. "Let's go!"

"Shouldn't you wear something to, uh, cover up?" I asked him. "In case someone sees you."

"No one saw me when I was chasing you," he pointed out. Or heard him, I realized. I couldn't fathom how, but I told myself to be grateful that no one had noticed and had posted the event on social media. The last thing I needed was to be associated with this whole fiasco...which, unfortunately, I now was.

"Fine," I said. "But still, let's be quiet." We both stood there for an awkward moment before I added, gesturing ahead, "You can go ahead of me if you want."

"But I don't know where I'm going," he said. "You'll have to show me the way." His look showed me he knew what I really wanted: to keep my eye on him at all times. Seemed he was pretty clever, then.

"Fair point," I said, playing along. I walked ahead, but I checked back often to make sure he wasn't up to something. He kept his gaze locked on me, and I stifled a shudder. He didn't seem too interested in the city, I noted, then recalled what he said earlier. I frowned. If he wasn't from Hell, then what kind of demon was he?

It took a bit longer to get back home considering I was walking rather than running for my life. Still, I walked quickly, and to my slight surprise, the demon managed to keep up fairly well in spite of his short legs.

"I live up on the second to top floor," I told him when we reached the building. The inside was as dingy as the outside. The clerk was snoring loudly with his head on the desk; his computer was
playing a football game. Chip crumbs littered the desk and the clerk's beard.

The demon stared with fascination at the computer before I had to haul him away.

When we reached the staircase, he said, "Man, it must be a pain to take the trash down."

I glared at him as his words echoed off the walls.

"What?" he asked, totally oblivious. "I was just saying!"

"Do you want to get caught?" I hissed at him. "Keep talking like that and the whole complex will hear."

The demon frowned, but he nevertheless lowered his voice. "Yeah, well then I'd have to leave, and I'm sure you'd love that," he muttered.

I glared at him. "But people will think we're affiliated somehow, that I had something to do with bringing you here, and I don't want that sort of trouble on my plate, so keep quiet."

The demon looked briefly abashed, but he quickly made his face neutral and nodded assent. Only because he's interested in saving his own skin, not mine, I thought as I turned around and continued walking.

We arrived at my door not two minutes later. I produced a set of keys from my pocket, one of which I fitted into the lock. I pushed on the door and turned the light on by the entrance, which bathed the interior in a faint orange glow.

"Nice digs," the demon complimented, looking around. I couldn't tell whether he was being sarcastic or not, because my home was anything but "nice digs".

It was modest but small, with a tiny living room connected to the kitchen and dining room, which was barely a corner to itself, so I usually dined at the couch, as there was a little more room. Beyond the living room was a door that led to the bedroom, next to which was the bathroom. There was no laundry machine, so I had to go to the apartment-owned laundromat on the bottom floor and pay extra just to wash my clothes every other day. Did I mention how much I hated the city?

"You can sleep on the..." But he was already running to it. He leapt in a clean high arc that only a cartoon character could achieve, and landed on his target with his legs in the air.

"...couch," I finished.

"Thanks, toots," he said, patting the cushions. "It's nice and roomy. And look at the size of these pillows!" He raised one up and pointed at it for me to look.

I stared at him, utterly dumfounded. Just what the heck kind of demon was he? He was made of ink, childlike in behavior, and looked and acted like an old cartoon character. Where were the threats, the soul contracts, the evil maniacal laughs?

Maybe I've been watching too much TV, I considered.

"What?"

I jumped, then realized I had been staring at the demon for a long time. He was looking at me oddly.

"I spaced out there. Sorry," I said, wondering why I was apologizing. This all had to be a trick. It had to!
"Oh yeah!" he said, snapping his fingers loudly and thus startling me yet again. "I haven't gotten your name yet, or introduced myself for that matter. Golly, where are my manners?" He giggled to himself.

He turned to me, knees on the cushions, his stomach pressed to the back of the seat with one arm resting on top of it while the other was stretched out, its hand ready to shake.

"The name's Bendy, toots. Bendy the Dancing Demon."

I didn't shake his hand. "I'm (Y/N)," I said, "and please don't call me that."

"Call you what?" he asked.

"Toots. It's annoying, and frankly demeaning."

"Oh. Sorry, I didn't mean to offend ya." He kept his hand outstretched hopefully for a few more seconds before realizing I wasn't going to shake. His arm fell and he pouted. "That was pretty rude yourself, you know. It's customary to shake hands when you greet yourself."

"Not always," I replied evenly, "especially when your guest is a demon who's probably going to eat you in your sleep."

"Hey!" Bendy protested, looking positively affronted.

I shrugged. "I said 'probably'. Now if you don't mind, I'm going to sleep. Try any funny business and you're outta here, got it?"

Bendy's face twitched oddly for a moment, and I wondered if I had gone too far. Sure, I wanted to establish a sense of control, but not at the expense of my life. What the hell was wrong with me? But the moment passed, and Bendy's easygoing grin reappeared. "No problem, too--I mean, (Y/N). I'll be quieter than a mouse."

I gave him a very long look before venturing to my bedroom. I opened the door and was about to close it, when I realized I hadn't offered him a blanket. I didn't want to further risk angering him, so I went to the bathroom and grabbed a towel off the shelf (I only had the one blanket). It was more than big enough to cover his tiny body.

I returned to the living room and held it out to him, being sure to keep my distance. "Here."

"Gee, thanks," he said, taking the towel and wrapping it around himself. "Seems you're not as cold-hearted as you like to appear."

I sputtered, unable to think or form a response to the jibe. I finally turned on my heel and hid in my bedroom. I couldn't stand another second in the same room as him. Both because I was terrified and he was being unbearable; whether on purpose or not, I couldn't tell.

I didn't even care that the light out there was still on. If the electric bill was a little higher this month, then I would deal with it. I wasn't going back out there for as long as I could get away with it...that was, until tomorrow morning.

I groaned into my arms. You'll get through this, I told myself without really believing it.

I'd locked the door without any real hopes of keeping him out; he could probably just turn into a puddle of ink and slip through the crack underneath. I flopped to the floor and leaned against the foot.
of my bed and stared at the door.

I so badly wanted to sleep, but I didn't want this Bendy to take advantage of me while unconscious. I wasn't about to be caught off-guard.

And so, I took out my pocket knife and vowed to stave off all sleep, no matter how tired I was, and protect myself in case he decided to try something.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

You spend some time with Bendy.

Chapter Notes

Hey guys! I'm back with another chapter! I honestly meant for this to be finished sooner, but I was having a bit of writer's block, and then I had to rewrite a part of the chapter in order for it to fit better with what I had in mind. But enough of that. Hope you guys enjoy this latest installment! Hopefully it won't take me as long to write and post the next chapter. Chao!

True to my word, I fell asleep less than ten minutes later.

I cursed myself and scrambled up from the floor, where I had been curled up in the fetal position, right hand loosely curled around my pocket knife. I looked around my bedroom but saw no signs of disturbance. Everything was quiet. Dawn light filtered in through the blinds.

*I slept so long?* It suddenly hit me that I'd forgotten to set my alarm; I was due to begin work in less than an hour.

"Dammit!" I muttered, frowning. I couldn't afford to skip work, but at the same time, I wasn't about to let that demon Bendy—Bendy, what kind of stupid name was that, anyway?—stay here on his own, either.

Speaking of...just what was that little devil up to? I was surprised he hadn't tried to murder me in the middle of the night, and it was dead silent on the other side of the door—which only gave me cause for further suspicion. I stood up, quietly crept to the door, knife at the ready, and grabbed the knob. I stood there for a full minute, frozen in fear of what I might find.

*Come on, he's not* that scary, I told myself. But that was a lie.

What spurred me into action was the twinkling of china. I flung open the door, heart pounding with anticipation, ready to swing and stab and scream bloody murder.

All I found was Bendy standing by the shattered remains of a plate, looking guilty as he glanced up at me.

"Oops," he grimaced.

I let out a breath I hadn't realized I had been holding. Slowly and reluctantly, I tucked my knife away into my belt.

"What are you doing?" I demanded, not quite successful in keeping my voice steady. A quiver of
fear rang out, and I internally cringed for it.

Bendy slightly hunched in on himself; his fingers fidgeted with each other as he spoke. "Well, I just thought I'd cook us both breakfast, as a thank you for lettin’ me stay with you."

I stared at him. Really? This was what he was up to? I didn't believe him for a second. He was a demon; it was in his nature to be mischievous. He probably dropped the plate on purpose in order to wake me up, or otherwise give me a heart attack. Or maybe he was planning on poisoning the meal. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed that the light had been turned off sometime overnight, but I dismissed the observation.

"Well," I told him, determined to keep my gaze level, "I appreciate the gesture—" (not really) "—but I think I can handle making breakfast."

"Oh, okay," Bendy said, looking disappointedly at the floor.

I frowned. If he was trying to make me feel guilty, it wasn’t working. All right, maybe a little, against my will of course. But I wasn’t falling for it.

“Just…stand back,” I told him with authority, but without sounding too bossy; I was still afraid of angering him, as he might not like being told what to do. “I’ve gotta clean this up now.”

I expected him to protest, or maybe roll his eyes and give some attitude, but instead he simply backed up as I requested. I stared at him for a moment, and he stared back, unblinking. I quickly looked away and went to get the dustpan and broom, feeling his eyes on me the whole time.

When I returned to the site of the mess, he was still staring at me. “Could you please stop?” I said finally, feeling rather creeped out.

“Why? Does this bother you?” A hint of his mischievous nature shone out as the corner of his mouth quirked into a smirk.

“Yes, it does,” I said.

“Oh, okay.” He continued to stare at me.

I groaned and looked away. I swept up the broken pieces of glass and tried to ignore his stare, but it was pressing to my side like a physical force. It took all my effort not to squirm.

Finished, I stood up and went to the trash can.

“Lovely memories,” Bendy sighed. I glared at the trash can as though this was its fault for filling up too quickly; then I wouldn’t have met him last night, and my life would be continuing just as normal. I wouldn’t constantly be worried about what he might do to wreak havoc, or someone else finding out that I was harboring a demon. Then again, it wasn’t like I had much of a choice in the matter.

After putting the dustpan and broom away, I spun around to face him. Suddenly I was at a loss for what to do. I should probably offer to make him breakfast; we were roommates now, after all—as much as I hated it, I would have to get used to it. But what did demons eat? Probably meat. But he was made of ink, which was definitely unusual. I shook my head to clear it.

"All right," I said slowly. "How about you pick what we eat?"

Bendy's head shot up. Literal stars shone in his eyes. "Really?" he asked.
"Uh, really," I said, put off by his sudden enthusiasm. "You can check the cabinets and fridge. There's not much, but there should be something you like." (What did ink demons eat? Could he eat? If so, how, being made of ink?) "Don't touch anything," I warned him, "just look."

Bendy nodded and went to the fridge. I watched him as he opened the door and looked inside, his pie cut eyes roving over the contents with fascination. After a few moments he closed the door and reached for the freezer's handle, but he couldn't quite reach; his arms were a few feet too short.

I sighed and stepped forward. "Here, let me..." I trailed off as he suddenly grew in height, stopping when he was about seven feet tall. His ink was beginning to run into his eyes; he wiped it away to see inside the freezer better. Other than that, though, he looked the same. Still, it took all my willpower to not run from the room.

"Pancakes look good," he said and turned to me. "Can we have pancakes?"

"Sure," I said, feigning nonchalance and hoping I wasn't failing. "Would you like syrup on them?"

His eyes widened. "Yes please," he said, nodding his head.

"Okay, then. Let me just wash my hands. Then I'll get started on the pancakes."

I went to the kitchen sink and turned on the faucet, using the excuse of looking down so I would no longer have to hold his gaze. I heard Bendy shift back into his shorter form and his footsteps as he approached me.

"I'm sorry if my other form scares you."

"Huh?" My head shot up and I looked at him, standing not five feet away. He was looking at me seriously, with a bit of sadness.

"I don't like it, either," he told me before heading into the living room.

I watched him flop down onto the couch and stared at him for several moments thereafter. My thoughts were all awhirl, I couldn't decide which to focus on. Was this all an act? Had I been too hasty? No, he had to be tricking me. But what if he wasn't? What if I was just so used to being distrustful that I saw an enemy in everyone I saw? But he's a demon.

*That sadness wasn't feigned.* I couldn't pinpoint how, but I knew that for a fact. I sighed and refocused my attention on cleaning my hands. Just focusing on little, insignificant things like that would keep me from going crazy, as my sanity had started to crumble before my eyes last night, when I first met the ink demon. Heck, even before then. Life is fun that way.

After drying my hands, I got two plates from a cupboard and retrieved the pancakes. "So...how many do you want?" I asked.

Bendy peeked over the couch at me. "I can choose?"

I frowned. He said it as though he'd never had a choice in anything before. Or maybe I was just reading too much into it.

"Yeah," I said. "Don't take all of them though, I have to eat, too."

Bendy scrunched up his face in thought. After five seconds he said, "Seven please!"

*Seven, huh? That's quite a bit.* Then again, he was a demon and not a human, and so he could
probably consume a lot more. Personally, I could handle maybe four pancakes for one morning, plus a banana.

I laid out seven pancakes on one plate, four on the other, and put his plate in the microwave. Bendy got off the couch and entered the kitchen to watch as the food rotated while it heated up. "Never seen a microwave before?" I asked him, reaching for the cups.

"I haven't seen much of anythin'," he replied without taking his eyes away. "I have heard about these things before, though. I thought they'd be bigger."

"Well, that's what ovens are for," I told him, rapping the device with my knuckles. "You can cook bigger meals in there, usually for a longer time."

"Wow," said Bendy, staring awestruck at the significantly bigger cooking appliance.

I stared at him for a moment. So many questions were burning on my tongue, like where he was from, how he had appeared on the street the other day, why he was made of ink. But I kept them all quiet; even though he was now my roommate, it wasn’t my business to pry into his life.

When the pancakes finished, a beep sounded, causing Bendy to jump. He stared at the microwave with a surprised expression. Against my will, a snort escaped me. "What's so funny?" he demanded.

"Nothing," I said quickly, quickly regaining my composure. What the heck is wrong with you? I asked myself.

But Bendy didn’t get angry. Not really, anyway. He just frowned and said, "I wasn’t scared by the noise it made. The microwave."

Again, a grin tugged at my lips, but I forced it down. I opened the microwave and pulled out the pancakes. I heated mine up, then took both the plates to the living room. I ate there for all my meals, seeing as there wasn’t enough room for a living room table; and even if there were, I wouldn’t need one for just one person.

I went back to the kitchen to grab a knife and fork for each of us, plus the syrup. "What would you like to drink?" I asked him.

"Coffee!" Bendy exclaimed immediately.

That immediately came to me as a bad idea. He was hyper enough already, it seemed. Then again, I didn’t want to anger him, and I needed a cup of coffee myself. And so I poured some into the coffee maker and turned it on. "It’ll take a few minutes, but it will go off to let us know. Like the microwave."

"All right, don’t imply what I know you’re implyin’," Bendy said as I sat down.

"I don’t know what you mean by that," I said honestly.

"You’re still makin’ fun of me for jumpin’ earlier. I told ya, I wasn’t scared, I was just surprised. I didn’t know microwaves made that sound."

"I’m not making fun of you, I swear," I told him hastily. He frowned at me as though he didn’t believe me.

"Uh-huh," he said, before turning to his meal. He grabbed the syrup bottle, flicked open the cap, and upended the bottle. Thick, syrupy goodness oozed out of the container and plopped onto the stacked
“Pancakes.”

“Uh, are you sure that isn’t a bit much?” I asked him.

“There’s never such a thing as too much syrup!” he told me with a grin, putting down the bottle. He grabbed the utensils and dug in. I watched in fascination as he inhaled the pancakes at supersonic speed, and stared when the plate was emptied not twenty seconds after he’d poured the syrup.

“Ah, that hits the spot.” He leaned back and patted his slightly bloated stomach contently. I blinked.

_ooh kay then. Probably should have expected that._

I shook myself from my stupor and turned to my own pancakes. _I forgot the butter_, I realized, but shrugged and poured some syrup onto my meal.

When the coffee was done being made, I handed Bendy a cup, treating it as though handling burning coals. “Thanks, toots,” he grinned.

“Don’t call me that, please,” I reminded him.

“Oh, right, sorry,” he said, not really sounding sorry at all. He blew on his coffee before taking a sip. “Mm!” He gulped the rest of it down. I cringed, and hoped I wouldn’t be regretting my decision not to put my foot down about the coffee in a few minutes when the caffeine kicked in.

I took a tentative sip of my own cup o’ joe and set the mug down.

“Y’know, you’re not like most other humans.”

I raised an eyebrow at him. “Oh? How so?”

“Well.” He sat up and put his hands on the couch, kicking his legs over the edge as he looked up at me. “You’re not bombardin’ me with questions about what I am or where I come from. And even though you’re terrified of me, you’re being fairly hospitable.”

Was my terror really that obvious? Well, I was never invested in an acting career. I sighed. “Well, I figured who and what you are is your business. Even if we are living together now, as hard as that is to take in, I’m not gonna bother you about all that.”

“Because you’re afraid I’ll get mad if you do.” He frowned, his brow furrowed over his eyes.

“Yeah,” I admitted, “but also because I know not everyone wants to talk about themselves. They just want to keep their secrets to themselves, and I respect that.”

Bendy frowned deeper. It was a contemplative frown, and he looked at the coffee table for a minute.

I continued to eat my pancakes in silence…until the silence started to get to me. I grabbed the remote. “Mind if I…?”

“Go ahead.” He waved a hand dismissively.

I turned the TV on, and after a few seconds of loading up, the screen showed a female news anchor reporting, yet again, that the government was claiming no affiliation with the mysterious ink demon that had appeared out of nowhere in the streets of—

“Change the channel.”
I jumped. It wasn’t a suggestion, but a command, laced with a growl that reminded me of his larger form. I hastily complied. I found one that played old cartoons, a channel I’d never noticed before. Bendy leaned forward; his legs became still. It took me a second to register what was on the screen.

It was old, black-and-white, and no one spoke; the only sounds were effects and the background music. But the characters on screen were all lively and joyful, and the liveliest of all was a cartoon character that looked exactly like Bendy.

“Bendy? What is…?” I turned to him and trailed off. His expression was a mixture of sadness and longing, along with a hint of pride.

“I didn’t know they played reruns of our old show,” he whispered, apparently oblivious of my presence.

I watched him for a few minutes, watching the TV. Even more questions whirled in my mind. I had to ask him, a part of me insisted. I had to.

But I couldn’t. I had told him I wouldn’t ask. Why do I feel this way? There was guilt, predominantly. But I almost felt sad for him, although I couldn’t say why. Again, I could tell the expression in his eyes wasn’t artificial; again, I couldn’t tell how. I just knew. Some of my caution slipped away, and I suddenly found myself reaching out a hand to touch his shoulder.

I froze with my fingertips just inches away. What was I doing? Why was I letting my guard down so easily? Obviously, he was just trying to fool me. He was a (cartoon)

demon. A demon, he was a demon. Demons did these things to you. People, too. They tricked you into thinking they cared, that they had a single emotional bone in your body. But it was always just an illusion, a big lie to take advantage of you. No one ever really cared, and neither should you.

A mantra I always repeated to myself; it always worked. It worked now. I withdrew my hand.

The movement seemed to stir Bendy from his stupor. He turned to me. Ink was beginning to dribble from his widow’s peak and down the center of his face. I eyed the stream warily. He must have noticed, because he wiped it away.

“Sorry.” He grinned, but it came out lopsided and false. “Got caught up in memory lane, there.”

“It’s okay,” was all I said. After a pause I added, “Do you want me to change the channel?”

I expected him to say “No,” but he nodded. I took the remote and flipped to a channel showing a Disney film.

I had never seen someone’s mood change so swiftly. His drooping figure suddenly tensed up, and he bared his teeth to reveal canines. His eyes narrowed at the screen, and his tail thrashed in the air.

“Don’t like Disney, huh?” I mused aloud.

“I despise them,” he growled.

“Okey dokey, then,” I said. I changed the channel without asking. The film changed to another about some plethora of wildlife. Bendy instantly relaxed, and his eyes widened as he hung on to the narrator’s every word. I sighed with relief and set the remote down to finish the rest of my pancakes.
I ended up finishing by the commercial break and stood up to gather up the dishes. “Can I have some more coffee?” Bendy asked me.

That sounded like a terrible idea. “Of course,” I told him. It took him just as little time to down the second cup of coffee as it had the first.

I frowned. I had expected him to be jumping off the walls by now. Maybe demons didn’t get sugar highs?

I put the dishes away, thinking about the cartoon with Bendy in it. There had been other characters as well: a wolf, a trio of troublemakers who I assumed were supposed to be some sort of gang, and what I thought was a fallen angel. It was quite the interesting cast. But what did that mean? That Bendy didn’t just look like a toon, but he really was one? But how was that even possible?

He wasn’t about to tell me, though, and again, I wasn’t about to ask. Why was I even still questioning these things if I wasn’t about to be provided any answers? Honestly, I thought, shutting the dishwasher door and standing up, I was killing myself with these questions—

“Gah!” Bendy was crouched on the countertop just inches from my face.

“Hiya, (Y/N)!”

“Bendy!” I gasped. “What the hell?”

He laughed. “You’re face! It’s so funny!”

I growled but bit back a retort. I calmed myself with a long inhale, followed by a sigh. “Ha, ha, you really got me there,” I told him. “Could you please never do that again?”

“Hmm.” He tapped his chin in mock thought. “Nah.”

He jumped backwards off the counter and landed on the seat of the couch, where he proceeded to do a headstand for no apparent reason. And by headstand, I mean he removed his head and balanced on it with one foot.

Well. There goes that theory that he won’t get a sugar rush.

“Could you please calm down, Bendy?” I pleaded.

“Aw, and where’s the fun in that?” he pouted, somehow succeeding in doing that while maintaining his signature, irritating grin of assholery.

I swore, he acted just like a child. One mood one second, the complete opposite the next, and a third in the next second. It was putting my head in a spin.

“Look, just—I have neighbors, all right? And if you make too much noise, they’re going to call for a noise complaint, and that will involve the cops. I assume you know what cops are?”

Bendy stepped off his head, picked it up, and plopped it into the air above his shoulders. He huffed. “Don’t insult my intelligence.” He tapped his foot for a couple of seconds, then his grin returned.

“All right, then. If you catch me, I’ll calm down, okay?”

I groaned. “Bendy, that’s not—”

“Great! Bet you won’t, though!” Before I could react in any form, Bendy zoomed out of the room in
a literally puff of smoke. I didn’t have time to be awestruck by the cartoon physics now permeating
my living room. I dashed after him, yelling his name.

Chapter End Notes

So...this chapter had more fluff and angst than I had meant it to have. But don't worry!
Judging by the end of it, the next one will have a lot more antics between Bendy and the
reader, as they become more comfortable around each other. ;)}
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

What the hell is this demon's problem?! 

Chapter Notes

I'm so sorry about the long hiatus! I've been juggling a lot of things on my plate in the last several months. I haven't forgotten about this story, however. I've also figured out more about where I'm going with this, as I only had a vague collection of the plot when I first started this fanfic. But from now on, expect more and frequent updates.

I've wasted enough time with my babbling already! On with the next chapter!

If someone had told me that soon after I became an adult and found a place to live on my own I would end up spending that time chasing after a hyper, bipolar ink demon cartoon thing and trying to make sure he didn't make a mess of the apartment, I would have told them to kindly fuck off and find a therapist to soothe their ailing brain.

Now I'd be the one needing a therapist just to deal with all this insanity.

"Get back here!" I seethed at him between clenched teeth.

Bendy chuckled and looked over his shoulder to stick his tongue out at me. I growled and lunged forward. He leapt out of the way, his form a blur, and I crashed onto the carpeted floor empty-handed. I looked up and found him standing on my bed, tipping an imaginary hat to me while bent forward in a mocking bow.

"Why you little—" It was hard to keep my frustration in check as I stood up and glared at him, silently seething.

"Why don't you say what's on your mind, toots?" Bendy told me. "It might make ya feel better."

"I told you not to call me that!" I reminded him.

"Yeah? Well I don't care."

"Ugh!" I threw up my arms. "How can you go from being at least somewhat cooperative and polite one minute to being utterly unbearable the next?"

"What can I say, I'm a charmer, dollface," Bendy said, leaning back against an invisible wall and smirking at me.

If looks could kill...
"Look," I sighed, slowly releasing my anger into the void—as nearly impossible as that was. “I don’t have the time or energy for this. If you really wanna stay here with me, then you’re gonna have to cooperate with me. Otherwise you can kiss this place goodbye and kick your own ass out the door.”

Bendy chuckled. "Wow. I like you way better when you aren't suppressin' your anger."

"What...?" I slowly realized what I just said. My face burned red.

"Don't be ashamed, toots," Bendy told me, leaning forward. "I like a little feistiness in a lady."

Half of me wanted to scream and rage. Half of me wanted to hurt him as much as I physically could—which probably wouldn’t amount to much.

Instead, I walked out of the room.

"Hey, now, where ya goin'?" I heard him jump off the bed and his smaller footsteps as he followed me out of the room. "I was just jokin' with ya!"

"Uh-huh. Sure you were," I said distractedly, flopping down on the couch. "Could you excuse me, please?" Before waiting for a response, I took a pillow and pressed it to my face and screamed into it. Two minutes later, I pulled it away.

"You feelin’ better?" Bendy asked, one brow cocked up.

"No." I sighed and looked down at the floor. "Why is this happening to me?"

"Hey, imagine how I feel," Bendy replied. "Bein' stuck in this tiny apartment with nothin' to do."

"There's a TV."

"True, but I don't wanna be stuck in front of a screen the whole day."

"I have some books in my room," I tried.

"Hmm. Maybe." But he was obviously unsatisfied.

"Look, what do you want from me?" I demanded. "You're the one who came to me and asked if you could live here. Or rather, you forced it upon me."

Bendy looked at me oddly. "You could've said no."

I stared at him, caught off guard by how bluntly he said it. "What?"

"I said you could've said no. I was surprised myself when you agreed to my conditions. I didn't think anyone would give me a chance."

I could have said no? I recalled the night before, going back to Bendy's reaction when I had agreed to let him stay with me. He had seemed honestly surprised, like he hadn't expected me to agree. But what could I have done? He had me pinned to him, at his total mercy. If I'd said no, he would have just killed me, or made me say yes. So, what was he playing at now, saying I could have just said no, and he wouldn't be in my life or a part of my problems?

I shook my head. "No, don't try and fool me," I told him. "You could have killed me if I refused. I only said yes because I didn't want to die. So don't fool me with any crap and say I could have just said 'no', simple as that."
Bendy was frowning deeply now. I couldn't tell if he was upset or thinking, or both. Eventually, he spoke. "Well, I figured that you were scared, and that's why you said yes. But still, you didn't have to."

I huffed loudly, deciding to drop the matter. He wasn't going to be honest with me no matter what I tried. "You know what? Forget it. You're impossible to deal with, you know?"

"I pride myself in that," Bendy said with a grin.

"'Course you do," I muttered. With another sigh I added, "Alright. Regardless of whatever I could have or couldn't have said, you're gonna be living here from now on, which means you have to follow a set of ground rules."

"Okay." Bendy stared up at me. I hated it when he did that.

"Could you at least blink?" I was too annoyed by now to bother pretending to be polite. Bendy didn't seem to mind, though. My irritation seemed to be feeding his own amusement, as he just smirked.

"Okay, forget that, too. Let me start with the most important thing. I have a job, which means I can't always be here keeping an eye on you and making sure you're keeping out of trouble. If I don't work, we'll be evicted, which means we won't be able to live here any longer. Which means no more cozy couch and pillows."

Bendy's grin wilted off his face faster than it had appeared.

I continued. "That could also happen if too much noise is made. We could get a complaint from the neighbors either next door, above us, or below us, and then the police will come to check things out. And that's the last thing you or I want, right?"

"I suppose your right," Bendy admitted begrudgingly.

"In conclusion, I don't expect you to act like a saint while you're here. I barely know you, but I already know that would be asking too much of you. Just please, at least tone it down a notch. Several notches, in fact."

Bendy nodded. "Can do ma'am!"

I squinted at him. "You're not mocking me, are you?"

"Of course not!" His eyes grew big and innocent. "I would never be rude to such a fine, accommodatin' lady as yourself."

I rolled my eyes. "Whatever. Just promise me. Please."

Bendy pretended to think for a minute, just to infuriate me. "Alright," he said finally. "I promise to tone it down."

"Thank you," I said.

"Sooo…" He kicked one leg out. "What's your job, anyways?"

I narrowed my eyes. "Why are you asking?"

He shrugged. "I'm just curious."

"Well." I rested an elbow on one knee. “If you must know—”
"I must."

I stared at him until his cheeky grin disappeared. "Stick in the mud," he muttered out of the side of his mouth. I ignored his jibe and continued.

"I work as a waitress at a local bar," I explained.

"Why?"

Why so many questions? I wanted to ask him. Instead I just answered, "Because it was the best option for me."

"So...you don't like workin' there?" He cocked his head curiously. "Why do you work there, then?"

"Because I have to," I grumbled out. This guy was really irritating me. I was holding onto the last strands of my patience, and with every word out of his mouth he snipped another one away.

Luckily for me, he decided to stay quiet for a moment, as though digesting what little information I'd offered him. I allowed my gaze to wander in the meantime. It eventually happened to land on the clock. My eyes widened. "Oh, cheese nuggets and crackers." I sprang up and dashed into my room.

"What's the rush?" Bendy asked.

"I'm so late," I yelled. I slammed open my closet, grabbed my uniform and threw it onto the bed. "My shift starts in less than thirty minutes but I woke up late because I forgot to set the alarm last night...and then I got caught up talking with you...oh, my manager is gonna drill into me today. Fridays are always busy."

I took a quick sniff of my armpits. I didn't have time for a shower, but I didn't smell bad; just a quick swab of deodorant under each arm would do.

"Don't peek," I warned the demon before kicking the door shut.

"Don't get your hosiery in a twist," he said from the other side. "'Snot like I would want a look anyways."

I ignored the taunt. It wasn't worth yelling at him. He would just continue to taunt me. I quickly got dressed into my uniform: a black blouse and skirt with white frill, shoes with inch high heels that I loathed (it was hard enough to carry trays of food without wearing two potential tripping hazards), and my hair tied up in a bun. I checked myself in the mirror once to make sure I looked presentable, then opened the door.

Bendy stared at me. "Looking good, toots," he said. I couldn't tell if it was a genuine compliment or he was still messing with me. Who was I kidding? Of course he was messing with me.

"Thanks," I responded sarcastically, and pushed past him to grab a couple of biscuits from the pantry. I could wolf those down on my way to work.

"Behave yourself, alright?" I told him, purse slung over my shoulder, biscuits in one hand and the other on the door handle. "Remember, you've got books and the TV. You've also got food. Only eat stuff that doesn't need to be cooked or baked. I'll be back sometime in the evening. You'll have to entertain yourself until then."

Bendy's shoulders visibly slumped at the prospect of being left alone for so long. But he didn't argue. Having a roof over his head was more important to him than being bored all day, it thankfully
seemed.

"I promise I won't make a mess of things," he told me, holding a hand up. "Scout's honor."

I sighed and pulled open the door, shutting it behind me without another word. Hopefully today would pass by quickly.

......

My manager, as to be expected, was not thrilled when I rushed into work nearly ten minutes late. Normally I would arrive about ten to fifteen minutes early, and on most occasions he would have me clock in early to which I never minded; a few more cents in my pocket. But my punctuality didn't matter to him. Joe was a strict businessman and he tolerated nothing less but perfection from his employees.

"You're late," he said, standing right behind me as I was punching in. I jumped, having not heard him walk up.

"Oh! Um, sorry about that, sir. I was running late due to traffic—"

"Don't waste my time with your excuses," he cut me off. "I pay you, you get to work on time, no excuses. Got it? Good," he said before I could respond, slightly ticking me off. "Now get out on the floor," he continued, already beginning to walk away, "and if you're late next time I'll dock your pay by half."

Only by half? He must have been in a peculiarly good mood this morning to let me off so easily. Of course, that would technically be illegal, but I didn't say anything about it. I was just grateful that I was only let off with a warning.

"Yes, sir," I responded, and went to put my stuff away in my locker, the key of which I deposited in a hidden pocket of my skirt. I smoothed that out, put on what I hoped was a dazzling smile, and walked onto the floor, not at all ready to deal with the day.

......

"I hate customers!" I groaned into my arms. Why did they have to be so picky? They would order food and then complain about it, even when it's exactly how they'd ordered it. What the heck was wrong with people like that? You get what you get, and you don't get upset. There were people starving on the streets and someone would complain about how their strawberry wasn't centered just so.

I gave an angry huff. Whatever. It wasn't my issue to dissect these people's problems. I was just there to collect my paycheck. And most of the customers tipped well, anyway.

Most.

I had one man that day who managed to slip a hand under my skirt. I'd hissed, telling him off, and that of course ticked him off and he refused to tip me anything after that. Good old Joe didn't say anything about the customer's attempted assault, but he did badger me about treating the customers well.

"Assholes, all of them," I muttered to myself.

Thankfully the rest of my shift passed smoothly. I got tipped well, which meant tomorrow, on my day off, I could go and buy some groceries. My fridge was in desperate need of a fill-up. Especially
now that I had a new "house guest" to consider.

Speaking of...I looked up at the clock on the wall for the time. "Crap." It had been a busy day, with a steady stream of customers throughout the entire morning and afternoon, lasting all the way into the early evening. Joe ended up being short-staffed because of the restaurant's unprecedented business, and he asked me and the other two servers to stay extra. I'd volunteered just for some extra cash (which I managed to snag an extra twenty, nothing to sneeze at), but I hadn't realized how late it had gotten. Orange and pink rays slashed across the sky, signaling dusk's fast approach.

I dashed to my locker, unlocked it, and grabbed my stuff. Hopefully that imp hadn't gotten into any trouble while I was gone. Images of a trashed apartment flew through my mind as I left the restaurant and hurried down the streets (as fast as you can hurry wearing high heels).

The trek home felt longer than usual. By the time I arrived at my apartment, I was a bit of a mess, sweating from the heat of the sun (in spite of it already dipping below the horizon, nature just had to torture me along with everyone else today). I fumbled with the key little, then inserted it into the lock. I pushed open the door, anticipating the worst.

The apartment was clean, exactly how I'd left it. The demon was sitting in the middle of the floor, his head hidden behind a book.

I dropped my purse to the floor, partly shocked, partly relieved that he'd actually listened to me. At the sound of my purse, he lowered the book and looked over. A grin split his face.

"You're back!" he chirped, again taking me by surprise. Was he really that bored while I was gone? Why else would he be so cheerful upon my return?

Bendy leapt off the floor and trotted over to me. "Man, was it borin' without company here. No offense, but there's practically nothin' ta do!"

"At least you managed to keep the place in one piece," I replied slowly. My mind was foggy with exhaustion, my arm muscles burning from carrying trays of orders all day, my legs tired from dashing all over. "You seemed to be interested in that one book, though."

"Oh, that." Bendy glanced over at the forgotten book, which he'd left behind on the floor. "It was okay." He looked back to me. His eyes examined me up and down, their scrutiny making me uncomfortable. I resisted the urge to fidget. "You look exhausted, toots," he observed.

"Gee, thanks," I said sarcastically, too tired to be offended by his nickname for me. I was quickly coming to terms that there would be no stopping him from calling me that, any forms of protest were probably a waste of breath.

I picked up my purse and brushed past him, on my way to my room. "Just let me get changed and then we can talk dinner."

"Great!" Bendy said eagerly.

I didn't bother with a shower. Again, I didn't really smell, and I was too tired by the last twenty-four hours (had it been only twenty-four hours since he invaded my life? It felt like longer) to do anything more than pull on a blank T-shirt and a pair of sweat shorts. I left my hair in a messy bun and re-entered the living room.

I plopped down onto the couch with a sigh, stretching out my legs to work out the kinks.

"So, what're we makin'?"
I glanced at Bendy. He seemed unusually eager to help me prep dinner--and why would he want to help? To get on my good side, of course. But, if he was willing...

I shook my head. "We're not making anything. It's too late."

"It's only seven."

"It feels too late," I objected. "So we're going to order something rather than make it."

"Wow." Bendy leaned against the arm of the couch, cocking his brow at me in a rather judgmental way. "Your real lazy, huh?" He drawled out "real" in a way that made my eye twitch.

"Yeah, I'm real lazy. Just been working all day, dealing with people who seem to harbor a mutual grudge for me and a desire to piss me off over stupid little things." I still had not forgiven that one lady and her strawberry "issue".

Bendy frowned but didn't say anything. He seemed to be thinking. I wrote it off as nothing and pulled out my cell phone.

At the sight of it, Bendy was pulled out of his thoughts and his eyes lit up, and he was suddenly right there, finger pointing at the phone's lit up screen and inches away from touching me. I repressed the urge to shiver, recalling how icy cold his touch was, and the way he'd pinned me to his chest. I still don't believe I could have just walked away from that. He's a little manipulator.

"What's that?" he asked, eyes not leaving the screen.

"You've...never seen a phone before?" I asked, dubious. How could he have not heard of a cell phone?

"This is a phone? It looks nothin' like one!" His expression was one of awe, with a mixture of doubt, like he didn't believe that it was a phone despite what I told him.

"Oh? Then what does a phone look like?" I asked, only partly humorizing him.

"It's big, a little longer than your hand, and it's got a cord that's attached to the wall."

I frowned. "Bendy, those were landlines, and people hardly use those anymore."

"They don't?" His head swiveled around so his gaze landed on me.

"No." I drew out the word, uncertain and suddenly feeling uncomfortable for a different reason. How does he not know? "This, well, this is a newer type of phone than that. It's been around for a while now; it's called a cell phone. The original version didn't have a touchscreen, but the ones that do have been around for over a decade now and...I'm really horrible at explaining this," I realized.

"How does it work without a cord?" Bendy asked me. "And what's a 'touchscreen'?"

"I don't know how it works," I sighed. "I'm not the one who invented the cell phone, or any type of phone. But I can tell you what a touchscreen is."

I briefly showed him how it worked, explaining how it responded to the touch of your finger. By Bendy's expression one would think I'd shown him an impressive bout of magic. I couldn't suppress a small tingle of pride. For once he didn't have a snide remark about me or my intelligence. I allowed him a couple of quick swipes and taps at my phone before snatching my phone back. Didn't want him damaging it, intentionally or not.
As he watched me order the pizza, more questions glimmered in his eyes, and I had a feeling he would start asking about the Internet soon. "Don't bombard me," I told him. "I'm tired, but I'll be more than willing to answer your questions in the morning. I'm off tomorrow," I explained. "I'll also be getting groceries."

"So that we can make dinner tomorrow?"

Did he have a personality disorder or something? Why was it he was snide and dismissive sometimes but childlike and almost charming the other half of the time?

Again, I shook it off. "Sure," I said, and he beamed. An odd feeling formed in the pit of my stomach, but I ignored it and pointed at my phone. "What toppings do you want?"

That proved to be a mistake. Bendy ended up listing every topping on the menu before I had to cut him off and tell him to only pick a few at most. "I'm not getting food poisoning or whatever thanks to you."

Bendy snickered, but he obliged and ended up ordering pepperoni, anchovies, and bacon. I raised a brow at the bacon—an unusual topping choice, but not unheard of. But it wasn't like I was eating it. His order only took up half of the pizza while I took up mine with three layers of cheese.

"No toppings for you?" Bendy asked.

"I like cheese," I simply replied. For some reason, that made him laugh.

I hit the "Order" button, and showed Bendy how the little icon on the screen showed what stage the pizza was at, and, once it reached the delivery stage, where the vehicle delivering the pizza was and how long it would take to reach my apartment. I could have chuckled at his enthusiasm...if I didn't keep in mind who and what he was.

And that was still a mystery I had yet to unravel.

Chapter End Notes

I didn’t mean to call her manager Joe and have his personality be so close to Joey Drew’s; it just worked out that way! I didn’t think about it until after I’d already written the scene out. But now I’ve got an idea for a snippet of a scene in a later chapter, which ties in to the bigger plot, so it ended up working out! ^_^
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

"Nightmares are just exaggerated forms of our past. But that doesn't make them any less significant."

Chapter Notes

Oh my gosh. Thanks you guys for 1000 hits! I can't believe it. And thanks for all the kudos and comments. Knowing that you all love this story keeps me motivated to keep writing!

Now, a bit of fair warning, there's a bit more swearing in this chapter, and it's a bit more serious. At least until the end, and I hope I successful kept everyone in character while lightening the tone a bit. Anyways, I hope you guys enjoy this latest installment and thank you all again for liking my work!

The pizza arrived, and I ushered Bendy to a corner of the room unseen from the front door. The delivery boy handed me the box of pizza and tried his hand at flirting—I patiently pushed my tip into his hand and closed the door on his face. I could hear him sputtering on the other side of the door for a moment before I walked away.

"Well aren't you the popular dame." Bendy was smirking.

"Shut up," I scowled, and set the pizza box onto the kitchen counter. I grabbed two plates and cups from a cabinet and offered some milk, to which Bendy accepted, and poured us each a glass full. I warned him to be careful not to spill it before he trotted off with it into the living room.

I opened the box and my mouth instantly watered at the sight and smell. Even Bendy's portions were appealing. I carefully ladled a couple of slices onto his plate and then to mine. Then, with practiced efficiency coming from years as a waitress, I carried one on each hand and set them onto the coffee table. Then I went back for my own glass of milk.

"What're we watchin'?" Bendy asked as I picked up the TV remote.

I shrugged. "Whatever's on, I guess."

"S'long as it's not that," he muttered.

"What?" I looked at him, unsure if he'd really said that.

"Nothin'!" he said too quickly and enthusiastically, confirming that he had.

I thought I knew what he meant. Just that morning, that one show from the thirties or forties era that had shown a cartoon character that looked just like him, along with other characters, had bothered him to the point where I'd had to switch the channel. As I flicked through them, I made sure not to
land on the one that played re-runs of that show, which was located on, oddly enough, channel 66. I recalled that he’d enjoyed the nature channel, and so I found that. It seemed to satisfy him. Like before, he leaned forward, eyes wide, drinking in every word and image.

Once dinner was over, Bendy continued to watch TV while I cleaned things up. He’d offered to help, but I hastily declined. I don’t know entirely why I did; maybe to avoid another accident with the dishes. Maybe to avoid touching him. He didn’t seem offended, but it was difficult to tell what he was thinking. Especially when his attitude kept flying all over the place.

After I finished cleaning (which only took a couple of minutes, really, considering all I had to do was give the coffee table a good wipe and pop the dishes into the dishwasher), I joined him back on the couch and watched TV with him. Or rather, I watched him watch TV. There were still so many questions I had. I entertained myself with them until Bendy turned to me, frowning. "Somethin’ wrong?"


He hummed, unconvinced. "You wanna ask me somethin'?"

"I already said I wouldn’t pry," I replied, keeping my eyes fixed on the screen ahead of me. "Besides, you seemed happy about that. You didn’t sound like you wanted me to know certain things."

"True," he admitted, and went silent for a minute before adding, "If you won’t ask questions about me, can I ask some about you?"

I looked at him. "No."

"O-okay," he stuttered, seemingly taken aback by my brusqueness.

To be honest, so was I.

I turned back to the TV and ignored the heat in my cheeks. I unclenched my fingers from the couch cushion. Breathe. I forced myself to, taking a deep inhale and exhale. Don’t let him get to you.

I briefly wondered if he was actually interested in my past, or if he was simply asking because he was bored. Whatever the reason, he wasn’t going to get any answers. It wasn’t like any of it mattered, anyhow. It all happened long ago.

……

"Daddy can’t play right now."

"Aw, but Dad..."

"Not now, sweetie, daddy has to work."

"Later, then?"

...

"Can’t you just listen to me for once?! Such an ungrateful brat. Why we had you, I don’t know."

"D-Daddy loves me. You don’t, but he does."

"Oh, sure, daddy loves you. He’s working all the damn time, can’t spend a single hour home with his wife and kid, but he loves us. Has ‘obligations’, he says. What a fucking douche!"
“What’s a—”

"Don't repeat that. Whatever. Just go to your room and stay quiet. Don't bother me until dinner."

...

"You what?! What the hell were you thinking, up and quitting like that? Where's our income gonna come from? What the fuck's wrong with your head?"

"Honey, please calm down..."

"No, I won't calm down. I've had enough of your bullshit. I'm leaving."

"Wh-what? Honey, honey no, don't, please, just sit down and let me explain. Th-think of (Y/N)"

"Yeah, like I wanted the little brat around. She's just as demanding as you are. I should've never married. Mother was right. Marriage gives you wrinkles."

"What does that...? Look, you're not yourself right now, please, let's talk this out..."

"And I said no! I won't let you drag me down anymore! I'm leaving, you and your kid, and that's..."

...

"Sissy!"

"Freak!"

"Nobody loves you. Not even your parents. So why don't you just go and die?"

"Go and disappear. No one will know the difference."

"I thought we were friends..."

"Yeah, right. Who'd wanna be friends with you? Freak!"

"Loser."

"Loner."

...

...

“I just want it all to disappear...”

......

“(Y/N)? (Y/N), wake up!”

I woke up. I was being violently shaken, a hand grabbing my shoulder. I uttered a weak, confused sound and turned my head. Bendy’s pie cut eyes were inches from my own. I jumped back with a startled cry, and his grip on my shoulder disappeared.

There was an emotion in his features that I never thought I’d see: concern. There was an emotion in his features that I never thought I’d see: concern. “Are you alright?”
I fell asleep. I couldn’t believe it. Sometime while watching that nature show I’d nodded off. How could I have let down my guard so easily?

A quick glance at the clock showed that only thirty minutes had passed. It felt like more time had passed while I was dreaming.

“You were cryin’.”

I redirected my attention to him. “Crying? I was…” I brought my hand to my face and felt wetness beneath my eyes, some streaking down my cheeks. I blushed and quickly scrubbed it away. “It’s nothing,” I lied.

Bendy’s frowned deepened. “Don’t lie. You were cryin’. Somethin’ must’ve been botherin’ you.”

“And why would you care?” I glared at him, and he leaned back, taken by surprise. “You don’t even know me. I don’t even know you! It’s only been one goddamn day…”

I sighed, closed my eyes, and tried to regain a sense of calm. It was hard to do. “It’s…it’s gotten late. I’m going to bed.”

When I stood up, Bendy hopped off the couch. “Are you sure you don’t wanna talk?”

“I told you not to pry,” I shot back, then raised an eyebrow. “And why do you seem so keen on helping me? You don’t think I can’t see through your tricks?”

“What tricks?” He looked utterly confused—it was a cleverly worn mask. How could I have ever thought there was a shred of goodness in him? No one ever truly cared; they only inquired after their own self-interests. That’s the way the world works.

“You know what I mean.” I was too tired and emotional and embarrassed to deal with him. “Just let me sleep.”

I marched past him, shut and locked the door. I leaned against it for a moment, listening through it in case he decided to barge him, which he could easily do. But he didn’t. I heard muffled footsteps, and then the sound of the TV being shut off.

I shook my head, more confused than ever. But I was too tired to think. I didn’t want to experience any further nightmares, but I was used to them. I would rather deal with familiar past terrors than him.
I collapsed onto the mattress and was asleep within seconds, too tired to even pull the blanket over me.

Something smelled good. I took a deep inhale. Pancakes. I loved pancakes. Especially with heaps of syrup and butter…

Wait…

Pancakes?

I bolted up. I was wide awake now, but the smell of cooking pancakes remained.

“Oh, shoot.” I jumped out of bed, scrambled to the floor (nearly tripping once at the foot of the bed), and unlocked and opened the door.

There was Bendy, standing on a stool to reach the microwave. He was waiting patiently for it to be done. He turned his head when he heard my door open. He grinned.

“Good morning, (Y/N)! I made breakfast.”

“I…I see,” I said, unable to think of anything else to say. I stared at him while my brain struggled to put itself together so I could think and act appropriately. The events of last night returned to me, and an involuntary heat reached my cheeks. I straightened up and quickly cleared my throat, willing the blush to go away.

“What did I say about making food?” I asked him, hands on my hips, making a somewhat desperate attempt to reassert my authority (if I truly even had some).

“I know, but I wanted to surprise you!” His grin wavered as I continued to stare at him, my eyes narrowing into a glare. “Eh, surprise?” He waved his hands.

“Yeah. You surprised me, definitely.” I lowered my arms and stalked past him to the microwave. “I’ll take it from here.”

“But—”

“Please.” I gritted my teeth. “I’ve got this.” It took all of my willpower not to snap at him. Not to accuse him of what he may or may not be doing. And to control the overwhelming, mixed and confused emotions coursing through me.

“All right,” he said, hesitantly. He stepped off the stool and carried it off with him. I kept my eyes on the microwave, refusing to look at him, watching as the timer climbed down…
Wait…

I didn’t own a stool.

I turned back around, in time to see him fold the stool and throw it behind his back. It vanished.

I blinked. “The hell?”

Bendy looked up. “What? I got somethin’ on my face?”

“How did you do that?”

It took him a second to understand my question. “Oh!” He snapped his fingers. “That’s just somethin’ we cartoons do! Pull things out of hammerspace, whatever we need at our convenience. Well, within reason of course. We can’t just pull whatever we want out, and it can only be used for comedic timin’, or else in times of need. Like I needed the stool to reach the microwave! And you were uncomfortable about my changing my height before and, uh, you’re not following this at all are you?”

“Not really, no. Did you say you’re a cartoon?”

“Well duh! What do you think I am, a Martian? Or better yet, the Queen of England?”

“Well, no, but…it’s obvious that you look like a cartoon, but cartoons aren’t real. They’re drawings on paper, flipped through fast so they look as though they’re animated, actually moving and talking.”

“Yes, that’s true. But what does that make me, then?”

“A…” I sighed and muttered to myself, “A real pain in the ass.” To him, I replied, “It’s just impossible. At least, I thought it was.”

“Well, seein’ is believin’.”

“I suppose,” I said slowly. I frowned, remembering the old cartoon show from before. “Are you from that one show?”

He noticeably stiffened. “Yes,” he said, his tone amiable, but there was a glint to his eyes that made me regret asking.
“I won’t pry any further,” I told him quickly. “I already said I wouldn’t,” I reminded myself, irritated at both myself and him.

“The pancakes are done,” Bendy said, suddenly cutting off our conversation. I turned and saw it had. I hadn’t even noticed it go off.

“Oh. Right.” I hurried to take them out and divide the pancakes onto two plates (he’d put both of our breakfasts in together; not advisable, but at least the microwave hadn’t caught on fire; it was a rather cheap model).

We ate breakfast in front of the TV. This was quickly becoming a routine habit of ours. Once done, I checked the time. It was almost nine.

“I should get ready to go shopping. I’m buying for two, after all.” I grabbed some clothes from my closet, a simple shirt and pants. Just before going in, I glared at Bendy. “No peeking, got it?”

“Don’t you trust me?” he asked with that irritating grin of his.

“No,” I said and shut the door.

A good warm shower helped calm my nerves and clear my head. I hadn’t taken one in over twenty-four hours. It felt great. I longed to spend a few extra minutes underneath the pouring hot water, but there were groceries to buy, and I wanted him alone in my apartment as little as possible.

I finished cleaning myself, then dried myself off and slipped into the clothes I selected. I grabbed my hair dryer and quickly dried my hair before pulling it up in a messy ponytail. I then slipped on some shoes, grabbed my keys and purse, and got ready to head out the door.

“Um, (Y/N)?”

“Yeah?” I asked him, anxious to get done with this chore.

“Could you buy some bacon soup, please?”

I stared down at him. Did he just ask for bacon soup? I’d never even had bacon soup before. And he’d asked so politely…

He was giving me the puppy eyes.

No, I told myself. Absolutely not. You are not getting tricked by those eyes. You’d be a complete idiot to.
The eyes widened.

_No, (Y/N). Don’t do it. Don’t you dare…_

They widened, if possible, even further. They were almost absurdly huge. And yet…

“Fine.” I told myself I would have agreed anyway, if only to get him off my back.

“Yay! Thanks (Y/N).”

I blinked. There he went again, acting so innocent and childlike. More confused than ever, I warned him to stay out of trouble, that I would be back soon, and then departed into the city streets.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

In which the news can actually be informational for a change.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As it turned out, bacon soup was pretty good. Bendy, however, seemed to praise it as though it was the Holy Grail. More than once, I suppressed a snort of amusement against my better judgement.

The next few days passed smoothly. Or at least, as smoothly as it can with a cartoon demon as your roommate. I attended work, making low wages but getting by with the tips left by customers, most of them decent, some handsome, and more than a few measly. I was on time every day, and good ol’ Joe couldn’t fault me for anything. The customers even behaved themselves—for the most part; one guy tried flirting with me, but I bashed his hopes and dreams without breaking a sweat. I smirked internally at his broken expression while his buddy patted his shoulder reassuringly.

I had more important things to look for in life than a relationship.

Meanwhile, Bendy was surprisingly well-behaved. He toned down after the first day and seemed to be respecting my “house rules” so far. Every day I came to the apartment anticipating the worst, but every day I was met with relief at the sight of a still-intact home and a demon sitting on the floor cross-legged and reading a book.

One day I asked him about this. “You’re usually watching TV when I’m around. Why do I always come back finding you reading a book?”

“I just like to read,” he replied. I got the feeling he was only half-lying, but I didn’t push him. I was being more careful about my questions now. In turn, he didn’t question much of my behavior, seeming to have given up after I had that nightmare. I still couldn’t believe I’d let down my walls around him. But he wasn’t giving me a hard time about it, which was what I had been expecting. There was so much of this guy to unravel, so many layers I had yet to see. I’d grown up learning to assume the worst from everyone, to trust nobody. But Bendy…there was something about him that was starting to make me question those principles I’d established for myself.

Of course, I was still wary about him. I knew next to nothing about him. I’d also only known him for about half of a week. But…

I was walking home, exhausted from work but still observant of my surroundings, with one hand poised above my hidden pocketknife. I’d never had to use it before, but it was still reassuring to know it was there. Tonight was the same as any other—I did have a later shift, however, and it was past nine by the time it ended. Now, with the moon overhead and darkness claiming the sky, it was even more important to be cautious of other people.

I passed by a store selling TVs. On one of them some people gathered around a table were discussing the ‘mysterious ink demon’ that had one day out of nowhere appeared on the street. It was still a hot topic of discussion, as it had only been a week since the event occurred. I paused to listen
“…can’t imagine what it must have been like to be there, in the presence of that thing,” a balding man was saying. His polished suit looked tight on him.

“What’s to imagine? It’s downright terrifying,” said another man, around his age. “To think, that demons are real. It’s like something out of a movie or a story book. I still can’t wrap my mind around it.”

“Of course, the government is still trying to deny the whole incident.”

A pretty lady, decades younger than the two men but likely equally as bright, if not brighter, snorted from across the table. “Yeah, right. As if they can stop social media from doing its thing. It’s all over the world now, played on millions of phones, tablets and laptops. It’s all anyone can talk about.”

“What baffles me the most,” the second man said, edging forward in his seat and leaning forward to rest his elbows on his knees, clasping his hands together, “is the overall appearance of the demon.”

“How do you mean, Jim?” questioned the woman, arching a slender brow at him.

“Well, Cassie—” and here the man cleared his throat before explaining. “The demon was wearing gloves and a bowtie and was positively dripping with ink. He didn’t look to be covered with the stuff; he looked like he was made of it.”

“But that’s impossible.”

“So are demons,” was his snark reply.

“Well, what’s your point, Jim?” the first man interrupted impatiently, before the two of them could trade banter.

“Right. The thing that struck me most about it was its smile. That smile...now, I remember that smile from when I was a boy. I know it’s impossible, but that smile is the same smile that this once-popular cartoon character used to wear. Have either of you heard of Bendy the Dancing Demon?”

The woman shook her head, but the other man nodded knowingly. “I remember him from when I was young. You wouldn’t know, Cassie, hardly anyone hears of him these days. He used to be the mascot of Joey Drew Studios, this old animation company back in the thirties and forties. It was getting to be as popular as Walt Disney in those days.”

“Until the company went bankrupt and down under,” Jim said with a laugh. "Couldn't afford to fund itself anymore. Spent too much money on the big picture."

“I don’t understand what this has to do with our discussion,” Cassie said, frowning.

“All I’m saying is, he looks like Bendy. Well, only a little. He has the same smile and bowtie and gloves, and he’s made of ink, sure. But Bendy was a little kid’s cartoon character. And sure, he was a demon, but he didn’t look anything like that monstrosity.”

“That’s still one hell of a coincidence.”

“Jim’s right,” said the other man. “It’s just a comparison back from our old school days. But let’s get back to the real discussion. You said you heard of some rumors from downtown Brooklyn?”

“That’s right.” Cassie straightened up in her chair, seemingly eager to get to this point of their
meeting, to the more important and “relevant” parts. But I was no longer listening, already tuning out whatever she was saying. Because I was certain that whatever rumors she’d dug up were simply that—rumors. What they’d just revealed was the real thing. None of them, no one else, had seen Bendy in his smaller, cute cartoon form.

But I had.

He really was a cartoon; he didn’t just behave like one. It didn’t surprise me much, even though I couldn’t fathom how it was possible. How could you bring a cartoon character to life? Why would you do it? And what did it have to do with Bendy?

That old cartoon show…that had been him on the screen. But who were the other cartoons? Were they alive too? I shook my head. So many questions, none of which made any sense.

“Joey Drew Studios.” I’d never given the name much thought before, but now I realized I remembered seeing it before—on the front of an old, decaying building not far from where I lived. Only a few blocks away, actually.

I bit my lip. I promised Bendy that I wouldn’t pry, yet I continuously was on the brink of breaking that promise, with every new secret that was leaked out. And now this….My curiosity simply couldn’t contain itself.

It wouldn’t hurt to just look at the building, I don’t have to go inside. And it’s not like he has to know.

……

It didn’t take long to reach the building. Looking at it, it was a wonder that it hadn’t been demolished years ago. The windows were all boarded up, the roof sagging, the wood rotten. It was tall and wide, and must have been impressive in its time, but now it was a sad, dying thing.

Above the front entrance doors was that sign proclaiming, “Joey Drew Studios”. The lettering had weathered over the years; the “o” in “Studios” and the “w” in “Drew” were both missing.

I stared at the doors, drinking it all in, wondering…

I could almost have sworn that something was whispering to me, some unheard and forbidden voice. But I was just tired. I snapped out of it, remembering how late it was. How long had I been standing there? Too long; I must have blanked out, being so deep in thought. Luckily there was no one around. No one that I could see, anyway.

Shuddering, I made my way home as quickly as possible without running; I didn’t want to draw any attention to myself.

When I arrived home, Bendy was waiting at the door. He slammed me with questions as soon as I entered.

“Where were you? It’s late! You’ve never been out this late before.”

“I told you I’d be home later tonight,” I said, put off by his show of concern.

“Yeah, but still!” He frowned, planting his hands on his hips. “It took you longer to get home.”

So, he’d been keeping track of the time while I was gone? I tried not to look suspicious as I said, “Did it? I didn’t notice. I was enjoying the moon and stars. They’re pretty to look at.”
He snorted. “Yeah, right. You don’t enjoy doin’ anythin’ fun.”

That shouldn’t have stung, but it did. I brushed it off with a shake of my head. “Whatever, it doesn’t matter. I’m home, aren’t I? And in one piece. I don’t see why you’d care.”

I brushed past him, intent on getting changed so I could eat; I was starving. But evidently Bendy wasn’t willing to end our conversation so easily. He grabbed my wrist, and I barely repressed a shudder at his cold touch.

I looked over my shoulder at him. “Hey, let go,” I said, then froze at his expression.

His eyes were narrowed, full of suspicion. “Where were you?” he asked slowly.

He doesn’t know. He has no way of knowing, I assured myself before my mind could go into a full-blown panic. I couldn’t suppress my nervousness, however, when I replied, equally as slow, “I don’t know what you mean. I just walked straight home, as I always do. Besides,” I added, glaring at him in turn, “why’s that any of your business?”

Bendy scowled. “I just wanna know how you found out about the studio.”

My veins went cold. He knew. How did he know? How did he find out?

My questions must have been clear on my face because he said, “I have a way of sensin’ certain things, and I can tell that you were there. That’s all you need to know.”

“L-Look.” I silently cursed myself for stammering, but I couldn’t help it. This past week I’d slowly been getting over my initial fear of him, allowing myself to slowly get used to him. I never let down my guard, but I had gotten used to some of his antics. But right now…he was completely serious, like the night we first met, and it terrified me.

Bendy must have seen this, because his expression softened, and he let go of my wrist. I instinctively rubbed it with my other hand.

“I’m not mad, (Y/N). I’m sorry, I just…I don’t like you knowin’ certain things about me, and I thought you understood that.”

“I heard something on the news,” I told him, not entirely sure why I felt such a need to explain myself to him. “These people were sitting around a table and discussing you. They pieced some things together, about how you seemed similar to this old cartoon character. That same cartoon character is from that show you don’t seem to like. And he’s you, isn’t he? That Bendy is you, and I know that’s not possible, but heck, what do I know?” I laughed suddenly, almost hysterical, and immediately cut myself off. What was wrong with me?

Meanwhile, Bendy was pacing back and forth. “I didn’t think they’d recognize me. How did they find out so quickly?”

“They don’t think you’re really the same Bendy. They just think you look similar.” I didn’t know why I was attempting to reassure him. It didn’t seem to be working much, anyway.

Bendy turned to me. “Yeah, but how long ‘till they make the connection?”

“Look,” I told him, “people won’t believe for a second that you’re an actual cartoon. Because you’ve only shown the rest of them that other, monstrous side of you. Er, no offense,” I said quickly.

“None taken,” he muttered, to which I flinched.
“As long as you stay here, you should be safe,” I continued. “I don’t know how you’re real, how cartoons can come to life, but if you don’t want me finding out, if you don’t want me by that studio —”

“I don’t,” he cut me off. I tensed up; his voice sounded deeper when he uttered those two words.

Bendy must have seen the fear in my eyes, the fear that I so poorly tried to hold deep inside me so that he wouldn’t see. He sighed, literally deflating like a balloon. It was always weird to see him perform those little cartoony stunts.

"Bendy..." I started, then paused. What had I been planning to say?

Bendy suddenly straightened back up and looked up at me. “Please don’t ever go to that studio again. Don’t even think about it. I don’t want you to go there.”

“Al-alright,” I said.

“Promise me,” he demanded.

“I promise.”

Bendy stared at me, looking as though he wanted to apologize. Genuine or not, I suddenly realized that I didn’t want to hear it, that I wanted to get out of that room. The tension there was suffocating.

I stepped towards my bedroom. “I’m...I’m going to get changed.” When he didn’t stop me, I rushed into the room, closing the door behind me, and leaving an awkward silence behind.

Chapter End Notes

Holy cow, over 100 kudos?! Thanks so much you guys! I can’t even tell you how much I appreciate seeing that! I guess I must be doing something right! (lol)

Anyways, I’m sorry that this chapter is a bit shorter than the rest, but I felt like it ended just where it needed to. Also, we’re finally starting to progress forward with the plot. I apologize if it feels a bit slow, but I just want to establish the characters and the setting before getting into the thick of things, which hopefully shouldn’t be too long from now.

Still, I hope you enjoyed this chapter. I’m really excited for the next chapter! That one shouldn’t take as long to get published, so expect an update pretty soon! Till next time!
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Questions asked, answers given. Some are open, some are hidden.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The next morning, I woke up to find Bendy still asleep on the couch; well, halfway off the couch. He was leaning dangerously over the side and looked like he could fall off at any minute. He was lightly snoring, with little Z's floating over his head and a little cloud to indicate he was dreaming.

Just like a cartoon.

I quietly stepped around him and the couch to the kitchen, where I began to prepare breakfast. A simple dish of scrambled eggs and bacon would suffice. I yawned, glancing at the clock. It was just before eight. Why did I wake up so early? I was off today. But now I couldn't go back to sleep, even if I was still a little tired.

It didn't take long before the eggs were sizzling in a pan on the stove. Either the sound or the smell of them cooking woke Bendy up. I didn't hear him stir, but I did hear him say, "Good mornin',".

I stiffened. After our brief argument last night, I'd gone back to perform our nightly routine of dinner and T.V., but neither of us had said anything to the other. Bendy had barely eaten and didn't seem to be watching the T.V.; he was just looking through it, as though secretly watching something else. Something from his past, perhaps? I didn't wonder about it any further, and simply ate in silence. It had been awful and awkward.

Had that tension carried into this morning?

Bendy approached me, rubbing the sleep from his eyelids. He sniffed the air. "Eggs and bacon?" he guessed.

"Y-Yeah," I stuttered. "You okay with that?"

"Why wouldn't I be?" He frowned up at me. "Are you okay, (Y/N)?"

"I'm fine," I said quickly. I glanced at him. "Why...uh, never mind." I looked away again.

Bendy said, "Last night's over. Let's not worry about it."

I was surprised by that response, and the wisdom it held. But I silently agreed and turned to continue prepping breakfast.

We both sat on the couch around fifteen minutes later, watching Steven Universe. Bendy was curious about modern cartoons, so I opted to introduce him to one of my personal favorites. His eyes turned into literal stars, falling in love with the show immediately. In spite of myself, I chuckled.

"What?" Bendy asked, not taking his eyes off the screen.
"It's nothing," I said, blushing to myself.

After breakfast, the two of us just sat on the couch. I bit my lip, uncomfortable with the tension between us—even if he didn’t feel it, or refused to acknowledge it. I didn’t know what to think of his reaction last night. He’d gotten mad when I went to Joey Drew Studios behind hiss back, even if it was only to check the place out. No way was I ever going to enter that place. There was something wrong about it, a dark aura I couldn’t quite explain.

It made sense why he'd be mad. I promised him I wouldn't ask questions, that I wouldn't pry into his life. I had meant it—at first. But I’d always been curious, ever since I was little. Too curious for my own good, my dad used to say. Apparently I never grew out of that phase.

I chanced a glance at him out of the corner of my eye, only to see him peeking at me, too. We both jumped and quickly looked away.

Did he want to say something to me? If he did, I wished he would just say it. The silence was unbearable.

At last, he did speak. "I'm sorry for yellin' at you yesterday. That was out of line. I just...that place holds bad memories for me. It's dangerous. I don't want you anywhere near there."

What makes it so dangerous? I wanted to know. Instead I asked, "Why do you care about me so much? We barely know each other."

"I know that," he retorted. "It's just that you remind me of someone I used to know. A long time ago." He trailed off, again staring into the space ahead of him.

I frowned, turning away. I reminded him of someone from his past? Was that the reason he was so friendly with me? The sole reason? A part of me squirmed unpleasantly at the idea, and I ignored it. Why should I feel upset?

"If...if you want, you can ask me three questions." My head swung back to face him. "Really?"

"Yes." He leaned forward, coming uncomfortably close, and I instinctively leaned back. "But on one condition." He pointed one finger to the ceiling and grinned. "You have to answer three of mine first."

He'd asked this before, hadn't he? Of some variation. And I didn't hesitate to disagree, back then. But now...it had only been a week, yet...

"Okay," I agreed.

Bendy seemed to hesitate only for a split second, as though surprised I was playing along, before his grin broadened. "All right! First question. Why are you such a grump all the time?"

Figures he'd open up with something like that. I crossed my arms and leaned back into the couch. "Specify grump," I invited him.

"Oh, ya know, a grouch, a Scrooge, a Debbie Downer, a loner, may I go on?"

"No, I've got the idea." I sighed, thinking before giving him an answer. "The reason I act the way I do, all closed-off and unfriendly, is because I've been screwed over my whole life by the people closest to me. My parents, my friends, even my teachers. So as I got older I realized that letting
people close to you only hurt you, and I avoided making new friends or interacting with people unless it was my only option. I built up these walls around myself and vowed they would never crumble. It seems I'm being tested now.

“By me?”

Damn, he was smart.

“Yeah, by you,” I admitted. “That counting as your second question?”

“N-no!” he stuttered, realizing his mistake.

I chuckled and shook my head. “Too bad, I’m counting it.”

“Aw, come on!” he protested.

“Hey, it is a question. So you’d better make your third and final one count.”

Bendy puffed out his cheeks in an adorable manner and sat back. He thought for a few minutes before leaning forward again, his eyes down as he hesitatingly asked, “What did your parents do to you?”

I froze. Should I refuse? No, I couldn’t. I agreed to this, knowing full well what he may or may not ask. Besides, if I refused, he wouldn’t deign to answer any of my questions. I bit my lip hard, almost enough to draw blood.

“I’m sorry,” said Bendy, interrupting my thoughts and surprising me. I looked up to see him staring at his hands, fidgeting with the cuffs of his gloves. “I shouldn’t have asked that one. I can tell you don’t like it.”

I heaved a sigh. “It’s…fine,” I said. “We made an agreement. Neither of us specified what kind of questions we could ask the other. Besides, I’m sure whatever I’m going to ask will be hard for you to answer, too.”

“I suppose,” he admitted, still wearing a guilty expression.

“I already told you it’s fine,” I said more sternly. “Now, do you want to hear about my parents?”

He nodded firmly.

“Okay. My mom never wanted me. Never wanted to have kids. She and dad took all sorts of precautions: pills, condoms, the works. Two weeks later she started showing pregnancy symptoms. She ignored them at first, thinking it was just coincidence, not wanting to acknowledge the
possibility. So she went a few more weeks of living in blissful ignorance, but then she skipped her period. I’m assuming you know what that is, right? And the condoms and such?” I asked, unsure if he knew what those were considering he was a kid’s cartoon.

“Yeah, I’ve heard the workers at the studio talk about that sort of thing. It was confusin’, at first, but I think I got a good notion of what you mean.”

“Okay.” I nodded, then resumed my story. “When her monthly due didn’t come as expected, she panicked and got herself checked out at the doctor, not going to the store to buy a pregnancy test. Again, she was in denial. The lady doctor told her with a huge smile that she was pregnant. Mom was pissed. She went home and yelled at dad, saying how this was all his fault, that whatever he took must not have been strong enough, because she knew that hers worked just fine. She wanted an abortion, but dad somehow talked her out of it. Said something about the miracle of childbirth, I’m sure. Plus, I think her own dad—my grandfather—guilted her into keeping me.

“Anyway, nine months later I was born, and ever since my conception, I cannot recall a single moment in which my mom didn’t hate me. My dad loved me, but he was always at work at…I can’t remember where he worked, because I was so young, but his job kept him busy, so I hardly ever saw him. My mom would yell at and scold me. She would tell her friends about how she’d never wanted a child but she put up with me because the world was against her, apparently. A couple of times mom would hit me, and dad would stand up for me, or at least try to. But he was never a confrontational man, and mom won every argument. Well, except for the one about birthing me, which I still don’t know how he managed. Because of that, because he didn’t ever grow a spine, I hate him. He wasn’t a bad person, but he was a bad dad, and it didn’t matter that he loved me. He was never there, and she let her treat me the way she did. And for that I hate them both.

“Then, one day when I was six, I had just got home when I saw my mom and dad arguing in the living room. Apparently dad had quit his job. The work there was too demanding, he said. He’d found another job that didn’t make quite as much money, but it didn’t make bad bucks, and it would give him a little more time to spend at home. Not much, but a little. Mom all but spat on him, and she decided in that moment to leave us. She grabbed her stuff, walked out the door, and that’s the last I ever saw of her.”

Bendy let out a little noise of sympathy, but I ignored him. I refused to look at him. I stared at a blank space of the wall and continued to vent, suddenly realizing that I needed this—someone to talk to about the pain and suffering I’ve endured through life. It was…freeing, in a way.

“Dad tried to juggle between his work and home, but again, he was at work a lot. He ended up needing to take a second job, and so I hardly ever saw him. I know he was just trying to keep us off the streets, and maybe I’m whining or being selfish by saying this, but I wished he’d take some time off to spend with me. Even if it was only occasionally. At school my peers had heard about my mom and dad splitting up, and they laughed, saying it was my fault and how…how they didn’t want me. I ignored them, but deep down I listened to what they said. Even though I knew I shouldn’t.

“Eventually, when I was eighteen, I moved out. Dad and I said our awkward good-byes and I haven’t looked back since. I’d saved up enough money to buy myself a small apartment having
already started my job at Joey’s in eleventh—"

“Joey!” I glanced at him, startled by the anger in his tone. He was seething, his fangs bared.

“Yeah,” I said. “Joey, or Joe as we usually call him, is my boss at the restaurant I work at.”

The fangs disappeared, but the tension in his shoulders did not. “Right,” he muttered. “Sorry.”

I paused. Joey Drew Studios. It must have been named after the founder. Obviously Bendy didn’t like him, whoever he was. I knew what my first question was going to be.

“That’s basically it,” I finished, even though there was more to tell. But he only asked about my parents—nothing else. Besides, I was done reliving the past for the moment. “I’ve been here ever since. Nothing has changed in over a year.”

Bendy stared at me for a long time—much longer than was comfortable for me. It was all I could do not to squirm under his close scrutiny. Finally he said, “I know how you feel, sort of. People have never been too nice to me either. Well, ‘cept for in the cartoons, but those weren’t real. They were fake. An illusion of living.”

“What does that mean?”

He smirked a little. “Is that your first question?”

_Dammit!_ I blushed, and he laughed. “Yes, that’s my first question. Just answer it, please!”

“All right, toots. It’s pretty simple to explain. Ya see, the cartoons are just that—simulations of movement and life on paper. The characters in them aren’t the same as the ones of reality. That Bendy isn’t the same as me—I’m not shy or timid, though I do dabble in my own mischief from time to time. Still, I’m just a replica, molded from ink. And the others aren’t like their cartoon counterparts, either. Similar, but still different.”

I wanted to ask about the others, but I wanted to ask what my original first question was going to be. “Okay. Who’s Joey Drew, then?”

His grin grew strained, but he still answered. “He’s the founder of the animation studio. He made all the cartoon characters, then brought them—us—to life through the Ink Machine. It involved a whole lot of satanic rituals and voo-doo and what-not, I’m not entirely sure how he did it. The point is that he did do it, and he’s a real greaseball.”

“A what?”
“It’s ol’ thirties slang, means no one liked him.”

“Why not?” I asked.

“Are you sure that’s your third and final question?” he said, leaning forward.

I hesitated. No, I had so many more, like about the other cartoons, and about the satanic rituals—though he didn’t seem to know the full answer to that, and I wasn’t sure I wanted to know the specifics. There was also how and why he appeared in the middle of the street, and what that flash of brilliant light had been, and his other, larger form…

Perhaps he would be willing to answer more at a later date. Of course, he’d probably ask for more answers in exchange, but I wasn’t going to give him anything else. For now, I would have to be satisfied with the answers he’d give me.

“Yes,” I told him, meeting his eyes. “Why did no one, including you, like Joey Drew?”

Bendy opened his mouth, but was interrupted by three sharp raps on the door. Both of us jumped. “Hide,” I mouthed to him, and he did, darting into the same corner as when the pizzaman had arrived earlier that week.

I got up, smoothed my hair and tried to look neutral as I opened the door. I gritted my teeth to keep my jaw from dropping at the sight of two detectives standing just outside.

“Miss (Y/N) (L/N)?” one of them asked.

“Y-Yes?” I cleared my throat to prevent myself from stuttering further as I continued, “Is there something I can help you with?”

“There may be. We’re here to ask you a few questions regarding the…anomaly that appeared on the street a few blocks from here one week ago. We’ve been asking around the past few days, as it’s likely that anyone in this area could have spotted something unusual that could help us in our case.”

Shit. Why hadn’t I thought of this? “Well, I haven’t seen anything unusual…” I started, but the man on the left interrupted.

“May we step inside? It will be more comfortable to discuss this sitting down, I’m sure.”

They shoved past me before I could protest or even try to resist. I turned and saw them freeze, staring at the corner Bendy was standing in. Both of them were slack-jawed, their faces pale with shock.

One of them was itching towards the gun on his hip.
I don’t know what compelled me to step forward to yell “Stop!” Maybe I had grown too attached to the little demon over the past week. But there was no taking it back.

“You’ve been housing this…thing?” one of the detectives spat out.

“She’s not with me,” Bendy began, and the other one interrupted with, “It talks?”

“He talks,” I said, suddenly hot with anger. “He, not it. And he’s harmless. Let’s just put away the guns and talk this out calmly.”

“Like hell I am!” The one with the twitchy finger grabbed his gun and in one swift, fast moment, pointed it towards Bendy.

“You’re gonna make this hard on all of us, aren’t ya?” said Bendy, already raising his hands—not in surrender, but in an attack stance.

“Shut up, demon,” he said, and undid the safety.

Bendy pushed his hands forward, and two blobs of ink jetted out, almost too fast to perceive. All I saw were two blurs of black shooting across the room to collide with the detectives’ chests. They were slammed into the wall, and slumped down unconscious. The ink blobs returned to Bendy, and he absorbed them into his chest.

I stared until he said, “Come on, we’ve gotta go!”

His words snapped me back. “G-go? Go where?”

“I don’t know, but here’s not safe. They’re gonna wake up soon and call their buddies, so we’ve gotta get goin’ so we’ve got a start on them!”

“O-okay. Just…hang on!” I rushed into my room, grabbed my knife and my hoodie, and a backpack. I stuffed some non-perishables inside, some cash, and told Bendy to hop in with what little room was remaining. He didn’t object, just stepped in and crammed himself inside. “Hang on,” I told him before zipping it shut, and threw on my hood. I grabbed my phone, then put it back; they’d be able to trace me with that.

I dashed out the door and broke into a run, down the stairs and out the front lobby, into the streets and broad daylight. As I slowed to a walk, to not stick out like a sore thumb, and kept an eye on every person surrounding us, I realized that life was never going to be the same. None of this was as simple as I once thought it was going to be. Should’ve expected that from harboring an ink demon. But now wasn’t the time to point fingers, or hold grudges. Now the whole world would label me as a
criminal, and the longer we stood in the middle of the sidewalk, in plain view of everyone, the quicker it would be until we were found.

I had to find a place for us to hide.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry! This chapter took longer than I wanted to finish, but I wanted it to be exactly right. And as you saw, this is the chapter that sets things rolling. Some character is established, but now the real story is going to begin. And with action comes cliffhangers, which are much more fun to leave on this side. :) Hope you guys enjoyed, as always, and see you on the next chapter!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!