Moving from a backwater town to a city bustling with human and monsterfolk alike, some things begin to change both for the better and the worse. What was left behind comes back to bite at you in the most unexpected times, current progress being put in danger as a result. It's hard to move on, though it's equally difficult trying to stay loyal to what you believe is right.

With an adoptive seven-year-old son and the remnants of a recent divorce in your hands, your goal is to move on and adjust to life with monsters, these becoming an important part of your life -- one of them in particular reigniting the spark you thought gone with your ex-spouse.

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Save Point

by JuniperJoy101
The following story is a re-write of the first UT fanfic I ever managed to publish on the Internet.

Undertale belongs to Toby Fox.

You belong to yourself.

Notes

Key for reading this fanfic:

(Y/N) = Your name
(L/N) = Last name
(S/N) = Son's name
(s/t) = skin tone
(h/c) = hair colour
(e/c) = eye colour
The medley of sounds from the busy city were drowned out by you turning up the volume of your car’s radio. You adjusted your rear-view mirror to see your child (S/N) sitting peacefully on the backseat, too distracted by the breakfast he was eating to notice you were staring at him. He seemed excited by the lively expression he carried on his face and the way he scarf’d down his food without so much as taking a break to drink from his unopened juice pouch.

It took you fifteen more minutes of driving to arrive at your destination. Your child had already finished his breakfast long ago, and he was currently halfway done with colouring a page of his book.

“Excited for your first day?” you asked, smiling at him after opening his side of the doors.

He nodded in response, a bright grin showing on his round face. “Yeah! I can’t wait to see what it’s like.”

You smiled back at him and waited for him to pick up his backpack. He reached out for your hand after making sure he had everything with him, following you to the entrance of the new school established by a former queen of whose name you were told was ‘Toriel’. Though you were aware you had no reason to be nervous – seeing as you weren’t the one who would be starting over in a new place – you couldn’t brush off the feeling of anticipation when beginning to spot monsters left and right. Having lived most of your life at a quiet, peaceful town with a population of no more than a hundred people, you weren’t used to seeing so many of them in one place.

(S/N), however, didn’t seem to be having trouble with that aspect, already breaking free from your hold to run off with a pair of bunny children and one goat child. The group of four engaged in a quick game of tag while you were left to wait for the gates to open. You looked around you during your wait, being particularly entranced by a tall fish woman holding a child up in her muscular arms. The latter noticed your staring and waved at you, an act which you returned to avoid upsetting them or making them think you ignored them.

The more you looked around, the more monsters your eyes seemed to come across with. They varied from humanoid fires to multi-limbed spider people, your trouble with adjusting to the diversity of monsterfolk only intensifying with that observation.

You snapped out of it when hearing the gates open, the vast sea of people that began to walk into the premises making it hard for you to track down where your son had ran off to. Your eyes jumped from one person to another, finally stopping to see him conversing with a goat monster
clipping the hedges set close to the gates. The pair were occupied talking with each other, content looks showing on their faces.

“Come on, (S/N),” you called out, tilting your head downwards in a form of salute at the gentleman left in charge of trimming the plants. “You can’t be late on your first day!”

He said his goodbyes to the goat monster and took your hand again, excitement clear by the way he pulled you whenever you were walking too slow. You still couldn’t shake off your awe at how different things were at the city, and your curiosity only grew when spotting a skeleton sweeping the hallways with a broom. You slowed your walking pace in spite of your son’s speed and pent up energy, catching a glimpse of the name tag on the skeleton’s shirt. It read ‘tutor & janitor’ on it, another observation that only made things more confusing to you and exiting all the same.

It was most likely going to take a while for you to get used to this new lifestyle, though you were just as determined to go explore it.

Your alarm going off made you jolt from your daydreaming, the sound in surprise that came out your mouth making the skeleton – Sans, from what you could read above his job titles – look up at you with an arched eye socket. You looked away from him in a haste and settled on checking your phone instead, holding back your frustration after reading you only had half an hour left before you arrived late to work. The harsh reality of balancing work with having to drop off your kid at school fell on you right at that moment, and you muttered a curse to yourself before hurrying the rest of the way to his classroom.

Breathless and near having your legs collapse, you arrived at the entrance door of your son’s first class. You didn’t leave until you made sure he settled in well with the students and his teacher, waving goodbye before stepping out of the classroom.

You avoided parents and staff on your way back, engaging in a battle against time to prevent a tardy mark on your first day at the new job. From the looks of it, adjusting yourself to this brand new lifestyle was going to be harder than you thought.

You still had the determination to power through it though, and you weren’t planning on letting frustration get the best of you just yet.
Slippery Halls

Your son was failing Math.

You frowned at the graded paper in your hold, a fifteen out of fifty marked with a red pen on the top corner of the test. (S/N) shrunk further into a corner of the room, waiting for you to scold him at any moment.

“We have tutoring services available if you cannot afford outside help,” Toriel spoke, a gentle smile showing on her face. She pushed her glasses back and shuffled some papers and documents, the pristine look of her work desk being the only thing to stand out more than her. “The enrollment fee covers those services as long as your son attends a lesson at least once a week. Would you like me to register him? You can talk with the tutor to make an agreement with him on a schedule that best suits you and your child.”

“That would be great,” you replied, taking the card she offered out to you. "Thank you.”

A phone number along with the name ‘Sans’ was scribbled over the card, the goat lady’s polished handwriting making the service seem more professional than it was supposed to be. You stuffed the card with the others inside your wallet and thanked her one last time before standing up from the chair to take your leave. Your son followed closely behind, still afraid to speak after the grade he received.

You stepped out of the principal's office and made your way down the hallway, searching for the skeleton you often saw cleaning the floors and scolding students whenever they ran around the halls. The time marked four o'clock already, and with the more you walked around without spotting him, the more you believed he'd already ended his shift for the day. You were about to give up on your search and resort to calling his number, the school's exit already visible to you from a short distance away.

What made a change in plans was the slippery floor underneath you, the feeling of losing balance making you close your eyes shut. You stumbled on your feet, preventing the fall by holding onto the nearest support you could find.

“You okay there, buddy?” a low voice asked.

You opened your eyes after making sure you weren't going to fall. Your eyes caught the image of
the same skeleton you were searching for ever since leaving the principal's office, and your hands were holding onto the mop in his hold for dear life.

“Oh, uh... Sorry,” you muttered, letting go of his mop. You rubbed the back of your neck, an apologetic look crossing your face. “There weren't any warning signs around that I could see.”

“It was my bad,” he assured you, chuckling. “I forgot to do that before I started moppin' the halls.”

You looked behind you to see (S/N) staring at you, relief showing on his face after seeing you found a way to prevent the fall. He shied away from you and the skeleton after catching onto what topic was going to be spoken next. Not wanting to hear the subject of how he was failing math again, he sat down on one of the benches nearby and waited for you to talk with the tutor standing next to you.

“Before you leave, sir,” you called out, noticing he was about to go back to mopping the halls. “I'm here to ask about your tutoring services.”

“Uh, sure,” he replied, looking up at you. “I don't normally teach adults, but I can try.”

“Quite the comedian, are you?” you commented, raising an eyebrow and letting a cocky smile take over the firm, professional look you tried to maintain when first talking with him.

“Considerin' the font I was named after,” he remarked, the smile that never seemed to wipe off his face tugging slightly upwards. “But enough of that. Whaddya need help with? I can tutor your kid on science and math.”

“It's math,” you explained, lowering your voice as if to respect the privacy of your son's grades. “He... got a fifteen out of fifty mark on his first test, and well... I can't exactly look for an outside tutor with our current income.”

“Leave it to me, then.” Sans leaned the mop against the wall. He rummaged around his front pockets, retrieving a notepad and a pen from their contents. “What time's best for ya?”

“Could it be on Fridays around six p.m.?”
“Sure,” the skeleton replied, nodding. He jot down the information on his notepad, looking back up at you afterwards. “Here, or at your home?”

Curiosity sparked in you when being asked that question, surprised to have these services accommodate as well as they were with your work schedule. The money spent on the enrollment felt like a steal with how many benefits this gave you and your child. Then again, the school's primary purpose was to work as a non-profit organization for the benefit of monsters and humans coexisting together, so you figured it was one of the few perks that came with it.

“Would it be alright with you if it were at home?” you questioned, not wanting to make him feel obligated to answering positively to that question.

“I've got no problem with that – It's my job either way. Just write down the address, and I'll be there this Friday at six.”

Nodding, you took the notepad and pen from his hold, scribbling down the address. You made sure it was easy to understand, even going as far as to sketch a simplified map and add silly details to the directions of your home.

“Thank you so much, sir,” you spoke up again, offering your brightest smile at him. “I guess I’ll see you in a few days, then.”

“Just call me Sans,” he suggested, a snicker leaving his teeth. “The ‘sir’ makes me feel too old and accomplished.”

You muffled a laugh at his comment, saying your goodbyes and signaling for your child to follow you out of the school. He directed a reserved wave at the skeleton when passing by him, still shocked by the grade he received to greet his new tutor properly.

You breathed in when stepping outside, grateful the new school offered as many benefits as it did. Now, your next mission was to organize the mess of your home before Friday marked itself on your calendar.
You smiled at the sight of the two getting along right away. Not half an hour had passed since Sans arrived at the door of your home, yet your son was already involved in deep conversation with him, discussing division step by step. You left the two to continue with the lesson while you went off to the kitchen in search for some refreshments.

Your eyes scanned the cabinets for any snacks you could give them. You settled for potato chips and fruit juice for the time being, taking out two plastic cups for the drinks and a bowl for the snack.

“(Mom/Dad) used to teach me all this stuff before they got a divorce!”

The bowl almost ended up on the floor when overhearing that conversation. A few chips ended up scattered around, though you were able to save most of them. Wanting to comprehend what they were talking about, you inched a little closer to the door keeping you from seeing them at the living room and pressed your ear against it.

“What about your other parent?” the skeleton asked, an awkward tone present in the way he asked that question.

“They’re out of the country, so they can’t really help me much with school, but... But they always call in the weekends. And they visit us on holidays, too!”

You couldn’t bring yourself to step out of the kitchen just yet, not wanting to interrupt the conversation they were having. You gave it some thought and settled on waiting a little longer, overhearing more of their conversation that consisted mostly of your relationship with your ex (wife/husband), a topic you never imagined your son would be discussing with his math tutor. The embarrassment was enough for one day, so you tried to avoid being the center of attention by waiting for a change in the pair’s topic of conversation.

“How do you divide by this many numbers?”

A soft sigh in relief left your mouth when hearing your child change the subject. After a few more seconds of wait, you pushed open the door, placing the bowl of chips and the two glasses of juice on the coffee table located close to the work desk (S/N) sat on. Sans was standing next to him, pointing out what he should do next.
“Would you like me to take out a chair for you?” you asked, unable to see a guest standing without remembering the hospitality rules your mother taught you since you were young.

“I’m fine,” he replied, looking over his shoulder to catch a glimpse of you standing by. “But thanks. You look like the one who should be gettin’ some sleep.”

“What gave it away?” you questioned, an amused smile showing on your lips.

“Other than the bags under your eyes, the way you're leaning against the wall right now kinda gives it away,” he spoke, returning your smile by chuckling to himself after his comment. “I should know, since I do that a lot after making my rounds around the school.”

You rubbed the back of your head, a yawn forcing its way out of your mouth.

“Well, I... I'll go wash up while you guys keep on doing that. Let me know if you need anything.”

After making sure it was okay for you to leave the two alone, you went off to the bathroom, a sense of relief remaining among the rest of your thoughts now that you had a helping hand around the house. You took this moment to relax, taking five more minutes than usual in the shower to appreciate the free time you had now that tutoring was out of your way.

You placed (S/N) down on the bed and turned off the lights, a few cushions placed next to him to avoid a possible fall. You made your way out of his room, shutting the door as silently as you could and walking back to the living room to see the tutor off.

“Thanks again for helping us,” you spoke up, directing your words at Sans as a small smile showed itself over your (s/t) complexion. “It's honestly a huge load off my shoulders.”

“I'm just doing my job,” the skeleton objected. He stood up from his seat on the couch,
approaching the exit of your home. “I should be thanking you for the food.”

“It was only chips and juice,” you remarked, letting out a small laugh. “It really wasn't much to
give thanks for.”

His smile seemed to lighten up at your comment, the white pinpricks of his eye sockets glinting as a result. The hand he'd placed over the doorknob retreated back to him and he extended it out to you.

“The name's Sans, by the way. Part-time janitor and tutor at your service,” he added, looking up at you. “I don't think we've introduced ourselves properly yet.”

“(Y/N),” you replied, taking his hand in yours. “It’s nice to–”

A loud 'pop' followed by his hand detaching from his arm made your words come to an abrupt halt. You stared down at the detached hand you were holding onto, shock making your mouth fall open.

“Holy crap, I– I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to–”

You stopped again in your words when hearing him break into hearty laughter, his shoulders shaking and an amused glint crossing the light of his eye sockets. Scared out of your mind, you froze in place, unable to snap out of it despite his laughter.

“I gotta hand it to ya,” he spoke up, a final chuckle erupting from his ribcage. “The face you made just now was priceless.”

“I thought I hurt you for a moment there!” you exclaimed, finally snapping back to consciousness. “I...”

You breathed out a heavy sigh, relieved to know you hadn't completely screwed up after formally getting to know the tutor's name. A sense of terror still remained on your shoulders, weighing you down as you stared down at the hand still in your hold. You looked at it for a few seconds, an idea crossing your mind.
“Need a hand?”

“Literally.”

Grinning, you gave him his hand and waited until he adjusted it back on his wrist before saying something else.

“I was gonna get some coffee to wake up and get stuff done around the house, but I don't think I need that anymore with what just happened.”

“Glad to be of service,” he commented, winking at you. “See you next Friday?”

“See you next Friday,” you replied, smile growing wider as you watched him make his way out of your home.
Stagnant Thoughts

Third Person POV

Sans’s Perspective

Papyrus brought his gaze away from the stew simmering in the pot, the sound of the living room door closing alerting him of someone entering his home. Sans had arrived, looking more relaxed than on previous occasions and still tweaking his wrist to fix the consequences of the joke he pulled on (Y/N).

“You look a little chipper, brother!” the taller skeleton commented, a bright smile made apparent on his skull. “Did something good happen on the way here?”

“Nothin’ big,” the short one replied, shrugging. He took off his shoes and placed them aside, making his way to the couch. “Just got done with my first tutoring lesson, and the people there were kinda nice and stuff.”

“You've made new friends, then? What are they like?”

He sat down, looking towards his brother and peering through the island that kept the living room separate from the kitchen. “There's this seven year old that's pretty into my math puns, and then there's his (mother/father), who made this really amazing, one-of-a-kind face when I pulled a prank on them.”

“I figured that would be your only way of making friends! Nonetheless, I am glad you are getting along well with them,” Papyrus commented, taking a break from the conversation to mix the contents of the pot. “You haven't made any new friends since we left the Underground!”

“Eh,” Sans droned, rubbing the back of his spine. “It's been hard to, but . . . I can't say I didn't enjoy today. The human (mom/dad) even gave us snacks while I was tutorin’ their kid, so I guess it's pretty different from the ones that don't want anything to do with us.”

“You are letting a few incidents get to your head, brother! While I am aware not all humans are as kind as Frisk. . . That does not mean it should take you this long to acquaint yourself with them. It's been a year since you last made any new friends!”
“I really don’t wanna talk about that now, Paps.” Sans let out a sigh, slumping himself on the couch. He placed a hand over his forehead while the other reached for the TV remote. “I’m tired.”

“It’s been a year, Sans,” Papyrus persisted, turning off the stove. He then turned back towards his brother and narrowed his gaze at him. “Please do not treat these humans too distantly. Frisk is not the only kind human out there!”

“I know that.” Another sigh left his teeth, his hand rubbing away the headache slowly creeping on his forehead. “I just need more time.”

After eating a slightly more edible dinner than usual, Sans stayed around for another half hour to watch the news and chat with his brother, and took another to wash up to be ready for the next day. The clocked marked eight thirty five when he entered his room, exhaustion taking over his body in waves.

He sat down on the edge of the twin bed and reached for the phone he’d placed on his nightstand, the notification for three new, unread messages showing on the screen.

Thank you for today, Sans!

Having you teach (S/N) today has been the best thing that’s happened in a while.

I hope you have a good rest. :-)

Sans reread the messages over and over, the little smiley face at the end making his thoughts a mess. He still couldn't bring himself to believe he'd given them his phone number and that – even after leaving their home – (Y/N) still had him in their mind long enough to thank him again for something that was supposed to be his job. It was clear by the way they apologized after the hand situation and from what was happening right now that this was their nature.

no problem. the kid's pretty eager to learn.

and same to you, pal.
I still haven't gotten over the hand situation.

Seriously, I'm sorry if I hurt you or anything.

it's fine.

didn't mean to get you that worked up.

I guess you could say your hand slipped on that one?

He couldn't help the small laugh that burst through the quiet of his room when reading (Y/N)'s latest message. Though the delivery was weak and the joke could use some work, he had to give them props for trying – especially through means of text messaging. Unable to leave them without a reply, he typed in one last response before placing the phone back on the nightstand next to his bed.

good one.

He drowned himself in the sea of bedsheets after that, unable to grasp how quickly another human had entered his life, and how well they seemed to be adjusting to the fact that he wasn't human himself. Shaking away those thoughts, he stared at the hand he twisted loose to pull the prank on (Y/N), replaying the events one last time before grabbing the phone again.

Unable to sleep with the changes going on in his life, he scrolled through Undernet for well over an hour, aimlessly going through the posts and updates made by people he followed. It wasn't until he noticed it was already ten that he stopped scrolling. Though it was the weekend tomorrow, he couldn't risk losing any more sleep if it meant he would regret it the morning after.

Giving in, he placed the phone aside and plugged it to the charger cable, finally managing to catch some sleep after another half hour of tossing and turning around in bed. Although he knew he was thinking too much over the subject, he couldn't shake off Papyrus's words while he prepared dinner for the both of them.

The fact that a whole year went by since monsters left the Underground was still an overwhelming thought to him. Times were changing, yet he still felt the same. As he opened his eye sockets again to stare at the ceiling, he began to realize just how much everyone else was changing and how he still remained the same old skeleton only known for his jokes and laid back character.
How he got all that out of a tense, yet brief conversation with his brother was a mystery to him. Even so, he couldn't deny the truth behind the observation he just made, and he wanted to do something about it.

He just didn't know what yet.
“You really don't have to pay for it,” he intervened, looking at you.

“It's fine,” you insisted, smiling at him. “It's the least I can do after a whole month of you tutoring my son. His math grades went from D's to B's!”

Sighing, the skeleton gave in to your words, grateful Papyrus wasn't around to talk his non-existent ears off about how it was only fair to split the bill with you. Pleased you were able to convince him, you handed the cashier the payment for both your orders while she gave you your change back. You waited for your food to be handed to you by standing next to Sans, mentally summing up how long it would take until your ex finished taking your son out to the movies.

Your ex took him from you around six thirty – thirty minutes into the usual tutoring lesson – and now that it was currently seven fifteen, there were only fifteen minutes left until the movie began. You figured they would be back home by ten, allowing you more than enough time to have a meal with Sans, run some final errands, and head back home without any complications.

“Sorry again for the unexpected changes,” you spoke up, facing down slightly to meet with his eye sockets. “I didn't think my ex would be returning to see (S/N) during his school year.”

“That's fine and all, but how're ya feeling?” he asked, arching an eye socket. “You didn't look too good when they showed up at your door.”

Embarrassment rose over the back of your neck and ears at that question. You shrugged that feeling off, wanting to keep your conversation going with him.

“To be honest, I . . . I still miss them,” you replied, passing a hand through your (h/c) locks. “Even though we're not together anymore, they weren't a bad (wife/husband). We just had to take different paths a year after the adoption, and that involved our . . . separation.”

You looked down, still finding yourself unable to say the word 'divorce'. You loved them deeply – enough to adopt a then five year old (S/N) back then. Oddly enough, their attitude changed right after the adoption, and even to this day, you were unsure as to what were the reasons for those changes.
“It's been a year, but the memories are still vivid.” Catching onto how emotional you were getting, you took in some air, closing your eyes and letting it out slowly. “But... What about you? Any special someone you have in mind?”

Your words came off light, wanting to let him know you were joking and that he wasn't obligated to give a serious answer. To your surprise, however, he stuffed his hands in his pockets, letting out a pensive sigh.

“Never really thought about that,” he admitted, honesty clear in his tone. “It's not really that different how monsters fall for someone, but we do have our differences. Since we can live longer than humans so long as our souls stay healthy, we don't need to rush into that kinda stuff.”

“If you don't mind me asking... How old are you, then?”

You thanked another employee for handing you a tray with both your and Sans's orders on it. He helped you by holding onto the coffee cups, walking with you to the nearest, empty table you could find.

“I'm in my mid twenties,” he replied, placing the cups down on the table. “Twenty-six, if we're gonna be exact.” He gave you a subtle once over after saying that, the sudden attention thrown at you catching you off guard. “You?”

“Twenty-three,” you replied, setting the tray down next to the cups. “I... got married at twenty, and then divorced at twenty-two.”

You braced yourself for his next question, expecting him to ask the same one almost everyone asked when you told them of your age.

“I rushed into it and pretty much received an 'I told you so' from almost everyone I knew back then,” you added, being quick to avoid having that interrogative brought up. “I don't regret it, but... I'm still trying to figure out what went wrong.”

You stopped on your words, realizing you ended up rambling about your life again.

“Enough about me, though. How're things on your side?”
The skeleton took a few sips of his coffee, gulping the hot liquid down before taking a napkin to his teeth. He wiped his face before speaking up, placing the coffee aside.

“For starters, I have a pretty cool bro that's a huge help around the house,” Sans spoke, adjusting himself to the unanticipated attention brought upon him. “He works outside and all, but he still manages to have food ready by the time I get home. The guy's the definition of a hard worker.”

“I can understand why,” you commented, smiling at his words. “It can be pretty difficult to deal with too many things at once.”

“The food he makes is kinda... still in the works, but I can't complain. If it were me, I'd just eat out every day.”

Before you knew it, you ended up talking with him until your coffee grew cold. The only things that managed to save themselves were the cold sandwiches you both ordered. The two of you broke into laughter when coming across the fact that you both forgot about the food, even while speaking about his brother's cooking.

You both ate in comfortable silence as you munched on your sandwiches, savouring the flavour and letting the food warm your taste buds. A soft breath escape your lips when taking a third bite of your meal, your eyes closed and body releasing the stress from a hard day of work, picking up your son, and having your ex show up at your house a few minutes into the usual Friday tutoring lessons.

“Woah.”

You were shaken out of those thoughts by the sound of Sans's voice, looking forward to see him staring at you with an amused expression painted as clear as day on his skull.

“Never seen someone enjoy food that much.”

Caught in your daydreaming, you glanced down at the half-eaten sandwich in hand, a sheepish look crossing your face.
"I don't think I remember the last time I ate this type of food. It's either home-cooked or Burger Queen for us most of the time."

He chuckled at your explanation, the sound airy and honest to your hearing. His irises flickered over to you, the ever-present smile on his face appearing freer to your eyes.

For a brief moment – as you reached for your cup of cold coffee and he reached for his – your hand brushed with his own, the small slip up only making the situation more awkward for you to digest.

“Sorry about that.”

Expecting him to say something in response to your apology, you were surprised to have him remain in silence. He seemed out of it for a split second, though he soon returned to the present, a hint of tension present in the way he looked at you.

“Do you, uh... want me to go get some new ones?” he questioned, his voice coming out as strained as the time your son brought up your divorce on his first day of tutoring. “I dunno about you, but cold coffee ain't my thing.”

“Sure,” you answered, your own voice faltering in that sole word. “Thank you, Sans.”
A week went by since the day your ex arrived to pick up (S/N) for the movies. They spent the entire weekend with him and were planning to stay a whole month at the inn located a few blocks away from your home. Now, you were back to the same routine of taking him to school, with the exception that you were at Toriel’s office again. Your son had – somehow – managed to pick a fight with a girl at his class, and he was now back to his quiet self from the time he obtained his first ‘F’ in Math.

He shied away again at a corner of the small office, waiting for you to finish speaking with Toriel, not daring to say anything in his defense. He only watched as you signed a paper claiming you were informed about the incident, and that you agreed on him receiving an hour of detention for his acts.

"That would be all then, (miss/mister) (Y/N)," Toriel spoke, her voice calming you down. "I hope all goes well."

"Thank you," you replied, smiling at her.

You first stood up from your seat and later excused yourself from her, extending a hand out towards (S/N) for him to take it and follow you out of the office. He complied without uttering a single word of protest, his eyes facing the floor the entire time.

Carefully, he loosened his hand from yours as soon as he stepped out, still quiet and still too frightened by what happened to keep up with your pace. You allowed him to follow behind you, knowing he wouldn't budge right now into telling you how he felt.

Your steps were haste as you made your way through the extensive hallway, (S/N) walking behind you with a pace slower than a snail’s. Clouded by your own thoughts, you didn’t stop walking blindly ahead until you heard your name being called out from behind you. You turned to see who it was, eyes facing the tutor-slash-janitor standing in front of you, a trace of concern showing in the way he looked at you, then back at your son.

“Everything okay back there?” he asked, directing his words more at the child rather than yourself.

The child remained quiet, looking down at his feet and avoiding the skeleton’s gaze. His hands balled into fists, and – before you could so much as blink – tears went running down his cheeks.

“I didn’t do anything. . .” he muttered, a hiccup interrupting his words. “I. . . I just wanted to. . . to–”

His hiccup turned into a series of sobs, his crying messy yet quiet as he rubbed his eyes free from tears. Stunned, you took a cautious step forward, attempting to reach a hand out towards him, only to have his silent cries explode into loud, uncontrollable sobs.

“Kid,” Sans muttered, caught aback by the child’s outburst. “Calm down and tell me what’s wrong. You’re acting real different from the kid I’m used to tutoring math to.”

He crouched down to bring comfort to (S/N), carefully holding out a gloved hand for him to take.
“What happened to the kid who’s always trying even after making mistakes in division?”

The child took his hand, a noise similar to a balloon releasing air making him flinch and take a step back. His surprise shook his tears away and dissolved into giggles when having the skeleton show him the whoopee cushion hidden underneath the work gloves he wore.

“Feelin’ better now?”

Nodding vigorously, he smiled at the skeleton before him and pulled him into a hug. The action seemed to take Sans by surprise with how long it took him to return it, though once he did, you could see happiness on his expression. After the two let go, he stood up from his crouching position and looked down at your son.

“I . . .” he trailed off on his words, hesitating. “I was sad because I got sent to miss Toriel’s office.”

Though neither of you were expecting to have (S/N) mention the cause of his troubles – a fact proven by the way you both looked at one another – you kept silent, waiting to hear him out.

“Someone was making fun of my bunny friend for her front teeth, so I . . . I told the girl to stop it. But then she pushed me, and then I pushed her back and–”

He stopped his venting when hearing his name called out from the same hallway you’d just walked through. The three of you looked to see a pink bunny child standing close to the principal’s office, gaze traveling further to see Toriel and a taller, equally pink bunny woman conversing with her. The two started to run towards each other until Sans warned them about running inside the school premises, obligating them to slow their steps. You watched the two talk the second they arrived next to each other, a small smile freeing you from the previous tension of being called out to see your son at Toriel’s office.

“Wanna join me?”

You turned away from the scene to come across Sans sitting on the plastic bench nearby, his welcoming tone making your smile widen. You sat down next to him, keeping some distance between you to avoid brushing with him like the time you invited him for some coffee and sandwiches.

“Thanks for the help back there,” you mumbled, an awkward laugh breaking free from your lips. “He usually tells this stuff to his other parent, so he . . . doesn’t really tell me when something’s wrong. I didn’t want to bring it up until we got home, but this is way better than the tactic I had in mind.”

“He won’t tell you about stuff like this?” he asked, his eye sockets furrowing slightly.

“Not unless I convince him to tell me, or if I’m told about it by people like miss Toriel just now,” you replied, letting out a soft breath. “I didn’t know another child was involved in it. By the time I got here, I was told he just pushed a girl out of nowhere.” You looked back towards where the children stood, facing Sans with a brighter smile afterwards. “I don’t know how you did it, but . . . This is the first time I’ve seen him open up this much to someone else.”

“I used to take care of my brother Paps when he was younger,” he noted, his smile loosening at that thought. “Guess I still got it.”
Caught in the moment, the skeleton inadvertently hooked his arm behind your side of the bench, the proximity of that action making him tense in place, his leg brushing against yours. At a loss for words, you looked away from him, the sudden leap in your emotions reminding you of the time you first met your ex (wife/husband). He scooted away from you after growing aware of how little space there was left between you, an awkward cough breaking the silence that fell after hanging his arm behind your seat.

You looked elsewhere, desperate to find a topic of conversation that would distract you both from that incident. Your wishes were granted by the sight of your son playing red light, green light with the bunny child, their joy and laughter making you smile.

“I kind of wish I could get used to change as quickly as (S/N) does,” you spoke, your words finally getting Sans to face you again. “I still can’t get over the fact that we lived in a small town just a few months ago.”

“Everyone deals with things differently,” he commented, his words still cautious after what happened. “For a kid like him, it might be a little easier, so don’t compare yourself too much with him.”

His word of advice was enough to keep your conversation going with him, the earlier experience vanishing – if only momentarily – as you both carried on with different topics. You talked with him until the children were done playing and the bunny parent was done speaking with Toriel. Then, you excused yourself from him, wanting to have a word with Toriel and the other woman before leaving back home.
(S/N) will be named 'Faust' from here on. This is based on the poll results found on my Quotev account!

Third Person POV

Sans's Perspective

Sans tossed and turned in bed again, still finding himself unable to grasp how he ended up feeling that comfortable around Faust's parent. His mind still remembered how it all happened and felt, how their skin felt softer to the touch and how their eyes grew when having his skull lean closer to their face. It was hard for him to forget the face (Y/N) made – quite like the time he pulled a prank on them, but with an entirely different context.

In need of counseling, he stood up from the bed, not caring it was already eleven o'clock or that it was still a Thursday. The mere thought that he had to see their face tomorrow again only made him rush on leaving the house. He picked up his well-worn jacket and wore it on the way out, being careful when closing the door to avoid waking Papyrus from his slumber.

The contrast in temperatures made him feel as if he entered another world in itself, the cool breeze of the city changed for a warm and cozy bar carrying the distinctive scent of fried food and alcoholic beverages. As usual, the bartender left a stool specifically for him, one that kept him at the privacy of only a few people instead of the ruckus the tables for four made. He sat down and ordered a plate of fries. Then, he chatted up with the couple sitting next to him while he waited for the bartender to return.

The recently repaired jukebox shifted from jazz to blues while the minutes went by, his order arriving after a few minutes of wait. He stopped his conversation with the couple to focus on the fiery bartender walking towards him, finding himself at the urge to have someone of trust to talk about his recent troubles to.
"..." ("Did something happen? It's almost midnight.")

Grillby handed him a generous plate of fries and a bottle of ketchup aside. He directed a question only the couple sitting close by or Sans himself could manage to understand, the almost inaudible language Grillby used to communicate being rare for people to comprehend.

Noticing the humanoid flame was waiting for a response, Sans took a small bunch of fries before beginning the conversation. As he did so, he remembered just how shocked the human parent had been when they detached his hand from his wrist. He wondered what questions they could possibly have in regards to how a skeleton monster's digestive system worked. He was certain (Y/N) wouldn't believe him for a split second if he told them his monster magic could disintegrate what he consumed.

"Earth to skeleton?"

Sans was brought out of those thoughts by the duck monster calling out for him. He looked towards him and then back at Grillby, realizing he'd forgotten to answer his question with how far he dived into those thoughts. Clearing his non-existent throat, he shifted on his seat before speaking up.

"Something happened at work today, and I can't get it outta my head," he explained, a chuckle leaving his teeth. "It's really stupid, but I... got a little too close for comfort with the (mom/dad) of the kid I'm supposed to be teaching."

"..." ("And why is that a bad thing?")

“I just don't feel too good about gettin’ that close to someone who barely divorced a year ago. I'm supposed to be a tutor for their kid, not their friend. A tutor doesn't go out for coffee with the kid's (mom/dad), and a tutor's not supposed to butt in when the kid gets detention. I'm only supposed to teach the kid and leave, but I'm always pulled in somehow.”

“...” ("That doesn't sound too strange. Is it because they're human?")

“It's not about them being human, Grillbs. It's more that it feels like I'm crossin’ a line I'm not supposed to.”
“...” (“You shouldn't think that way. I think it would be good for you to make friends with them – whether you're a tutor or not.”)

Sighing, the skeleton rubbed a hand against his forehead, trying to seek some calm.

“Welp. . . Thanks for the talk, pal,” he spoke, gazing down at his almost untouched plate of fries. “I don't know where I'd be if I didn't have an awesome bartender like you around. Hell, maybe tomorrow won't be as awkward as I'm expecting it to be.”

Finally, he focused on finishing up his meal, a little more enthusiastic about returning home to bed now that he succeeded on clearing out some of his doubts. The friendship he feared forming with (Y/N) became clear to him after talking it out with Grillby, and he understood that the earlier proximity felt off due to how much he tried to avoid being close to them. He didn't want to risk the reputation of tutors in the school by painting them out to be wolves who preyed on newly divorced or widowed parents. He wanted to keep a good and proper image for the school Toriel worked so hard to establish at the Surface – At least, that was part of the reasons why he tried to keep his distance.

sorry for butting in today.

your kid looked sad on the way out of the office, real different from the kid i'm used to tutoring.

It's fine.

Thank you for looking out for him.

He stared at the reply for a few seconds, analyzing how different it was from previous messages. The human was much more formal in their typing and they cut to the chase with their response. Unlike previous conversations exchanged through quick text messages, (Y/N) didn't leave it open for any further replies.

He figured they would be feeling strange after that incident too, though he wasn't expecting a change like this. Breaking his irises away from the phone screen, he looked at Grillby again and showed him the messages, in need of more guidance from the quiet yet wise bartender standing behind the counter.

“What does this mean?”
“. . .” (“You do realize you're worrying too much about all this, right? (Miss/Mister) (Y/N) is most likely still feeling strange about what happened between you. Just give it some time.”)

Snickering, Sans shook his head, the response he received from Grillby making him realize how much he overcomplicated the situation. It was a change he feared going through ever since Papyrus told him it was time for him to start making new friends and form new relationships besides the ones he already had down at the Underground. If it were up to him, he'd stay the same, though as he looked around at the bar, it dawned on him. It dawned on him that – besides Toriel, Grillby, and his own brother – there wasn't any other relationship he could say was deep enough to rely on stuff like the one he was experiencing now.
You greeted Sans with a simple wave and signaled for him to enter your home, too tired to bother dwelling over yesterday's situation at the bench. He stood next to your son's desk as customary, giving him directions as to what he should do next and making sure he followed the steps correctly.

An uneasy feeling remained in you as you watched them go about their usual lesson, your thoughts dizzy and a headache pounding persistently at the sides of your head. Your first attempt at leaving the living room was stopped by you trampling over your own feet. What kept you from meeting the floor was the wall you held onto, the thump making both Sans and Faust turn to face the product of the noise.

“(Y/N)?” your son questioned, startled by the sight of you holding onto the wall for support. “What’s wrong?”

“It’s nothing,” you assured him, managing a small smile. “I just feel a little dizzy.”

Both the child and the skeleton seemed to have trouble believing your words. Faust was instructed to keep working on the next exercise while Sans’s gaze lingered on you for a moment. You stared back at him, feeling as if your white lies were deemed useless in front of him. If he managed to notice something was wrong with your child in as little as a month of knowing him, it was of no doubt he could tell when something was off with you, as well.

The lesson went by as you were used to – half an hour of teaching, a quick break for snacks, and another half hour to finish up with the lesson. Faust ran off to get ready for bed the minute he finished being tutored by Sans, and you were left alone together once more.

“You sure you're okay?” he asked, sitting on a corner of the couch, as usual. “You didn't look too good the whole time I was here, and you didn't eat anything either.”

Breathing in, you crossed your arms over your chest, fighting against whether to tell him about the reasons behind your headaches. You only knew him for a month, and – besides the times you went
out for coffee together or met up after school – you hadn't really crossed borders beyond those. It seemed as if a thin thread stood between you, one that could snap if either one of you stepped forward.

“I'm just a little tired from work,” you replied, sitting on the couch opposite to his. “I've had to work a few extra hours to make up for some things.”

Before answering, he stared at you again, irises focused on your tired complexion.

“Is that all?” he inquired again, furrowing his eye sockets.

You faced him at the sound of him directing another question at you. It was unsure to you whether it was your current state of exhaustion, but you were certain of one thing. Right now, he was trying to form a conversation with you – he was trying to be friendlier with you, a large contrast from the times he pulled back when noticing he was getting too close to you.

“Honestly... No,” you replied, shaking your head. “I... I found out my ex is dating someone else now. I know it’s been a year, and that it’s about time for them to move on, but... I feel like I’m falling behind.”

“You, too?”

The question caught you completely off guard, his tone changing for a more enthusiastic one. He scooted forward, almost falling off the couch with how close to the edge he was.

“'Cuz, ever since I left the Underground, it feels like everyone else is moving ahead, while I’m still stuck on the same spot.”

“I never thought I’d meet someone else who feels the same way!” you exclaimed, coughing when realizing your tone of voice rose with your own excitement. “It’s like I can’t move on, no matter how badly I want to.”

You ended up talking with him for a whole hour after that, telling him all about your week at work and asking him about how things were going at his own job. The two of you didn’t stop until you both checked the time, eight thirty marked on your cell phone. You both ended up excusing yourselves at the same time, laughing it off afterwards.
“I can’t believe it’s this late! Are you sure you don’t want some of the rice left on the pot? There’s beans and stewed vegetables, too.”

He looked just about ready to reject your offer, though another thought seemed to interrupt that. Instead, he turned back to you, accepting your offer and walking with you to the kitchen.

You served him two bowls – one for him and one for his brother. You were used to making more than for just two people, using the leftovers either to bring with you for work or give to your neighbour whenever she came back late from a long day out.

“Thanks,” he muttered, hesitating when reaching for the bowls. His phalanges brushed against your fingers when doing so, the cold of his touch making you flinch. “You didn't really have to give us this much.”

“It’s alright,” you assured him, offering him a smile. “I always make enough for over four people.”

You accompanied him out of your home, walking all the way out until reaching the busy road. The night was hot and scarce of stars, a stark difference from the cold nights and starry skies you experienced at your hometown. His footsteps were heavy against the pavement, making you wonder just how much he weighed for someone made out of bones.

“See you next Friday?” you asked, facing him with a smile.

“See you next Friday,” he replied, holding a hand out to you.

Aware of what happened the last time Faust did that, you grinned at the skeleton, tilting your head in a confident manner.

“Can I hug you instead?” you questioned, a laugh breaking the silence of the night. “We both know what happened last time with my son.”

It took him a second to respond, though he soon loosened his shoulders, snickering.
“Sure,” he spoke, extending his arms out the moment you did the same.

Having received his consent, you leaned down slightly to match with his shorter height, bringing your arms behind his back and pulling him close to you. You jolted when feeling his hands slip behind your lower waist, the action reminding you once more of your differences in height.

You both let go of one another, saying your goodbyes and watching him off. He walked down the street and stopped on the nearest bus stop, waving at you from that distance one final time.
Feeling Fine

A knock on the living room’s door was the only thing to motivate you into stepping foot out of bed. Reluctantly, you tried to make yourself look decent by throwing on a jacket and slipping some sneakers on. You made sure your (h/c) locks weren’t a bird’s nest before stepping out of your room and closing the door behind you.

“Don’t open until I check who it is, Faust!” you yelled out, making your way down the stairs.

Your steps were slow and sluggish, your headaches becoming worse to the point of you considering them to be migraines. A feverish tint covered your (s/t) cheeks and you couldn’t go a few minutes without coughing.

“Who’s—“

You cut your words short after arriving at the living room. Sans was standing at the entrance, a taller skeleton along with Toriel and a human child standing right behind him. Aware of the sudden visitors, you held back the scolding you wanted to direct at Faust for not following your directions for safety and chose to greet them with a wave instead.

“Welcome,” you muttered, throat dry with your fever and constant coughing. “I . . . I think I might have the flu, so I wouldn’t suggest you guys get too close to me.”

“It’s fine,” Sans replied, winking at you. “Monsters can’t contract human diseases, so we’re here to make you some company.”

“And to make you heal faster, as well!” the taller skeleton – Papyrus, from what you assumed based on the stories Sans told you about – exclaimed, directing a bright smile towards you. “I have brought you some vegetable soup and juice. You must stay healthy and hydrated if you have a cold!”

“Oh, well . . . Come in, then. Thank you for your troubles.”

Toriel and Papyrus made their way in while Sans approached Faust, bumping his fist with his, the greeting they’d made for themselves causing you to smile. Your curiosity sparked at the sight of the human child stepping in, extending their hand out towards your son. Your interest increased
when observing how – right after the handshake – the child began to sign their name. ‘Frisk’, you managed to make out, not noticing how long you’d spaced out watching over the two children until feeling someone place a bony hand on your shoulder.

“How’s it going?” Sans asked, casting his white irises up at you when seeing you turn around. “I was worried somethin’ happened when you called to cancel yesterday’s lesson.”

“I didn’t want you getting sick, so I figured it was for the best,” you replied, directing a smile at him afterwards. “But... Thank you for coming. Did Faust tell you the truth, by any chance?”

“Yup,” he replied, chuckling. “He saw our texts and replied saying you were too stubborn to tell me why you cancelled.”

“That sneaky Faust,” you muttered, feigning annoyance as a laugh made its way out. “He downright snitched me – my own son!”

He grinned at your dramatical act, humor crossing the glint of his eye sockets as he made his way with you to the couch set next to the one Toriel and Papyrus were sitting on. Faust and Frisk were still at the entrance, the pair already good friends and playing ‘eye spy’ around the house.

The taller skeleton introduced himself as Sans’s brother, your deduction at him being Papyrus proved correct. He handed you two bowls filled with vegetable soup and placed a carton of juice over the coffee table, his smile never faltering as he talked with you.

“Those bowls are the ones you gave us last week,” Papyrus commented, his cheery tone matching with the friendly look on his skull. “May I say... You are quite the cook, (Y/N)! I have never had something like that dish before. Where is it from?”

“It’s a Cuban recipe my friend taught me after moving here,” you replied, smiling at him. “She’s native from there, so she’s always teaching me new things.”

“That sounds lovely!” Toriel chimed in, beaming with joy. “I would love to exchange recipes with you sometime.”

“Same here, (Y/N)!” Papyrus added, matching Toriel’s cheerful nature. “You must tell us how you do it.”
The visitors stayed for two whole hours, the time flying by with the conversations you shared with them. They arrived around three in the evening and it was now five. Frisk had gone upstairs with Faust to check out his room before leaving, while Papyrus and Toriel were already standing by the door frame, patient smiles on their faces as they waited for the children to finish up what they were doing.

Sans approached you during the wait, a sheepish look masked by the casual pose he kept in front of you. You faced with him, waiting to hear what he had to say.

“Are you free next Saturday?” he asked, hiding his hands in the pockets of his jacket. “I wanna make up for last time.”

“You don’t have to make up for anything,” you spoke, chuckling. “But I am. What did you have in mind?”

“I’ve been wantin’ to show you and Faust something special from the Underground,” he replied, his smile widening slightly. “We, uh... kinda brought here some of the flowers that used to grow there. They’re at Tori’s garden. She won’t be around that day, but Undyne’ll be taking care of Frisk at their house while she’s gone.”

“Is that what the kids were talking about seeing each other’s rooms?”

“Yeah,” Sans replied, letting out a laugh. “Frisk’s pretty hyped up about it. They’ve been wantin’ to make new friends, so they jump in at every chance they get to meet new people.”

“Well... It’s a date, then,” you agreed, nodding. “I guess we’ll see you then. ... And on Friday, too.”

“Great. Just don’t get sick again,” the skeleton teased, making his way to the others while you followed close by. “We could drag you out of bed and throw a jacket on you, but then it wouldn’t be as fun. Take care of yourself, (Y/N).”
That last sentence struck a chord on you, the fever you carried increasing with that feeling. His words came off genuine, more earnest than you were expecting them to be. Thankful your visitors wouldn’t be around long for you to deal with that feeling, you smiled at him before waving them off.

“Same to you.”
The time marked nine o’clock when reaching his home, the detour Papyrus had to take for the supermarket being the cause of them arriving at an hour later than usual. He helped him carry four of the nine bags they’d packed in the car and followed him towards their home. The night was cloudy and cold, completely free of stars. The unusual change in temperature reached his bones, though it was nothing compared to the perpetual cold of Snowdin.

Sans stopped walking after reaching the entrance and waited for Papyrus to unlock the door, taking this as an opportunity to check his phone before it was time for him to wrap up for the day. Surprised to see a notification marking two unread messages, he set himself aside -- right next to the locked door his brother was still searching the key for -- and placed the four bags he carried nearby. He clicked on the notification, the two messages he was informed of displaying themselves on screen.

I feel like I’m saying this too much but . . . Thank you for visiting.

I really like the time I spend with you.

don’t mention it, pal. i feel the same way.

i think you’re pretty rad-ius.

How humerus.

I bet you could go ulna-ight making puns like that!

“You seem quite close with (Y/N) now, Sans!”

Those words were the ones he regretted hearing the most. He almost jumped at the sound of Papyrus’s sudden, booming voice and was close to dropping his phone with the startle he received from him. Feeling a strange sense of guilt -- quite like that of a child being caught eating too many sweets -- he locked the phone and put it away, shielding it from Papyrus’s attentive line of sight. Though he was expecting his brother to bring up that subject again, he still didn’t feel ready for it. He looked up at the taller skeleton, his hand holding the door open for him and the rest of the
grog paper bag he carried set on a corner inside the house.

“How long has it been already? Three months? Four?” Papyrus asked, enthusiasm clear on his voice.

“It’s been two months,” Sans replied, walking with him into the living room. “It’s been kinda fun, tibia honest, so I figured it’d be nice to invite them and Faust to see the Echo flowers.”

“I am happy for you, brother! Perhaps, you could bring them over some time.”

“Sure,” the shorter one muttered, chuckling. “Is there another reason behind it, Paps? A cooking duel or somethin’ like that?”

“Don’t be silly, brother!” the tall one exclaimed, furrowing his gaze at him. “I think it would be a good way to get them to know you better. Show them what you do for fun!”

“What, like my sock collection?”

“I am being serious! What about science? You give tutoring lessons on that too, after all! I am certain they would love to hear you talk about things you like. You could perhaps find something in common, too!”

“I’ll see what I can do.”

Still feeling as if he’d been caught sneaking his hand where he wasn’t supposed to, Sans set his phone aside on the coffee table and began unpacking the groceries, helping Papyrus organize the pantry and fridge. Palpable silence spread across the kitchen, the baby elephant in the room refusing to be addressed, no matter how many times he initiated conversation to ask over where an item was supposed to go. Although his brother meant a lot to him, this was a matter he could only bring himself to discuss with Grillby.

Later on, perhaps, he could find the ease to tell his brother the whole story, rather than evading the topic with every miniscule chance he got. Right now, however, he couldn’t find the right words to explain how much he liked receiving texts from (Y/N), nor how much he enjoyed visiting their home to see them and Faust.
What was left of the night disappeared in the blink of an eye. Sans found himself at Grillby’s again, choosing a burger this time for his order. Grillby was standing behind the counter as customary, eyeing him warily -- or at least, it seemed so. It was hard to tell based on the flame’s featureless face, the only thing to enhance it being the eyeglasses he wore.

“. . .?” (“Something on your mind? It’s midnight again.”)

Looking away from his half-eaten order, he smiled at Grillby, resting his hands over the counter as he leaned closer to face him. “Your advice worked like a charm, Grillby,” Sans explained, his voice sounding calm despite the thoughts he had left in mind. “I, uh. . . think we’re technically friends now.”

“. . .?” (“You think? . . .Technically? Why are you this uncertain?)

“Gimme a break, pal,” the skeleton intervened, snickering. “I just wasn’t sure what to call it before. I mean, we talked after the lessons, and we went out for coffee a few times. . . But it was a lil’ awkward back then, since I didn’t know how close I could get.”

Appearing pleased by his regular’s response, the bartender only nodded and left off to the back without a word. Intrigued, Sans watched the door Grillby passed through, finishing up the rest of his burger while he waited for the flame monster to return.

The quiet bartender returned after a few more minutes of wait. Much to the skeleton’s surprise, he placed a shiny, round rock on the counter. It was similar to the ones he observed with the help of a telescope near Waterfall, the sight bringing back memories, both good and bad.

“What’s this for?” he asked, taking the rock and inspecting its smooth and perfectly spherical surface. If he didn’t know where these were from, he would’ve assumed it was fake or modified to look the way it did. The fact that nature could create such wondrous, striking objects still amazed him to this day.
“...” (“It’s a gift for (Y/N). Give it to them when you feel ready, or when the moment’s right.”)
Dividing by (e)x

Chapter Notes

Due to the poll results on Quotev, there will be a 'choice' moment in the story every 10th chapter. (Since this story will be about 50 chapters long without counting the extras and the prologue, there would be 5 choices overall.) The choices will not affect the main story per say, but it/will/affect the final, end relationship with Sans.

An extra would be posted this Sunday with a scene for each choice you would be given, and it would be based on the decision you make at the end of this chapter.

That's all I wanted to say with this note! Feel free to ask me if you've any doubts.

You heaved a sigh, throwing yourself on the couch while your ex continued to rant from their phone. If it weren't for the late hour, you would've left the house to avoid the possibility of Faust waking up and sneaking in on your argument. You settled on lowering your voice and stepping out of the house, the warmth of the night seeping into your skin.

The night was quiet with the exception of the (man/woman) ranting on the phone and the few cars honking as they passed by near your home. You leaned your back against the door and caught sight of your neighbour just arriving home from a busy day at work. She waved and you waved back at her, a sympathetic smile showing on her dark complexion when taking notice of the distressed look on your face.

“It’s only a small trip to miss Toriel’s garden,” you explained, hearing your ex calm down. “He’ll be spending time with Frisk.”

You could hear shuffling noises in the background along with them sighing deeply. Hushed whispers exchanged words, the second voice you recognized as their new lover.

“Is that really the best you can do?” they asked, their voice mocking to your ears.

“What do you mean?” you questioned back, knitting your eyebrows together as your hold on the phone tightened.
“Only two months living in this city, and you’re already going out with a monster?” they commented, the way those words came out leading you to imagine they were frowning at your choices. “Don’t get me wrong. I’m in favour of monsters being here at the Surface, and okay with them working with us, but dating them’s a little. . . Y’know.”

“I don’t know,” you snapped, creases forming on your forehead as you directed a disapproving look at the wall next to you, wishing they were present to direct it at them. “I’m not dating Sans, if that’s what you’re thinking. But that still shouldn’t excuse what you’re trying to say here.”

“I just don’t think you should be so friendly with someone like him,” they persisted, chuckling at their own words. “We don’t know how things were like at the Underground. For all we know, they could be underdeveloped lives – unknown creatures waiting to snap at any moment.”

“I don’t think we’re on the same page here,” you intervened, frowning. You paced to and back the entrance of your home, taking deep breaths to avoid getting worked up. Not only were you out in public, but it was late in the night and you were against causing disruption with the hour it was. “Sans has been nothing but cordial since we met. He’s the one responsible for Faust’s math grades going up.”

“It doesn’t matter to me what he does. That’s something you could do, or hell — You can even tell me, and I’ll try to tutor Faust every once in a while.”

Furious, you could feel your hold on the phone turn painful. It was becoming harder for you to remain calm with how nonchalant they were being, yet you tried to keep yourself from blowing up -- it being one of the main reasons why you ended up in arguments with them in the first place. You wanted to change now that you were divorced and living at a new place, so you took in another breath, letting it out through your nostrils.

“I would do that, but you’re never there. . . I tried contacting you when he got his first ‘F’. Three times I called you, and three times it went to voicemail! I’d teach him if I could, but you know it yourself. I can’t do that right now.”

“I just don’t feel comfortable having a monster around at your house. You and Faust should be more careful around him and the rest of those guys. That janitor-tutor-whatever’s being too friendly with you for someone who’s only supposed to teach Faust.”

“Careful? Faust goes to a human-monster school, run by a monster herself,” you disagreed, glaring
down at the floor and pressing the phone closer to your ear. “Why bring this up now of all days? It’s been two months since he started school!”

“Honey, calm dow–“

“Don’t ‘honey’ me anymore,” you interrupted, gritting your teeth and letting your back slide further down from the wall until reaching the floor. You slumped yourself on the floor, already worn out from your argument with them. “You’ve been like this ever since we signed those adoption papers.”

“You’ve changed, too,” they objected, their tone growing cold. “You’re nothing like the (Y/N) I fell in love with seven years ago.”

“Don’t start with me again,” you muttered, holding back the urge to start crying.

Noticing the change in your tone, you could hear their mocking tone return with a dramatic gasp, a noise that made annoyance prick at your mind. “Oh? You’re not gonna call your little monster boyfriend to comfort you?” they spat, snickering. “I’m sure he knows by now how to make you feel good in bed. I should know, since it didn’t take me longer than a few weeks to get under your pants.”

You felt sick to the stomach with those words, incredulity mixing with a strong sense of hurt. Out of all the things you expected them to say, this one was at the bottom of your list.

“I’ll be taking Faust with me tomorrow, whether you like it or not. I don’t want to hear your voice anymore, so goodbye.”

“Too bad you adopted a kid with me – You still have to, even if you don’t want to.”

With that, they hung up on you. Fury coursed through you as the earlier words kept surfacing over your thoughts. The fact that they dared to bring up how quick you both ended up in bed together during your younger years made your chest ache. You never expected them to bring that up as a way to make you feel like a lesser being.

Defeated but not yet ready to give up, you let out a sigh, allowing your tension to be released from that action. The wrinkles on your forehead lessened the further you calmed down, and you were
able to stand up, gathering determination to head back inside and get ready for the next day.

Though the conversation still remained in your thoughts as you made your way inside, you tried to distract yourself by packing a backpack large enough for both Faust and yourself, not exactly knowing what you would need for your trip to see the Echo flowers. You settled on packing the essentials just in case, a ‘ping’ noise from your phone interrupting you from your planning. You picked up your phone from the coffee table and checked to see who it was, coming across Sans’s name on the screen.

i hope you’re ready for tomorrow. frisk won’t stop asking how long ‘til you guys get here.
g’night, (y/n).

Choice #1

How will you reply to his message?

a.) Finish packing first

b.) Don't reply

c.) Formally

d.) Casually
You decide to finish packing up first before answering.

It’s almost midnight when you pick up the phone again, and you hesitate to answer, thinking you could wake him up from his sleep. Your doubts are shaken by the sight of another notification on screen, marking it was sent just a few minutes after he sent the first message. Curious, you click on the notification and see a friend request from Sans.

You accept his request and enter the app, able to confirm he’s still online by the small, blue dot on the top left corner of his profile picture. It’s then that you finally decide to reply to his earlier message. You leave the website and head back to your phone’s SMS app and begin typing a response.

Just finished packing. :)  
What are you still doing up?

can’t sleep.

i might’ve tried what you guys call ‘coffee’ here a few minutes ago.

i knew that stuff existed, but i didn’t know it had caffeine.

so now i can feel my soul drumming really fast.

i think i might die or somethin’.

Don’t say that!

I’m sure you’ll be fine. . . You’re just not used to it yet!

Drink some water or warm milk, and lay down for a bit until it calms down.

thanks, (y/n).

i’ll try to do that soon.
You chuckle to yourself when receiving his latest reply, wondering over just what exactly had led him to try coffee at eleven p.m. -- and for the first time, at that. A smile remains as you resume to what you were originally working with, not exactly able to picture the earlier scenario as clearly as you were expecting to. It was hard for you to imagine him worrying about something like that.

It takes you another hour to finish with setting things up for tomorrow morning. Your steps are careful and quiet as you make your way up the stairs of your home. You soon arrive at your room after passing by Faust’s and -- without thinking it twice -- you throw yourself in bed, letting your body be taken captive by the sheets and pillows, the softness of the fabric easing down the tension from your muscles.

Choice B: Don't Reply

You decide not to reply to Sans’s message, the words your ex spoke still revolving around your mind. You couldn’t shake off the thought that they assumed you were already in an intimate relationship with the tutor of your son. It was difficult for you to process just how and why they viewed you that way -- if ending up in bed with them a few weeks into knowing them had been the only reason for them to see you that way, or if there was something else behind their comment.

Catching yourself delving into an unhealthy spiral, you snap out of those thoughts and resort to packing, leaving the phone aside. You pack until you realize how late it is and how hungry you are.

You check your phone to see it’s already half an hour past midnight and more than five hours since you last ate. Sighing, you make your way to the kitchen and grab the quickest thing to eat from your fridge, grabbing a bottle of water along with you as you make your way up the small set of stairs leading to the bedrooms.

You pass by Faust’s room and enter yours, sitting on the edge of the bed. The night is unusually quiet, and you can’t stop thinking about the phone call with your ex.
Choice C: Formally

You'd stared at his message for half an hour, still unsure as to whether to reply to his message or not. After a few more minutes of thinking, you settle on answering, refusing to let your ex’s words influence you anymore than they already had.

Goodnight to you, too.

Groaning, you set your phone down on the coffee table and place your hands over your face, realizing how quickly you cut off the conversation with him. Even after thirty minutes of staring at his message, you still couldn’t bring yourself to forget about your recent phone call. The image of Sans being more than just an acquaintance and the tutor of your son was still painted fresh and clear in your mind, and it was hard for you not to think about the fact that your ex had pretty much called you easy to please and bed.

Aware you ended any possibility of having a conversation with him, you stand up from your seat on the couch and make your way up to your room. You then begin packing with the company of the late night news being broadcasted from your phone’s FM radio, the foreign pull you felt on your chest remaining even as you finished packing.

Yawning, you decide it's time to head to bed now that the clock marked midnight. Hoping you wouldn’t lose that thread of drowsiness, you turn off the lights and hurry to bed.

Choice D: Casually

His message was the type of distraction you were hoping for after ending up the call with your ex. Happy to have a change of subject, you proceed to type in a message on your phone.

I’m getting things ready just now.
can’t figure out what to pack?

Honestly... no.

I’m not sure what to bring with me.

the way there’s only an hour long, but you can bring stuff for Faust, just in case.

and maybe a change of clothes for him, since Frisk has a kiddie pool, and I'm 99.9% sure they’re gonna want to splash in there with him.

That’s so cute!

You sound just like a father, Sans.

psh. i’d rather call it brotherly instincts.

raising paps was a lotta work.

That’s still pretty sweet.

thanks, i guess.

you’re pretty nice yourself.

Thank you.

Are you... sleepy yet?

not really.

i’m at grillby’s right now, so i won’t be home in another hour.

Grillby’s?
it’s a pretty nice bar n’ grill kinda thing.

i dunno if it’s your style, but . . . it’d be cool if we could hang out someplace like that sometimes.

That’d be nice.

I have to finish up packing now, but talk to you tomorrow!

Don’t stay up too late.

heh. i’ll try.

see you then, (y/n).

A smile remains on your face after finishing with the conversation. You check the time to see it's already ten o’clock. You would get roughly six hours of sleep if you were to finish preparing for tomorrow in the next two hours -- and as long as you didn’t forget setting up your alarm. The silence of the night allowed you some time to think on what to do first, so you chose to pack up the extra change of clothes Sans had suggested you brought with you.

Carefully, you go up the stairs, map out your plans, and slowly push open the door of Faust’s bedroom. You then begin your search in the dark, not wanting to wake him up by turning on the lights.

You arrive at your room at midnight, checking your phone one last time to see Sans had sent you a friend request on Overnet, the Surface's equivalent of Undernet.
The striking scents of coffee, cinnamon, and freshly-baked goods meld together as you exit the employee’s lounge and head over to the checkout counter. You pick up Sans’s order from your boss’s mitten hands and thank her for giving you an extra ten minutes for today’s lunch break.

You walk to his table for two and set the small batch of doughnuts down on the table. Then, you sit across from him, waiting for him to take one and be the judge of the food’s quality. He picks one up and gives it a thorough, curious look.

“So. . .” he speaks up, trailing off on his words before continuing. “You don’t use spiders to make this stuff?”

“No,” you reply, shaking your head. “That’s Muffet’s specialty.”

“You know her?”

You grin at Sans’s comment, thinking back on the day you first met the spider. It was on a busy day like this one that she entered your boss’s newly-opened pastry shop with her feet stomping the floor, an angered look painted on her face. “Yeah. . . She called us ‘greedy little humans’ when she saw my boss and I setting this place up.”

“She can be a real tough one to deal with -- or so, I hear,” Sans comments, chuckling at your words. “Is she still angry about the competition?”

“Well, not really,” you reply, lips forming a faint smile. “Turns out her shop is two streets across from this one, so we don’t really have to compete with each other -- though she says otherwise.”

“Sounds like her.”
Your conversation is interrupted by the sound of a camera shutter almost a foot away from where you stood at. Startled, you look around you to see a pair of adults -- both apparently teachers based on the way they dressed -- hunched over a camera, one human and one monster. The man fumbled with his phone while the monster scolded him for not lowering the volume before taking the picture.

“Hold on a sec, (Y/N).”

You’re taken by further surprise at the image of Sans standing up from his seat, a scowl leaving his teeth as he makes his way over to the pair arguing with each other. He approaches the two with a neutral, unreadable expression, the one previously scolding the other teacher closing his mouth shut.

“What was that for?”

Caught red-handed, the one with the phone looks up from the screen and faces Sans with a tense smile. “Hey. . . pal! H- How’s it going? We were just having our lunch break -- Wanna join us? You can invite (Y/N) over, too.”

“You’re ignoring my question,” Sans persists, his eye sockets furrowing slightly. “You took a picture of us without permission.”

“Aw, c’mon, buddy. We don’t mean any harm! You know we were just--”

“Just tell him the truth,” the other teacher intervenes, sighing. “You screwed up already, so just come clean to avoid embarrassment.”

The rest of the conversation is drowned out by a flood of customers entering the premises, the once small and serene pastry shop taken over by couples and students looking to have lunch here for Valentine’s. Concerned over what Sans was dealing with, you stand up from your own seat and walk to their side. You reach out for the skeleton’s shoulder bone, excusing yourself into the group’s conversation.

“Is something wrong?”
You can see the owner of the phone jump at your words. His face pales further than it already is and you can see his hands shake with controlled anxiety. The older one -- a bear monster with brown fur -- faces down to meet with your eyes, an apologetic look on his face.

“Sorry, (ma’am/sir). My friend and I were just trying to take a picture of you and Sans to tease the guy later, but we both screwed up by forgetting to turn off the camera shutter. It’s . . . nothing personal. We don’t mean any harm.”

From the calm look on Sans’s face, you can confirm his words are true. The skeleton appeared to have resolved the conflict by the way his shoulders relaxed and how he returned to his usual self.

“You guys owe me after what happened here,” Sans speaks up again, his smile lighting up with amusement. “There’s no way I’m lettin’ you guys off the hook this easily if you didn’t bother being sneakier enough.”

Relieved to know the two talking with him were simply co-workers and friends of his, you smile and excuse yourself back to your table. The worry you had about being out on Valentine’s Day with a monster fades away as you wait for Sans to finish his conversation and return to your table. You return to your conversation about doughnuts and Muffet’s establishment until you both finish with the pastries, left only with the drinks brought to you by your boss, who gives you a playful wink before leaving back to her post. Aware there’s only fifteen minutes left of your lunch break, you try to stand up but are promptly held back by Sans reaching out for your hand.

You jolt at his frigid touch, his bony fingers pricking lightly onto your skin. Time seems to halt for a moment as he pulls back and produces a small teddy bear along with a ribboned, five piece chocolate box from inside the jacket of his work uniform. He almost too quickly hands it over to you, his irises facing everywhere but your face.

“This is for you, (Y/N),” he mutters, his voice low and strained, almost as if he couldn’t believe he was actually accomplishing something like this. “Thanks for inviting me over for lunch here today. I dunno if you feel the same way, but. . . I really like what we have together so far.”

“Thank you. . .” you mumble, any other words you could direct at him unable to reach into your mind. “I would’ve got you something, too -- I just didn’t know what that would’ve translated as.”

“You paid for our lunch,” he reminds you, amusement in his tone. “But even then, you don’t need to feel that way, ‘cuz honestly, I was thinking the same thing. I didn’t wanna make you feel like I’m suddenly asking you out or anything, though I’m up for it s’long as you are, too.”
“You... want to go out with me?”

“You... want to go out with me?”

“If it’s cool with you, sure.”

Heat rises up in response to his nonchalant way of asking you out. You bring a hand over the back of your neck and think it over, the smile you were trying to hold back showing up on your face.

“Can I... kiss you on the cheek-- uh, cheekbone, then? I... I’ve had that in mind for a while.”

A snicker leaves his teeth as he nods to your request. Without a word, he leans forward on the table, allowing you to plant a kiss on his face. Slowly, you close the space left between your face and his skull, pressing your lips against his cheekbone. You’re surprised to have him reach out for your own cheek, holding you back for a few more seconds before letting you go to end the kiss and lean back on your seat.

Instead of a shutter noise, what’s next to interrupt the moment is a burst of goofy giggles and muffled laughter. Instinctively, you look towards the table with the man and the bear, seeing the monster snatch the same phone from earlier to hide it behind his back. You smile at that scene yourself and resort to placing a hand over the one Sans had set on the surface of the table, preventing him from standing up again.

“It’s fine,” you assure him, smiling. “That’s just your friends pulling your leg.”

“They’re just co-workers,” he shrugs off, looking away from you.

“It’s been a year since we’ve met, Sans,” you insist, squeezing his hand tighter as if to prove a point. “You... really shouldn't feel like you can’t make new friends, because I’m sure they see you as that, too.”

“I would, but... Last time I did that, it was with you. And look at how that turned out.”

“What do you mean by that?”
“You’re just. . . interesting, and kinda nice to be around with. I’ve never told you this, but since the
day we first met -- when Faust was just starting out at Tori’s school -- I kinda stressed out a lot
over our friendship. I never imagined we’d be this close with each other, and. . . I tried to keep my
distance at first, but it was harder to do that the more I got to know ya better.”

You take a small sip from your drink before responding, an eyebrow raised as you make eye
contact with him. “You? Stressed? You’re the most chill guy I know! I don’t know whether to be
flattered about that, or annoyed that what you’re saying is a lie.”

It startles you to have him hold your free hand, the cold left behind from the glass matching with
his own temperature. He squeezes them both and faces you with a foreign expression -- one you’re
not used to seeing on him often. “I’m not,” he objects, furrowing his gaze at you. “I wasn’t lyin’
when I said I wanted to give this dating thing a try.”
“You look terrible.”

“Thanks.”

Sans stood in front of your door, an amused expression showing clear on his skull after taking in the state you were in. It was already nine in the morning, and you were supposed to be at Toriel’s home by ten. After yesterday’s argument with your ex, you stayed packing for two whole hours and threw yourself in bed afterwards, completely forgetting to set up the alarm for six in the morning.

Stepping away from the door, you allow him to enter your living room and walk with him back inside. Faust was busy scavenging through the backpack you prepared for the trip while the television played in the background, giving reports over the weather and sports.

“Feel free to change the channel if you want,” you speak up, checking your phone again to make sure you wouldn't run late. “I’m gonna go take a quick shower before we go.”

Nodding, the skeleton holds back a grin, observing how you huff and ruffle up the (h/c) mess of your hair. He sits down next to Faust while you go up the stairs, rushing in your steps to avoid delaying the two further than you had already.

Sans kept his eyes on the road, casting a look every once in a while to your side. It wasn’t until fifteen minutes passed since you mounted his borrowed convertible that he managed to say what he had in mind.

“Did, uh. . . Did somethin’ happen last night? You look pretty tired for someone who overslept.”

Smiling, you look down at your lap and let out a breathy chuckle, embarrassment making you take longer to respond. “A call came up last minute, and well. . . Things didn’t end up well in the end.”
You spare a look his way, understanding flashing through the light of his irises before he focused
his attention back on driving. “But how are things on your end? Any other kids you’re tutoring this
semester?”

“Just Faust, two kids with Algebra, and Frisk with Science,” Sans explains, slowly pushing the
brakes when seeing the green light switch to red. “Most kids usually need help with Language and
Geography, so I don’t really get many kids to tutor that often.”

He takes a moment to look through the rear-view mirror, his ever-present smile appearing to widen
at the sides. Faust waves at him, a bright smile showing on his face.

“But Faust’s been improving a lot since we first started. I think he can strive for that A if he keeps
that up.”

Your own smile grows at his words, a thought making its way to your mind. “How do you manage
both jobs at once?”

“I usually work three days as a janitor, so that leaves me more time to work on the other job.”

“You must be very committed to what you do,” you comment, glancing his way again.

He steps on the gas, the light changing back to green. “Thanks, though my bro thinks otherwise,”
he replies, chuckling. “But I know he means well.” A beat of silence takes over your surroundings
before he speaks up again. “What about you? I don’t think I’ve ever heard you talk about your
own job.”

“I’m a pastry chef,” you reply, a wistful sigh breaking through your words. “I used to be a police
officer, but a lot of us got laid down after that incident with the new laws about monsters living at
the Surface. I . . . I wanted to resign before that, since I didn’t agree with some of the changes they
were making, but the lay off got to me first.”

“What kinda changes were they makin’?”

“They wanted to set some laws with the schools -- keeping monster children in categories. They
wanted to put bunny monsters on one side, fire monsters on another, and so on. In the end, they
passed the law since things are kind of different at my hometown.”
The skeleton hums in thought, turning the signal left, where your eyes spot a large yet cozy-looking home painted in warm colours and decorated with a wide array of wildflowers in various shades of reds, oranges, and yellows. He turns the car said direction and parks under the small, open garage located next to the house.

“You’ve got integrity to ya, (Y/N),” Sans comments, his gaze carrying a warm tint when facing you. “Resigned or not, you wanted to leave ‘cuz of the laws they were makin', and I think that’s still pretty cool on its own.”

“Thank you,” you mutter, sheepishness making your voice hard to hear. “I never thought of it that way.”

You open the front passenger door and step out of the vehicle, closing it shut shortly after. You then make your way to Faust’s side, ready to open his door, only to see Sans was taking care of that already. The only thing left for you to do was to take the backpack in your hold and follow them there.

Taking in a breath and allowing your thoughts to settle, you take in your surroundings, the sight of the flowers dancing gently with the wind providing you with calm. Your steps were hesitant the closer you got to approaching the front door, Sans’s words still resting in the back of your mind.

The door opens and you're promptly welcomed by the sight of a fish woman stepping out of the house, her sharp teeth in full display as she directs a grin at Faust. You watch her put out a hand for him, your worries falling from your shoulders as you see her shake hands with him. She encourages him to join Frisk inside for their playdate.

“Don’t be shy, (Y/N)!” the woman exclaims, making a gesture with her hand for you to join her inside the house. “We’ve been waiting for you!”

You manage another smile and direct it at her along with a firm nod. No matter how many monsters you saw day-by-day, the sight of how different they all were from each other still surprised you. Awe was one of the main emotions to cross you whenever you spotted a different kind of monster, the fact that they could grow so used to their own differences without seemingly any difficulties making you wonder just how they managed to do it.
When Flowers Bloom

Quietly, he observes the way awe strikes over (Y/N)’s face. Their (s/t) skin lights up with joy at the sound of the bright blue flower repeating the ‘Hello!’ they directed at it. It's hard for him to focus on anything else, and -- before he can process it himself -- he’s stepping foot forward, standing next to their side as he too leans close to the flower to mutter something for it to repeat.

“Go ahead,” Sans encourages, his smile widening slightly at the sides as he waits for the human to approach the Echo flower again.

The human nods and leans close to the flower, not quite sure what to expect from him.

“If you were a flower, you’d be a damn-delion.”

The pit of silence that once overpowered the garden is shattered by (Y/N) bursting with a laugh, their knees wobbling and gut aching with the suddenness of that pun-slash-pick up line. Sans’s shoulder bones relax at that sound, relieved they hadn’t taken it as seriously as he imagined them to. They face him with teary eyes before focusing on the Echo flower again, an amused smile stretching across their lips.

He takes a subtle step closer, hoping to hear what they were whispering to the flower, though he doesn't manage to hear beyond the beginning of their sentence. The human takes a step back and waits for him to approach the flower.

“I’m lavender time I spend with you. I can really feel something blossoming between us.”

“Damn,” Sans comments, chuckling. “Two in one -- Good job, (Y/N).”

“Thank you,” they reply, grinning.

The skeleton moves on from the Echo flowers after that, too worked up over the risk he'd taken with that pick up line to stay around them any longer. He takes the human to a field of tall sunflowers, some of them towering slightly above him while a few surpassed (Y/N)’s height by a foot.
“These ain’t from the Underground, but I figured you’d still like to see them,” he explains, facing to their side to see them casting their eyes up at the yellow field sporting a light, flowery fragrance and a few bees buzzing close by. “Whaddya think? Tori’s been working on ‘em ever since we reached the Surface.”

“They’re beautiful,” they reply, their smile widening as their fingertips brush carefully against the flower petals. “How can she manage to grow flowers with different needs on one same climate? That had to be hard to do.”

Catching onto another opportunity to further his relationship with (Y/N), Sans walks over to the gardening shed nearby, opening the rickety door with caution. Inside, he produces a pocket knife from the gardening supplies set on the middle shelf. Then, he leaves the building and approaches the human again. “It’s actually pretty normal at the Underground. We had around four or five different weather stations coexisting all at the same time.”

His irises scan the sunflowers until finding one of the smaller ones. Carefully, he retrieves it from the ground it was planted in, making sure not to damage its stem or roots to have it last long enough -- until the human could arrive back home.

He brushes off the few bits of soil that clung onto it and looks at (Y/N) before speaking up. “I’m not sure if Echo flowers can last with the weather at your place, but here.” He hands them the sunflower, his hand jolting slightly when feeling their hand brush against his. “We can put it in a vase when we head back inside, but there’s one more thing I wanna show ya before we leave the garden.”

Sans watches the human bring the flower close to their face, a warm smile brightening their (s/t) complexion, (e/c) eyes softening when looking back to him. He returns the smile, trying to maintain his calm demeanor despite his mind telling him he could most likely screw up with any chance he got. He breathes in and settles on ignoring those doubts, moving on to the next batch of flowers the garden had to offer.

“Woah.”

That was the first reaction he got out of (Y/N) when taking them to a pond decorated by all sorts of wildflowers. The clear water rippled lazily and a few more honeybees were accompanied by hummingbirds and butterflies.

One of the butterflies lands on the human’s nose, the ticklish feeling making them sneeze.
“That was amazin’,” Sans speaks up, snickering. “I woulda taken a picture if that hadn’t ended so quickly -- You looked just like a Disney (prince/princess) for a minute there.”

“You watch Disney movies?” (Y/N) questions, curiosity leaking from their tone.

Sans bends down to sit on the grass close to the pond and gestures for them to join him. “Frisk makes me watch one every other Sunday,” he replies, his irises glowing brighter with the memory. “I think they’re in that phase where they won’t stop watching ‘til they’re tired of it, but the movies’re pretty good.”

(Y/N) takes up his offer by sitting next to him, keeping enough distance for another person to sit between the two. “Do you have a favourite?” they ask again, a more teasing tone exchanged with their earlier curiosity.

“Lilo and Stitch,” he answers, looking down at his reflection over the water. “I, uh, actually got a lil’ emotional at the end of it.”

Humoured by his response, the human scoots a bit closer to his side. They engage in conversation with him about other Disney movies and talk about their own, favourite film out of all the ones they'd watched over the years. He listens intently and finds himself reeled in by the topics (Y/N) spoke about, losing track of time and being informed about it by the fish lady appearing behind them, her reflection cast between them on the water.

“You two dorks ready to head back inside? Frisk cooked up some dinner and they’re waiting for you guys to join them and Faust.”

Surprised to hear it was already late enough to have dinner, Sans fishes out his phone from his back pocket, unlocking it to see it was already five in the evening. He stands up from the grass and helps (Y/N) back to their feet, still unable to process three hours had gone by since he took them to the garden.
You’re taken by surprise the second your next-door neighbour opens the door for you, the same fish woman who greeted you into Toriel’s home barely just a few days ago sitting on the couch of her living room. She recognizes you almost instantly, a bright and welcoming grin replacing the doubt she seemed to have clouding her eye.

“Hey!” she calls out, grinning. “You live around here, too?”

“Yeah,” you reply, smiling at her. “I, well... I wanted to discuss something with Solana, but I don’t want to interrupt you guys from what you’re doing.”

“Nonsense, (Y/N)!” your neighbour intervenes, both hands on her hips as she gives you an amiable look similar to Undyne’s. “You can help us with Undyne’s dating dilemma -- Did you hear she and Professor Alphys are going out?”

“The science teacher at Toriel’s school?”

“Precisely,” she replies, nodding. “Any ideas for a way to celebrate their one-year anniversary as a couple?”

You walk over to the couch, sitting next to Undyne while Solana takes the small reclining chair set next to the television stand, occupied with both fiction and nonfiction books of all sorts rather than an actual television. “Well... What about the place where you first asked her out -- or the place where you guys first kissed?”

Both women hum at your suggestion, Undyne’s face being the first to light up. Your neighbour, on the other hand, stays a little longer in her thinking state, her eyebrows knitting together as her eyes focus on the floor. “Where was that place, Undyne?” she asks, lifting her gaze from the carpeted floor.

Undyne leans back on her seat, passing a hand through her red locks of hair kept tidy by a high ponytail. Her eye goes back to its clouded state as she begins to think back on that memory. “It was at the beach -- I... gave her a kiss on the cheek right after we left the Underground, and she got all blushy and cute about it.”
“Then that’s where you should go with her!” Solana declares, moving her gaze over to you. “You’re pretty good at this, (Y/N). Who knew we’d find a solution this fast?”

“Yeah,” Undyne agrees, laughing. “It would’ve taken me a lot longer to come up with that idea.” She casts her eye over to you, a curious look on her face. “Are you dating anyone, (Y/N)?”

You feel a surge of cold run through your body, aware of how awful it would sound to say you were divorced, right after just providing her with dating advice. Solana notices your hesitation, a frown forming on her lips.

“It’s. . . It’s a little complicated, but--”

“They’re crushing!” Solana intervenes, startling you out of your confession. “(Y/N) here’s been single for almost two years now, and just recently. . . the (girl/guy)’s found a crush again -- Isn’t that right, honey?”

“Y- yeah,” you stutter, almost choking on your words. “But it’s kind of a secret right now.”

“Do I know him? Her? Them?” she asks, enthusiasm clear in her voice.

“You do know him,” you reply, stifling a laugh at her intense nature. “That’s exactly why I can’t tell either one of you who it is.”

The rest of your conversation with the two women goes by smoothly, steering clear from the bump in the road involving your divorce thanks to your neighbour. Hours pass with the three of you chatting together and having some coffee courtesy of Solana. You wait until Undyne leaves to approach her again, the doubts you had only increasing in their strength after your talk with her and the fish woman.

You’re both standing outside now, seeing Undyne off after making sure she was -- and felt -- ready for her anniversary celebration with her girlfriend. You wave her off as you watch her mount her car, silence falling between you and your neighbour the second the fish woman closes her car door.

“Solana?” you call out, uncertainty in your tone.
“Yeah, honey?” she asks, turning her attention back to you.

You wait until Undyne’s vehicle disappears from your sight, bracing yourself for what you were about to say. “What’s, um. . . What’s your opinion about monsters?”

She raises an eyebrow at your question, a stunned look reaching her dark complexion. “What do you mean by that? My general opinion on them or…”

“G-- General, I guess?” you clarify, heart racing as your mind refuses to get straight to the point. “What you think of them. . . working and living together with us.”

Her gaze narrows at your words and she crosses her arms, her back leaning against the door of her home. “What brought this up, (Y/N)? Those words don’t sound like your own.”

You chew on the inside of your lip, trying to contain yourself. Your palms grow sweaty and your mind begins to overthink, making it hard for you to come up with a response straight away. “My ex called a few days ago, and. . . It just got me thinking. There weren’t nearly as many monsters at my hometown as there are in this city, so I guess I just want to know what you think -- since you’ve always lived here.”

“I think they’re just like us, but a little different all the same,” she replies, passing a hand through her brown curls as she lets out a breath. “Things were different a year ago, with people here not wanting to live near any of them, but the co-ambassador changed that with time. Some people can’t believe Frisk’s only nine years old! They weren’t able to become the monster ambassador per se, since they’re still too young, but. . . Their vision helped the mayor of this city realize monsters are just like us.”

Solana pauses in her speech to inspect you again, intrigue and confusion both swirling in her eyes. She walks over to the stairs set in front of her home’s entrance door, sitting down and inviting you to join her.

“Something in particular you want to ask me? You were the one who wanted to resign as an officer for stuff like this happening in the first place.”

You sit next to her, facing the floor as you place your hands on your knees. “Should I be getting this close with Sans? Is it. . . okay for me to let Faust study at Toriel’s school? I just feel like I’ve been moving too fast, and that I’m barely considering what’s happening right now. What if Sans
feels forced to spend time with us? What if... What if we’re just taking advantage of that school? Hell, the tutoring’s free! It still feels weird not having to pay, even though it’s been two months already.”

“Breathe, honey, breathe,” Solana soothes, placing a hand on your back. “You’re getting way too worked up over this stuff. You were telling me how great your date with Sans was just a few days ago!”

“It wasn’t a date,” you correct, gathering the strength to look at her in the eye. “The phone call just got me thinking.”

You flinch at the sight of her standing up from the stairs. She looks down at you with a furrowed gaze, a hand being offered out to you.

“Forget about that damned phone call!” she exclaims, a glare forming on her face. “Are you seriously going to act this way just ’cuz your ex can’t handle you moving on -- Or are you gonna do what a real cop should do, and try to fight for what you think’s right?”
You stare at her hand for a minute, lips forming a straight line.

“I. . .” Your shaky hand reaches out for hers while your fingers hesitate on making contact with her palm. “I-- I’m not sure yet.”

You pull your hand back, a frown tugging your expression downwards. Your neighbour only sighs and retreats her hand, her feet moving her body back to the door of her home.

“Alright then,” she speaks up, voice sharp and somewhat stern, a vast difference from the usual warmth of her tone enhanced by nicknames like ‘honey’ or ‘dear’. “I won’t rush you into sorting out your thoughts, but please don’t drag Faust with you on this -- I’ve never seen a kid like him this happy to go study, and I’m pretty sure Toriel’s school has something to do with that. Cancel the tutoring and tell Sans how you feel if you want, but what your kid needs right now’s a stable experience. It’s the second time he’s seen a divorce, with the exception he didn’t got sent back to adoption after yours.”

“I. . . I won’t take him out of there,” you assure her, resting your hands on your lap. “I just need some time to think this through. I need to think about the life I’ve been living here so far. I. . . I just never imagined I’d be making friends with monsters -- And that I’d be having a crush on one, too.”

“Why’s that?”

“That's. . . how it was back in the town I was in -- We didn't or, well, still don’t allow monsters to work or live in the same place as us. The children can study together, human or not. . . but they still keep them on separate sides of the classroom.”

“Then take your time to reflect on that whenever you can,” she replies, a smile finally breaking the stern look she carried since your conversation drifted away from lighter topics. “I’m not telling you to rush yourself -- Just try not to let others get to you.”

“Thanks, Sol,” you speak up again, returning her smile. You stand up from the stairs and walk to her side, giving her a quick and tight hug before taking your leave. “Sorry about the trouble.”

“It’s fine -- Just remember I'm here if you ever need someone to talk to about this kind of stuff.”
You stare at the sunflower on the center of your living room, debating whether to keep your feelings firm or push them away. Though you couldn’t deny the time you spent at the garden was a good moment to relax and enjoy yourself, you had your doubts over what route your current relationship was detouring to. Sighing, you check your phone again to see one of the main factors of your doubts.

**You’re not answering my texts.** -- Sent six hours ago

**Bet you’re messing around with that janitor-skeleton-thing again.** -- Sent five hours ago

Those were sent about an hour into your conversation with Undyne and your neighbour. The most recent ones were the ones that made you more frustrated than you already were.

**I’m taking Faust with me until you clear your head a little. ‘Cuz, clearly, you’re not thinking clearly about what you’re doing.**

*You can’t do that. Let him finish this semester in school first.*

*He needs this chance to make some new friends.*

**So now** you respond, huh? You fell for that bait real quick.

*What do you mean?*

**He can keep on studying at that school, but I don’t want him near that skeleton -- Sam or whatever his name is.**
It’s Sans.

You’ll have to tell Faust that yourself, then.

I’m not going to be your accomplice for that kind of stuff.

Suit yourself. I was giving you a chance to say it nicely by yourself, but I guess I’ll say it to him in my own way.

Rather have it that way than listen to your bullcrap.

Soft as ever aren’t you, (Y/N)? Can’t even curse through text.

I have no clue how they hired someone like you to be a cop.

You refuse to answer your ex’s last two texts, anger swelling inside you. Breathing in, you can feel your body shake with pent up emotions, palms building a cold sweat and heart racing a mile a minute. It isn’t until dizziness takes over that you realize you’re panicking.

Avoiding the risks of ending up passed out on the floor, you try to stabilize yourself and begin to make your way to the kitchen. There, you open the old refrigerator and take out a bottled water. You turn it open and chug it down, both the cold and the sudden intake of liquid startling you out of the light-headed feeling.

Your next mission is to pick up your phone again and hurry to text Sans. You return to the living room and sit back down on the couch, sighing again as you let your eyes close and shoulders drop for a while before texting. Calm returns to you after a few minutes, haste breaths regaining their steady pace and chest returning to its slow rise and fall. Once you’re sure you’ve regained your composure, you open your eyes again and grab hold of the phone.

Hey.

I need to talk with you for a minute.

Could you call me when you’re free?

Expecting him to take a while to respond, you almost jump from your seat when feeling your phone vibrate in your hand. You stare at the screen to see Sans’s name, the options to either answer
or hang up showing up on screen. Your fingers flutter over the ‘answer’ option as you then bring the phone to your ear.

“What’s up?”

The rumble in his voice makes you check the wall clock nearby, finding it odd but still expected from him to be sleeping at seven p.m. on a Wednesday. It was just a few hours after him finishing his work shift for the day.

“Were you sleeping? Sorry if I woke you up.”

“Nah, I’m just hella tired. I might’ve stayed up last night ‘til two in mornin’ trying to get some sleep.”

“Oh? Do you have insomnia?”

“Don’t think so. I just had a bit of trouble sleepin’ last night, and when I did, I just kept waking up every hour.”

“I’m no expert, but I think that’s insomnia, then.”

“Heh -- Who knows? Might have to get that checked sometime,” he replies, chuckling. The laugh makes his groggy voice more prominent, though you don’t comment on that. “But what did you text me for, anyway? Something happen with the kid’s grades?”

“No. . . It’s not that,” you dismiss that thought, a frown growing on your face. “It’s about my, well. . . ex. They’re gonna talk with Faust tomorrow to convince him to stop being tutored by you. I don’t know how or what they’ll tell him, but. . . I just wanted to let you know about this before I canceled the tutoring on my own. Or at least make it seem like I did, until I. . . until I find a better solution to all this.”
Making Amends

Chapter Notes

Minor crude language and behaviour ahead. Discretion is advised if you're under 13 of age.

Also, this was meant to be Thursday's update! The next chapter will be up tomorrow at its usual schedule.

“I don’t want to!”

A headache was bound to show itself soon with how much and how long the argument between them was becoming. Faust refused to quit with his tutoring lessons, no matter how much his other parent tried to convince him it was for the best.

“Why should I?” he pressed, anger slipping from his tone.

“Don’t you dare talk to me like that, Faust (L/N)! I’ve been patient enough with you already,” your ex speaks, chastising him for his behavior. “(Y/N) may be okay with having a monster in this house, but I’m not. It’s dangerous, and I won’t put you through that risk.”

“But... But why are they dangerous?” the boy questions, earnest confusion replacing his anger. “I’ve made friends with lots of them!”

“They just are,” was their response, words stern and cutting sharp. “Do you even know what happened to Frisk when they were in the Underground? Monsters attacked them with every chance they got -- They were merciless, I’m sure, and they’ll act no differently with you!”

“Stop for a second,” you intervene, stepping in on their argument. “I’m aware they attacked, but merciless? That's an adjective that doesn’t really fit them.”

“So now you’re defending them?” your ex asks, disbelief showing by the humourless laugh they direct at you. “What’s next -- Are you gonna marry that tutor and adopt another kid with him?”
“Don’t change the subject,” you object, narrowing your eyes at them. “While quite a few of them did attack Frisk, the monsters spared Frisk, or Frisk spared them -- And now those that did are being held accountable for their actions.” You pause in your words, a sense of spite rising in you. “I should know, since I was one of the people left in charge of detaining and punishing them in the first place.”

“You were a shit cop and you know it,” they taunt, grinning. “Why else would you be laid off?”

“I was about to resign when they did that,” you defend, still maintaining a stern look their way. “The only reason I was fired was because I didn’t agree to separating monsters in categories.”

“You did the wrong thing, then. They should all be--”

Your argument is interrupted by Faust bolting out of the argument, tiny and short legs rushing to make their way up the stairs of your home. You stop sending glares at your ex and cast your gaze up, catching the image of the child covering his face away with the sleeve of his striped shirt, scrubbing the tears with a furious pace. You don’t bother to excuse yourself from your ex and instead run after Faust, stress making your shoulders freeze.

“Faust!” you cry out, hurrying in your steps as you climb up the stairs. You can hear footsteps close behind you as you reach the top, and you turn around to see your ex running after you.

“Wait up,” they plead, panting and out of breath. “I want to talk with him, too.”

“You cursed right in front of him,” you remark, annoyance prickling at your tone. “I think you should calm down a bit more first.”

“You should too,” they snap, managing to say those few words after recovering from the dash they gave from the living room until here. “Maybe. . . Maybe think about what could happen whenever you greet a monster into your life and into your house -- especially that tutor guy.”

“I will, but right now. . . I want Faust to be happy again. I’ll be more careful, and I promise I’ll protect him while he’s with me -- But please let him have this. He’s made a lot of friends, and Sans is one of them.”
You remain hopeful as you wait for their response. Silence settles on your surroundings while you wait, giving them time to think.

“Alright,” they give in, words let out with a sigh. “But on one condition: Sam has to tutor him at the school -- far away from this house.”

Chewing on the inside of your lip, you hold back the urge to correct your ex. Rather than inciting another argument with the topic of them purposely misspelling that name again, you smile at them, relieved they managed to come to an agreement with you. “Good. I’ll tell Sans it’ll be there from now on.”

The both of you make a silent agreement by nodding and carrying on to your original plans of comforting Faust. You lead them to his room and slowly creak the door open, peeking into the child’s room. The lights are off when you look, and you can hear faint crying and hiccups from inside.

“Faust?” you call out, words soft and treading with caution.

There’s no response, even during your second call. Puzzled on what action to take next, you walk towards the lump of bedsheets in a corner of the bed and sit down beside it. You place your hand on top, feeling his soft strands of hair even from the shield keeping him separated from you. Carefully, you begin stroking his head and press your cheek against his, comforting him the way Sans had advised -- or least, taught -- you to.

Being a police officer for two years straight had its consequences in terms of how you brought comfort to others. The things you heard and saw -- from robbery and fraud to murder and sexual assault -- you were lectured to keep a thick skin and a heart of steel, if you wanted to keep the job and not let the increasing rate in criminality get to you. That was one of the things you realized the day Faust broke up crying right in front of Sans.

Unlike the skeleton, you were never patient in your approach and demanded Faust told you what was wrong right away. What softened you up a little was the service you provided to the clients at the bakery you worked in, but even then you had your troubles on detecting when someone needed a bit more care and patience for them to function and respond to you properly.

You flinch when feeling him wiggle around. He breaks free from his blanket fort and wraps his small arms around you, burrowing his face on your stomach and letting his muffled crying be heard.
“I... Did I do something wrong? I-- I just want to make new friends!”

You wave goodbye at your ex as they mount their car, breathing a sigh of pure bliss the second they disappear from your sight. Happy things hadn’t gotten as bad as you were expecting them to, you allow yourself a moment of rest by staying outside. You sit down on the stairs of the entrance of your home and pull out your phone from your back pocket.

The clock on screen marks ten, and you look up to see the starless sky. You look back down at your phone and access the messaging app, thinking over how you could lay down the news to the tutor who remained in wait for your update on what would happen to Faust’s lessons from here on.

Hey.

Our... talk went better than I expected.

Faust can keep on with the lessons, with the exception that it can’t be at my house anymore.

damn.

that’s a lil’ harsh, but way better than what i was expecting.

You’re still welcome to visit, though.

But it’s now my mission to protect Faust more than before.

s’if you weren’t doing that already.

you came off strong when the kid got in a fight, but you still showed you cared.

some parents don’t really pay much attention to the fights their kids get into, so the cycle just repeats itself ‘till someone gets hurt real bad.
Thank you, Sans.

What you did back there, it made me realize some stuff... And it’s that I need to be more patient.

When I got the call, my mind just went blank and all I could think of was in what way I could punish Faust... Not why he got into a fight in the first place.

But enough about us two. When is it okay for you to meet up at school?

I don’t want to trouble you more than I already have.

You wait for his response for a few seconds, watching the three dots until they fade away and no message is received. You’re startled from that observation by your phone vibrating, and you look back down at it to see Sans calling your number.

“Hello?” you answer quickly, heart caught in your throat.
He stops eyeing the child’s paper at the sound of an older human calling out his name. His irises look up to see (Y/N) standing by the open door, Faust now standing next to them and eagerly tugging at the corner of their shirt, encouraging them to step inside.

“Relax and c’mon in,” he speaks, catching onto their uncertainty. “I won’t bite.”

“Kinda hard to do after what I said to you through that phone call a few days ago.”

Sans lets out a chuckle at that remark. He shakes his head and gestures for them to sit down on the chair set closest to his work desk. Not long after, he notices them hesitate once more when stepping in -- quite like that of a child afraid of plugging in a device after being shocked by the power outlet firsthand. He decides not to comment on that for the moment being, ignoring the urge to tease them for their hesitant nature.

“Thank you. . . for still choosing to tutor him even after what happened. And I’m really sorry for how this ended. I. . . I didn’t think a compromise with Faust’s other parent would lead to this,” (Y/N) speaks up, their earnest tone failing to mask the blunt tiredness behind their voice. He notices bags forming under their eyes again, not to mention they took up the offer to sit down almost too quickly. The faint smell of baked good catches his nose cavity when the human shifts in their seat, and it isn’t until then that he notices something unusual about their appearance -- more specifically, their face.

They had flour in their hair, actual dusts of the ingredient stuck to their hair’s left sideline. He stifles the urge to let his smile widen, already imagining a scenario where they would freak out the second he mentioned that missed detail. He imagined how they would vex over that -- how they would think back on the number of people that saw them like that prior to arriving at the school.

“Should I take Faust with me now? I don’t wanna keep you if you’re busy.”

He almost jumps at the sound of their voice and focuses his eyesight again to see (Y/N) facing their lap, looking apologetically at their palms. They squeeze them into fists and sigh, looking up to meet with him again.
“I’m not busy right now,” he corrects, awareness falling upon him like a bucket of ice cold water. He’d been staring far too long at the human, and they had obviously come up with the worst case scenario as to why he wasn’t responding to them -- when in reality he’d spaced out completely, staring at the specks of flour decorating their (h/c), (h/l) locks of hair. “You, uh, just have some flour stuck in your hair.”

“Oh,” they mutter, posture stiffening at his comment. “Where?”

The skeleton directs them to where the stains are, chuckling when they’re unable to locate the last spot left to dust out. Wanting to lend a hand, he leans over his desk and reaches out for (Y/N)’s hair, excusing himself before getting to touch it. The close view of their face makes it all the more clear that they weren’t getting enough sleep at home, though he still refuses to make a comment on anything personal. He was more than aware by now that there was still the line of teacher and parent between him and them, one that kept him from approaching them any closer than he had the day Frisk and Faust decided to set up a day to hang out together.

“Thanks,” (Y/N) speaks up again, the suddenness and informality of that one word response only adding to his desire of teasing them for how nervous they seemed to be. “Are you... okay with this for real, then? I know I talked with you on the phone about this, but I wanted to make sure you were being honest by coming to see you in person.”

“I am,” he replies, leaning back on his seat. “It ain’t the first time somethin’ like this happens, if I'm gonna be honest, but it is the first time I’ve had someone worry so much about how I feel.”

“I just feel like have to. You and this whole school have been... pretty good changes, to say the least,” the human explains, words sounding distant despite having them sitting right next to his work desk. He observes the expression on (Y/N)’s face as they contemplate on their own, intrigued by the way their eyebrows furrowed the more they waited to say what they had in mind. “Faust’s opened up to me a lot since the day you talked with him... I-- It made me realize I could be a bit more open with how I feel every now and then.”

“So whaddya feel right now?”

“I...” They sigh again, placing their hands on their knees as they grip both tight. “I feel like this experience -- the whole moving to a new place, choosing a new school, and working on a new job. It feels like the right thing to do right now. The town I used to live in wasn’t any good for us, but here. I’m really starting to feel at home here.”
“Then keep doin’ just that,” Sans suggests, waiting a few seconds before adding else to his comment. “And if it doesn’t work out, you can try again. I’m sure you can do it if you stay true to what you want in life.”

He jolts at the sound of them letting out a laugh, one he would grow annoyed at if it had come off as mocking. Instead, the tone was warm and genuine, as so was the look on (Y/N)’s face.

“What’s got ya laughing?” he asks, looking to prod gently at them now that they’d chosen to do the same.

“Nothing,” they dismiss, a stray laugh hiccuping from their throat -- one that they covered by grinning. “That was really sweet of you, is all. Haven’t heard advice like that in years. . . Since high school ended, if I’m gonna be exact.”

“Are ya still in college?”

“I left when I got my Bachelor’s half a year ago -- started it at eighteen and finished four years later. Kind of a waste, considering I quit the job at the police department barely a year into it, but. . . I was lucky to find a job at the bakery a few blocks from here.”

“Is that the one Muffet’s still tryin’ to sue?”

“Precisely,” the human replies, snickering. “It’s still kind of nice, though. . . Really makes things interesting every now and then.”

Sans catches himself on a comfortable, back-and-forth conversation as he readies himself to speak up again. How he managed to keep this friendship going with (Y/N) was still a mystery to him. He didn’t have to be at Grillby’s or crack jokes all that often to gain the human’s attention, a change of pace he appreciated just as much as the feeling of falling asleep without having to aimlessly toss and turn in bed for an hour.
Two weeks passed by since the incident involving the tutoring lessons. An empty feeling similar to that of melancholy lasted whenever you came to pick up Faust Fridays at five -- an hour earlier than usual to fit the changes your ex agreed on -- and come home to an empty, quiet house. During those three months, you’d grown used to having someone around your home once a week. Hearing the two discuss the math problems had, in a way, become a therapeutic experience for you, and even more so when the skeleton stayed an hour or two later to chat with you.

You look at the calendar and then at the old wall clock of your living room, calculating it was currently noon thirty on a Saturday. You reach for your cellphone and hover your finger on Sans’s number, reluctant to listen to your thoughts and the pull in your heart. It had become hard to stay in touch with him ever since the schedule changes, and you were beginning to grow tempted on asking if he wanted to go out sometime. A sharp, metallic taste stops you from chewing on the inside of your lip as you tune back to Earth. Another split second of uncertainty crosses your mind as you click the ‘call’ button, hearing it beep twice before he picks up.

“Hello?”

You almost yelp with how loud the voice is, recognizing it as Papyrus’s, and manage to smile through the pain despite knowing he couldn’t see you. “Hey, Papyrus! How’re you doing?”

“I’m doing well, (Y/N)! Sans is currently showering right now, but I can tell him you called! Is there something in particular you wanted to speak with him?”

“No, not really,” you dismiss, an awkward laugh following after your words. “I just wanted to catch up with him on some stuff.”

“Is it to ‘hang out’?” he questions, the way he says those last words making it seem as this were a foreign concept to him. “He has been saying recently how he misses the days you--”

“I’ll take it from here, Paps.”

The abrupt change in the caller’s voice leaves you stricken. You press your phone closer to your ear, hoping to hear what the two brothers were discussing between themselves. The only few words you’re able to decipher is something along the lines of ‘Lucky I got here on time’.
“How’s it going, (Y/N)?” Sans asks, his lower tone of voice a drastic change from the cheerful and naturally loud tone of his younger brother. “Been a while since we talked like this.”

“Yeah. . .” you mutter, a phantom smile reaching your face. “I was gonna ask if you wanted to hang out today? . . . If you’re not busy and all, of course.”

“I’m not,” he replies, amusement present in those words. “This week was pretty light, so I woke up at eleven today. I’ve got no plans for the rest of the day, ’sides from reading through some new school policies Tori needs to look over for Monday.”

“Do you guys need help with anything, then? I could always do some research before she has to turn them in.”

“It’s fine -- We’ve got some people looking over them already, but I’ll let you know if we need more help.”

You conclude that topic with an ‘alright’ and move on to settling on the hour and location you would meet up at. The last thing you hear as he says goodbye is Papyrus asking what he planned to wear for your outing. By the way the call ends shortly after that, you figure he’d forgotten to hang up before heading over to his brother. You laugh to yourself as soon as you check the call had truly ended, against the idea of embarrassing him further by letting him know you’d been listening all along.

Energy rises within you as you set the phone down on the coffee table. You rise from the couch and head over to the kitchen drawers. There, you take out a pen and a sticky note from the second drawer, placing the yellow paper on the counter as you begin composing a quick heads up for your ex.

“I went out to run some errands. I’ll be back by 7.” — (Y/N)

Though there was the option of sending them a message and be done with it much faster, there was the risk of them asking for specificity. You were more than done arguing with them about what you were choosing to do now that you weren’t together any longer, and it was turning harder each passing month to have a discussion with them without making compromises over any discrepancy you had between you.
A collective laugh fills the room with a sense of tranquility and contentment, the hospitality of the bartender adding volumes to the comfort of your surroundings. You take a sip from the coffee in hand after blowing some of the steam away, the bittersweet taste spreading across your tongue and warming up your face. The cup is set back down as you turn your head left and then right to take in the aspects of the establishment.

From the worn billiard set, the poker table, and the collection of fine and antique alcohol bottles hidden behind the bartender and her boss, it was clear this place was still meant to stand out more at night. The ‘family diner’ aesthetic it tried to keep until five in the evening crumbled whenever you took a closer look at these things, masked only by the bright and cheery menu advertising food and drinks both children and adults could consume freely.

You snap out of it the moment you feel a hand on yours, the cool feeling of bone making recognize the person without having to look up -- though that doesn’t stop you from doing just that, onset to see why the skeleton had chosen to reach out for you. Your eyes adjust to the sight of him busy talking with a duck monster, and you go into deeper observation to see his phone just a few inches away from where your hands laid at. His hand had gone just a little farther from his stool and landed on your own, missing the phone entirely.

Instinctively, you pull back and are presented with him turning around to face you. His irises fall on your face, then your hands, and -- finally -- to his phone. It doesn’t take any words for him to pull back and look away again, muttering a haste but earnest apology from his teeth.

“...”

You aren’t given much time to dwell over that scenario, already reeled into another conversation by the owner of the establishment himself.

“Excuse me? I didn’t catch you the first time, sir.”

Although he required a translator for most people to understand him, you still wanted to keep the polite customs of asking again. His employee -- and presumably, also his daughter -- steps in, her small, dot-like eyes squinted in a way of mimicking a smile.

“He asks if there’s something going on between you and that guy,” she explains, whispering those
last words to avoid the subject of conversation from overhearing what she said.

“No,” you respond, almost instantly, smiling to mask the embarrassment you felt creeping on your shoulders. You remember Papyrus’s words and cling onto them. “We’re just hanging out.”

“…”

Giggling from the fire girl’s part makes you raise an eyebrow, curious as to what Grillby had said to make her react that way. You wait to hear her upcoming translation, though she turns back around one more time to make sure she had heard him right.
Grillby hesitates at the firegirl’s doubt as to whether she should translate his sentence or not. Though he doesn’t have any facial features that resemble eyebrows or a mouth, you’re still able to see confliction when his bright orange fire pales into a yellow colour, eyeglasses focused more than ever on the cup he was wiping down with a cloth. Slowly, he shakes his head from left to right and stops staring at the cup to look at her. He dismisses the idea and delivers another message in return, making her turn back to you.

“He asks if you want a refill for your coffee,” she explains, small, dot-like eyes narrowing in mischief -- you were certain she would be grinning right at this moment if she were to have a mouth. She receives a nudge from Grillby, and the latter stares her down until she gives in to his silent scolding. “And. . . for how long you’ve lived at this city.”

You take the empty coffee mug and hand it over to Grillby, shaking your head ‘no’ in response to his first question. Then, you shift on your seat and think back on how long it had been since your arrival here.

“Three or four months,” you reply, trying to reel your thoughts back in. “I’m still getting used to it, if I’m gonna be honest. The town I lived in was pretty. . . secluded, to say the least. And it didn’t really see all. . . this as acceptable.” You gesture at the premises surrounding you, from the group of six -- four humans and two monsters -- chatting away among themselves and the few families eating together regardless of their appearance or race. It feels like a safe haven for both human and monster kind -- that is, until you hear someone laugh in a mocking manner, the words that follow making you freeze on the spot.

“Never thought a guy like you’d be hanging out with someone like that.”

Tense, you almost crack your neck trying to get a view of who’s talking to who. Your eyes come across a drunken bunny monster with an arm hung over Sans’s shoulders. They seem too close for comfort by the way Sans leans back, though they don’t seem to pick up the signs. Rather, they press themselves even closer to the skeleton’s side, removing their hand away from his shoulders to stand in front of him and jab a finger at his chest.

“You know what people like them do to us,” the monster scolds, ears flopped as they send a disapproving look his way. “Frisk might be nice and all. . . But all the other humans just take advantage of us and spit on our faces whenever they don’t like something about us. A fun guy like you shouldn’t be taking this chore -- leave it to the monsters actually patient enough to deal with humans like (Y/N).”
You gulp down the saliva stuck on your throat, the thick substance almost burning you when it goes down. You’re about to speak when Sans beats you to it.

“Nobody’s free from judgment or consequences,” he intervenes, leaning back until he reaches your seat, his escape from their constant proximity cornering him between you and the bunny monster. “So far, I have no reason not to trust (Y/N), so I’m gonna keep hanging out with them -- whether you like it or not. You’re not my brother or anythin’ like that to be sharing your two cents like this.”

Without any argument to retaliate, the bunny monster scoffs and balls their hands tight. They spare a glare your way and push themselves between you and Sans, jabbing a finger at your chest the same way they had done with him.

“You better watch what you’re doing, (Y/N),” they hiss, words heavy with venom and rencor. “This may be a friendly place, but that doesn’t mean I like the game you’re playing with us here -- You can’t just jump in on this city all of a sudden and act like you’re not one of those people who want nothing to do with us in the first place.”

“I think you could use a moment to cool down,” you reason, trying to ease them down. The thick, orange hairs on their arms are all ruffled and their ears are perked up, signaling they were on edge and ready to keep going with their argument. Instead of following along, you push their finger away from your chest and look at them in the eyes. The smell of booze is strong and prominent in their breath, though -- from the looks of it -- it seems they’d already entered the premises drunker than the average person could probably tolerate. “Do you want some water or anything to wash down what you had?”

“I’m fine as is.” They end that sentence with a sharp finality behind their voice, glaring at you and Sans one final time before pulling away and stomping off to one of the empty tables around. Grillby only spares the two of you a look along the lines of if should he throw them out or not, but you shake your head gently and manage to regain some calm, assuring him it was fine as long as they didn’t turn to insults or threats again.

It’s one hour earlier from the time you expected to be back when you make it to the safety of your home. Sans is walking next to you, still choosing to stay by your side after the tense incident at the bar. He looked to be onset on keeping you company until the very end as a way to make up for that
You reach your front door without so much as a word exchanged between you, the tentative subject you had between you refusing to be addressed. The door opens with a click after you insert the key and turn it around.

“Do you want to come in? There’s no one here -- Faust’s still with his other parent, so he won’t be back until two more hours.” A faint heat rises your cheeks when remembering the night you first shared with your ex. You’d done something like this -- the cliche of saying your family wasn’t home, with the addition that your bed had room for two.

“Sure,” he replies, a chuckle finally breaking the dubiousness he seemed to have on his face since leaving Grillby’s diner-slash-bar. “I don’t really feel like being alone to think right now.”

The two of you enter your home and settle on the living room. You quickly resort to bringing up the only other subject you could think about out of the few you had to choose: how work was going for him, and how it was on your side. The elephant in the room shrinks in size the more you exchange words with him, growing more at comfort the more minutes go by.

“So how’s it going for you?” the skeleton asks, deciding to change the topic of his job and the new things that came to him each day at work. Now, the attention was concentrated on you as he waited for your response. “That flour in your hair from a few weeks ago has to mean something. Do you always bake stuff for the shop, or do you only work behind the counter?”

“I’ve been in charge of breadmaking recently,” you reply, placing your hands on your lap. “But that’s really all I can bake properly -- I’ve been meaning to take a course on baking, but I can’t really do that right now with our budget, schedule, and all that.”

He arches an eye socket, staring at you, a puzzled look showing on the white light of his irises. “Do you always have Faust with you still? I figured his other parent would wanna split the time now that they’re back.”

“Oh no,” you correct, shaking your head with a strained smile. “They’re not back permanently -- they usually come over to visit on holidays or summer, but they’ve been visiting more often lately to see how Faust’s doing at school. I still have him with me seven days a week.”

The more you talk about that subject, the more you begin to think you were being taken as a fool
by your ex, but you weren’t exactly ready to come to that conclusion just yet. You still understood they had to help out their family to adjust in life overseas, and that they would come back as soon as that was settled with. You were told to wait -- a wait that seemed to be stretching out more and more each day.

“You doing okay there, pal?”

You’re shaken out of your spiral at the sound of Sans speaking up again. You look at him again to see a touch of concern marked on the white of his irises -- as if fearing he’d taken up a touchy subject.

“Yeah. . .” The word that leaves your mouth doesn’t quite match what you choose to do next. Slowly, you shuffle closer to his side and hesitate when it’s time to follow with the next step. You wanted nothing more than to ask if he’d like to go for a walk with you until you cleared your head, yet the drunken bunny’s words kept you from doing that. “I just. . . have a lot on my mind right now.”
The next day, you’re still thinking about what happened at Grillby’s. You reflect on the tension that put in your relationship with Sans and pretty much every other monster you came across with, adding to those thoughts the long time you had been waiting for your ex to be back permanently -- to split the time you each spent looking after Faust. Today, according to your calendar, marked a year and a half since your divorce, and a year since they went away and left you with Faust seven days a week. Reflecting on any of these three subjects was becoming a burden to you. All you wanted at this moment was some peace of mind to continue preparing the dough for the bread.

“We need two more pounds at the register, (Y/N)!” your boss exclaims from the front desk, the sound of people chatting making it hard for you to hear her clearly. “And a separate one for another customer!”

You sweep off three long loaves of bread from the stock -- one wrapped individually -- and rush out of the kitchen. There’s a lengthy line behind her register, and you can see a few people growing impatient with the wait by the way they tap their foot or cross their arms. You hand her the three pounds of bread and ask if she needs anything else.

“A dozen glazed doughnuts and the ice cream cake I put in the freezer,” she instructs, taking the bread from your hands. “The client requests ‘Happy Birthday’ written in purple icing.”

“You got it, boss,” you reply, nodding as you turn to leave back to the kitchen. It was still hard for you to process how different this job was from the one as an officer keeping watch on the streets.

The familiar scent of bread and pastries wafts through the air as you rush back in, keeping your boss’s orders listed on your mind. You choose to ice the cake first and place it in a small, white box after finishing with the second ‘y’ on ‘Happy’ Birthday’. You take that box along with the dozen of doughnuts back to the front counter, carefully holding onto both items with both your hands while you use your hip to push the door open.

“Thanks, honey.” Your boss takes the two boxes away from your hands and places them on the counter. Then, she excuses herself from the customer in front of her and turns to you, wiping her hands on the white towel hanging on her pocket before continuing. “Take twenty -- the shopkeeper bunny I told you about will take care of the back for the next few hours, so we’ll be covered while you’re gone.”

You nod and set yourself on going to the employee’s lounge. There, you untie and take off your flour-stained apron and the hair net wrapped around your scalp. Once that’s out of the way, the
items are set aside on the small couch set on a corner of the room, and you make sure to look at yourself in the mirror hanging above the furniture before doing anything else. The memory of the flour in your hair makes you check twice around.

“Hey. . .”

That single word is whispered behind you. The ghostly sound almost makes you retaliate towards the direction of that voice, but you hold yourself back when coming across a winged monster half your size. Her face is contorted into one of fear and her small body shakes, most likely ready to endure whatever form of attack you were going to direct right at her face. Embarrassed, you cough and adjust yourself before apologizing.

“Sorry about that,” you speak up, words coming out muttered and about as quiet as the eerie whisper most likely meant to be an inoffensive greeting on the Whimsun's part. “You scared me -- I didn’t think another employee would be showing up besides the bunny woman.”

“I get that a lot,” the Whimsun replies, giggling. “I’m not very good at speaking too loud. . . so people always say I’m more like a ghost than an actual Whimsun.”

“Still, I'm sorry -- I could've hurt you.” you insist, now looking to introduce yourself to make up scare she'd give you, and vice versa. “It’s nice to meet you miss. . .” You squint to see the name tag on her pink apron. “Sunny?”

“Yup!” she replies, her frail expression changing into a bright and happier one. “I was nicknamed that by my friends when we saw the Sun for the first time here.”

“Oh. . .” You feel your body freeze at her comment, the way she says it almost making it hard for you to believe monsters like her were still experiencing things for the first time here at the Surface. “What about the stars? It’s pretty hard to see them here in the city, but the towns across have lots of them.”

“I’ve seen them, too!” she chirps. “The sparkling rocks at Waterfall were nice. . . but the stars here are something else!”

You smile at her excitement and walk with her to the small couch. Rather than going out to take in the air outside the bakery, the two of you chat about the differences between Waterfall and the Surface until your twenty minutes run out. She even exchanges phone numbers with you before
you leave to wash up and head back to work.

It amazed you when you thought of how different her perspective seemed to be -- You’d heard of Waterfall before, and the pictures you saw showed beautiful flowers similar to those Sans had shown you at Toriel’s garden. It was a place widely known around the Surface for its glistening puddles and a large waterfall brimming with clear water.

While you found more beauty in Waterfall, the tiny Whimsun saw more beauty in the stars and the Sun.

You arrive home to a quiet and empty house. The hectic day at the bakery had led you to leave work at four instead of two, and you had to call Faust’s principal -- Toriel -- to notify the child of it. You instructed him to take the bus back home, thankful you’d given him a copy of your keys since moving to this city. Even with that reassurance, however, you still found it difficult to breathe at the sight of an empty living room and kitchen -- Faust was nowhere to be seen downstairs.

“Faust?” you call out, receiving no response.

Breathing becomes even more difficult for you as you go up the stairs, ready to check both the two bedrooms and the bathroom.

“Faust!”

The rest of the search is completed in a haste, with you running to and back the rooms, checking to see if he was playing some sort of heavy prank on you. What makes you stop on your frantic search is a note resting under the lamp of your bedroom’s dressing room. You take it out carefully and unfold the paper, the words you read causing the world around you to spin.

“*I’m taking Faust with me. He’s better with me than with someone who gets into fights with*
There’s something else written on the back of the note. You turn to read it almost instantly, the words adding fuel to your fire. Your fury makes your hands tremble and for your surroundings to blur into incomprehensible shapes and colours.

“Have fun with that ‘Sam’ guy. Tell him thanks for tutoring Faust, something you could’ve done on your own.”
New Recipes

Chapter Notes

Two updates will be made both today and this Thursday to make up for last week's missed updates.

Updates will return to normal afterwards!

Third Person POV

Sans's Perspective

“So when was the last time you saw them?” Undyne asks, directing her words at the skeleton, who was too caught up in his conversation with her to pay attention to anything else.

“A week ago,” he replies, a breathy chuckle leaving his teeth. “But if I'm gonna be honest, I don’t even know why I’m worryin’ about all this. It ain’t the first time a kid’s been absent for more than three days.”

“That’s what happens when those people are your friends,” the fish lady sneers, grin bright and wide as she snickers at the skeleton’s words. “Of course it’s normal for you to worry about ‘em. Don’t you feel the same about Grillby and all your friends at the bar?”

Sans sighs as he leans his head back on the dining chair, the scent of pasta boiling reaching his nasal cavity. “Yeah, I guess,” he comments, shrugging his shoulders bones and making eye contact with Undyne. “It kinda just feels weird -- making new friends, I mean. It’s like I’m living things all over again, gettin’ to feel and see all new kinds of stuff.”

“Like that time you invited them over to see Toriel’s garden?”

“That was Frisk's idea,” he objects, a laugh leaving his teeth. “But yeah, it was pretty nice -- I wouldn’t mind gettin’ to do something like that again.”

His conversation with Undyne is interrupted by Papyrus placing a steaming hot plate of pasta between him and the fish lady. He greets the two with a cheerful smile, the look on his skull making it clear he waited for them to give the new recipe a try.
“Thanks, Paps,” Sans speaks up, directing a freer smile towards his brother.

“Who gave you the recipe anyway?” Undyne asks, looking down at the plate to see colourful, ribbon-shaped pasta with garlicked broccoli on the side.

“It was (Y/N)!" Papyrus exclaims, excitement in his voice. “We have kept in touch ever since we went to visit them when they were sick!”

The elder skeleton stifles a laugh at his younger brother’s comment, finding it amusing how eager he was when it came to making friends who could cook. “I didn’t know you were pals. Are you guys friends on Overnet?”

“Why, yes,” the taller skeleton replies, nodding firmly. “I saw you were friends with them there, hence why I figured I could do that myself. I was surprised to hear they work at a bakery rather than a restaurant!”

“Wasn’t (Y/N) an officer before that, too?” Undyne chimes in, interest in her voice.

Both heads turn to look at Sans, the two aware he was the most acquainted with the human to know more about the topic. Papyrus seems to be the least informed of the pair, though he waits with the same amount of eagerness as the woman next to him. Sans’s smile widens at that sigh, though he tries to hide it by shifting on his seat and looking elsewhere.

“Yeah, but they quit after what happened at their town with the monsters that moved in there.”

“You mean that thing about keeping them in categories?”

Sans nods at Undyne’s question, tapping his fingers against the wooden surface of the table. Steam has stopped rising from the plate, though when he pricks the pasta with the fork and moves some aside, a little puff of heat rises from it.

“The new lay off got to them first, but it was still for the same reasons,” he explains, pinching a small portion of pasta through the throngs of the fork. “The department over there didn’t want officers who thought monsters should be treated the same as humans.”
Sans brings the food to his teeth, using his malleable cheekbones to chew on the food. He remembers the day (Y/N) invited him out for cold sandwiches and a cup of coffee. The human had been enjoying their food too much to notice how his cheekbones could move in order to let him chew, but he was certain they would react just like the time they had accidentally popped his hand from its socket. It was similar to how people looked at him strangely for the fact that he had irises instead of hollow eye sockets, with the exception that there were people like (Y/N) who wanted to understand those differences, rather than avoiding them.

“You spaced out,” Undyne comments, her cheeky tone of voice making him more alert of his surroundings. “Thinking about (Y/N) again now? I don’t blame you for it, though -- It has been a week since you last saw them.”

“What’re playin’ at Undyne?”

Undyne shrugs, leaning her back against the seat. The dining chair creaks as she props the seat on two legs and holds it back with the wall behind her. Confidence emanates from her body as a smile spreads on her face.

“I’m just saying,” she dismisses, pose unwavering. “I think it’s pretty cool you’re thinking more about stuff like this now.”

“Whaddy mean by--“

“I agree,” Papyrus interrupts, booming with joy. “You are worrying more about those two humans with each passing day! It is nice to see you happy with this choice, brother.”

“Thanks, Paps,” Sans relents, letting out a mix between an exhale and a laugh. “I, uh, appreciate your support.”

“That is my duty as family. I do not wish to see you down, nor against meeting new people. Our lives at the Surface are just beginning -- for all thousands of us. We should all be deserving of fulfilling something from this milestone.”

The conversation simmers down as Sans continues to eat from his portion of the meal. Undyne begins as well, already halfway done when she compliments Papyrus for his recipe. He says his own words of praise, the new dish he had gotten to taste along with the improvement in Papyrus’s
cooking skills being enough of a reason for him to finish until the last bite. The peppery seasoning brings bursts of flavour and the mild taste of the pasta contrasts with the broccoli dipped in garlic broth.

He glances a look at his phone after eating, spotting three new unread messages from Toriel. It’s as if instant regret falls upon him the precise moment he skims through them.

*Greetings, Sans! I hope you are well. 3:-)*

*This is to inform you that Faust’s mathematics lessons have been cancelled as of today. He has been officially marked as a departing student, as he will be studying abroad for the rest of the semester.*

*P.S. If you are in disposal, would you be so kind as to give (miss/mister) (Y/N) a call? I have not been able to contact them ever since the weekend ended. Please do update me on this matter as soon as you are able to.*

Sans stares at the messages and reads them over again, disbelief being the primary emotion to stick out from all the questions he had. He locks the phone, sets it down, and thinks on how to respond, finding himself hesitant to delve further into his thoughts.
Chapter Notes

Based on the survey results on Quotev, your ex will now be named Jessie – a gender-neutral name to keep their gender up to your sexuality/orientation.

Your eyelids weigh down on your sight as the sound of your fingers hitting the keyboard lull you into a dulled, drowsy trance. You can feel your breathing slow as tiredness continues to rise and take over your body. It takes some willpower and a quick gulp of water from the bottle you placed nearby to wake up. Followed by that is the sound of a new notification on your phone, two more of the same sound making it known it was a string of the same notification. You stop on your research to check what it is and come across three messages from Sans on Overnet.

hey.

can we meet up somewhere?
i need to talk to you about somethin’.

You feel reluctant to respond, a wave of guilt washing over you. A full week had gone by since the day Faust was taken away by Jessie overseas. The pair were currently living in the house Jessie shared with their new lover, and your son was already midway into the process of enrolling into a new school. You responded to Toriel’s calls only twice, the second time you used to finally tell her Faust wouldn’t be attending her school any longer.

Sure.

I’m at the East Librarby right now.

Think you can make it there, or should we go somewhere else?

there’s fine.

i’ll be there in a few.

The conversation ends with those last two messages from his part. You eye yourself through the poor reflection of your computer screen to make sure you looked presentable enough to meet up with him. Then, you fix your clothes by taking off the baggy jacket you’d worn on the way here.
You hadn’t really bothered trying to fix yourself up too much for the library, given it was only a few blocks away from your home, and that you only chose to make a trip here in order to work on the case involving Faust and Jessie. The only effort you placed on your appearance before leaving the comfort of your home was by fixing your hair, washing your face, and throwing on a jacket over your worn work clothes. You wouldn’t’ve even bothered taking a detour back home after leaving work, if it weren’t for the fact that you had to take your laptop and documents with you to go anywhere with your research.

You set your computer on sleep mode and allow yourself a minute of calm. The silence of the library is enhanced by the hushed murmurs of people around you along with the soft sound of raindrops hitting the roof and windows of the building.

“How long have you been here?” Sans asks, it being his first concern after seeing you wave at him from across the table you were sitting at. “You look like you haven’t seen a bed in years.”

You can’t help the smile that follows with you hearing him speak. His teasing was something you undoubtedly missed since the last time you saw him. You offer the monster a seat next to you and grin, checking the time on the wall clock nearby before answering him.

“A couple of hours.”

“I’m guessin’ the hours from your shift weren’t enough work?”

“I just can’t sleep well at night until I know Faust will be back. I . . . Even if I can’t have him here with me, I want to know I’ll be able to see him.”

“So you haven’t filed a case against Jessie yet?” he asks, furrowing his eye sockets as he leans forward on his chair.

“No,” you reply, shaking your head. You grasp onto the back of your scalp as you look down at your lap, shoulders shaking abruptly with a deep, heavy sigh. “I don’t want to do that yet — I want
to try and fix this first without having to bring in lawyers and all that stuff.”

“That’s dangerous.”

“I— I know, but. . .” You can’t bring yourself to finish your statement, gulping down saliva to prevent your voice from breaking. Your eyes begin to burn as you refuse to blink away the tears building up the further you discuss this subject with him, wanting your eyes to stop watering. “What if I lose the case? The law’s the law, and I won’t be able to fight against it if my ex decides to bring this case to a court that doesn’t allow. . . this.”

You take his hand, making a point by showing the sharp differences of your (s/t) skin against the yellowish, white hue of his bones. His hand is cold, much like some of the reptile and amphibian-like monsters you interacted with at work or when picking up Faust from school. The sudden, risky action on your part is only acknowledged when you level your gaze with his.

“I can’t let that happen,” you add, letting go of his hand and making a mental note to apologize later for the suddenness of your actions. “I can’t lose him — He’s the only good thing that stayed after our divorce. He’s. . . He’s my son.”

“You can make it work,” he states, keeping eye contact with you. “Hell, we can make this work — together. We can hang out like this whenever you need a breather. You don't have to worry all by yourself.”

“Thank you, but I. . . I need to try talking with Jessie first.”

“And if they don’t wanna work things out?”

“Then I’ll try to do that. But right now, I. . . I—“

You stop rambling to take in a shaky breath, a single tear trailing down your cheek. In a haste at trying to cover up, you wipe it off and blink a few times to ease the burning sensation and see past your clouded vision, hoping in vain he hadn’t seen you when looking back to him.

“I think you need a break right now.”
The sound of a chair being pulled back snaps you from your panic. You look back to Sans's side to see him back on his feet, a hand in wait for yours. You manage a smile and decide it’s time to stand up from your own seat, taking his hand only when you’re certain he doesn’t have any sort of prank or trick hidden underneath the work gloves he usually wore.

“I’m surprised you didn’t have anything hidden this time around,” you mention, standing up from your chair.

“I have other ways,” he remarks, directing a wink at you afterwards.

You become alert at the wit and vagueness of his warning. Reflexively, you let go of his hand once you’re standing on firm feet and take a few steps back in precaution, losing track of him the second your eyes avert elsewhere. A soft, quick press on the center of your back makes you jolt, and you reach out behind for whatever’s deemed responsible for that feeling.

Paper crumples and crunches under your touch as you retrieve a sticky note from your back. You unfurl it to see a few words scribbled on it.

“‘Wanna go to the park?’” you read out loud in a tone leveled enough not to disturb the people around you, raising an eyebrow as confusion settles on your thoughts. You look up from the sticky note to see him standing in front of you again, a cheeky look showing on his skull.

“Thought you’d never ask.”

A warmer smile stretches across your lips when taking in the joke the skeleton had made. You fold the note and hide it away in the back pocket of your jeans, smile widening into an earnest, freer grin.

“You’re such a dork,” you comment, a laugh interrupting your words.
The sun is already gone by the time you reach the park. For most of the ride, you drive with the skeleton sitting quietly by the front passenger seat, occasionally initiating conversation with him whenever a topic came to mind. The stress of solving the issue with your son was without a doubt still there, though you reprimanded yourself for that when driving past a yellow light, something you had ticketed various people for -- countless, if you included red lights -- during your short time as a cop. No matter how much worry you were submitted to, you didn’t want to gloss over that negligence, and even less knowing it could lead to accidents.

You don’t notice how much pressure you’re putting into gripping the steering wheel until you settle at the nearest, empty lot available at the park’s premises. A dull, tingling pain emerges the second you let go, a reddish tint showing on your palms.

“It’s a miracle you didn’t tear off the wheel,” Sans comments, chuckling as he steps out of the vehicle alongside you. “Want me to drive the way back?”

“It’s fine,” you reply, shrugging off his words with a small, discreet smile. “I’m... not as stressed as when we were at the library.”

You breathe in as if to compose yourself, though the method is cut short when you hear your phone ring once and then vibrate, signaling a message rather than a call. Reflexively, you take the device out of your jeans’ back pocket and unlock it, disappointment making your shoulders droop when checking what it is. The notification shows a subscription e-mail rather than the text you were waiting to receive from one of your friends well-informed with lawyers. You set the phone on silent and follow Sans to the park, taking in the subtle taste of fresh air around you, a luxury given by having this place a bit farther away from the city.

A blue rabbit monster waves at the two of you as you begin to walk past various benches and tiny, artisanal shops just opening for the night. There’s a shorter, maroon cat standing close by as well, though he’s too busy taking a smoke and just as indulged looking at the darkening sky to notice any changes whatsoever. You wave back at the rabbit and smile, stepping aside when hearing rushed, tip-tapping steps getting closer and closer to the direction you were heading to. A gust of wind follows quickly, barely allowing you enough time to process what was happening.

Barking and low, husky laughter makes you look down to see a white dog standing on top of Sans, his continuous licks at the skeleton’s face being the product of that laughter. You bite back a smile as you watch the two, the dog determined to keep him down while the skeleton struggles to stand up. You lend a hand by crouching to pick up the dog, his thick coat of fur tickling your face when taking him in your hold.
“Is he yours?” you ask, the smile you were keeping hidden finally showing on your face.

“Kind of,” Sans replies, propping himself up with his arms to sit on the ground and look up at you. “Paps finds him at our kitchen every once in a while, but the lil’ guy never really stays in one place for more than two seconds.”

“Must be a handful then, huh?” You grin at that observation and place the dog back down on the ground, only letting go when you’re certain he won’t jump at the skeleton again. “Do you have a bowl, food, and all that stuff for when he’s back?”

“I’d be lyin’ if I said I don't go to PetSmart every now and then for the guy.”

Your expression brightens more at that image, and you take the opportunity to deepen your conversation with him. “What about Papyrus? I take it he’s angry whenever the dog messes with the kitchen?”

“Oh, definitely,” he remarks, a laugh making his smile tug slightly at the sides. “But he’s the first one who brings up a bowl of food whenever Toby’s back.”

You help Sans up with one hand and pick up the dog with both once you’re done. Then, you follow him to one of the benches, sitting just a few feet away from the ice cream cart the blue bunny owned. The dog settles on your lap whereas Sans sits next to you, the proximity not as awkward as when you were first getting to know him.

“That’s a cute name,” you comment, smiling. You take Toby in your hands and hold him up in the air. “It suits you, doesn’t it?”

The dog responds with an animated ‘woof’ and sticks his tongue out, ready to lick at your face, though you bring him back down before he has the chance to. He circles around your lap two times before finding a comfortable spot, resting his face against your arm by using it as a pillow of sorts. Not long after, he closes his eyes and drifts off to sleep, the energy and spontaneity of the moment slowly dissipating back into calm.

Sonder settles in when you cast your eyes forward, observing how couples, families, and people gathered around the park, some stopping to buy food from the shops while others went straight away to having fun. You look next to you to see Sans staring down at the dog, though he quickly
looks up when feeling your gaze on him.

Without a word, he scoots a little closer to your side and maintains eye contact with you, white irises reflecting your face on them. He shuffles on his seat and coughs, breaking the silence that formed since Toby fell asleep.

“You want somethin’ from one of the shops?” he asks. “My treat.”

You nod and form a smile. “That’d be nice.”

Slowly, you take the dog in your hands again and cradle him between your neck and shoulder, careful not to wake him up with your movement. The crowd has grown noticeably in size by how much you have to step aside to give passerby space to walk past you, the act leading you to walk side-by-side with Sans and the dog still in hold. A jogger stops close by and spares an odd look your way, though he shrugs before taking a sip from his water bottle and sprinting off again from the scene.

It’s subtle looks like those that remind you of what got you into this mess in the first place. Hadn’t you chosen to go against the new laws set up at your hometown, and moved to a city allowing both human and monster kind to work together, you wouldn’t’ve ended up having to go through what you hoped was the temporary loss of your son.

What stops you from thinking negatively about that matter is the dog that presses himself closer to you when shifting in his sleep and the presence of Sans handing you a popsicle with the name ‘Nice Cream’ labeled on the wrapper.

He helps you with taking off the wrapper -- given you were occupied holding Toby -- and you reach out for it with your free hand. You cast a subtle, curious look his way when he hides the wrapper away from your sight, managing to see some letters on the wrapper, but not being able to read them.
Opening Up

You thank your neighbour for the coffee and turn your back on her when you reach the sink. The scent of dish soap overpowers the lingering smell of the caffeinated drink when you pick up the wash cloth and begin wiping the cup clean. It’s evident you’re trying to avoid a specific topic of conversation with her by how long it takes you to clean up.

“Are you sure about this?” Solana asks, still unconvinced with the options you were taking into consideration. “I mean, if you tried to work it out before, but even then they still didn’t cooperate. . . I think it’s a bit risky.”

The taste of iron makes you stop chewing on the inside of your lip. You hold onto the coffee mug tighter than before, hands losing their coordination with the longer it takes you to be honest with your neighbour. You didn’t want to tell her you had already sent a message to Jessie saying you wanted to talk things out with them. A part of you demands honesty, while the other fears how she would react if she knew you were trying to get in contact with Jessie for the past two weeks, in spite of receiving no response on their end.

You turn to face her and lean back on the kitchen counter. “But what’ll happen if they take the case to my town or somewhere similar?” you ask, a frown on your face. “You know those places still have their laws against monsters.”

“That’s still not an excuse. They shouldn’t shut down your case just because you’ve made friends with a few monsters. Hell, Faust studied in a place full of ‘em! Jessie should’ve had a word against it since the beginning, not just now — all out of the blue.”

You let out a breath and rub the back of your neck, facing down slightly to avoid her sharp stare. Your mind is conflicted as to what you should do, and it doesn’t help that you can’t stop thinking about the actions you’ve taken up until now.

“Think about it,” she advises, stern voice contrasting with the gentle expression on her face. “You have a lawyer, evidence, and even a few witnesses if you ask them beforehand. If Jessie wanted to fix things, they wouldn’t have taken Faust away like that.”

“Thank you, Sol,” you mutter, voice groggy with confliction and a general lack of proper sleep. “I. . . I’ll give it another day to think about it.”
“I’ll take your word for it.”

Ready to say your goodbyes before you can get any further with that topic, you stop leaning against the counter and walk to her side. You kiss her on the cheek and receive one back before taking your leave, a farewell customary of her country. Tiredness reaches your muscles when you walk out of the house, the feeling reminding your weary self of just how many nights of sleep you’d lost since Faust was taken away from you.

A cold, light breeze blows by when you step outside, said action retrieving an involuntary shudder from your body. You shove your hands in the pockets of your (jeans/skirt) and keep walking, wanting nothing more than to reach the warmth of your home and think over what you were to do next. The shiny, wet asphalt is slippery under the soles of your shoes, forcing you to walk with caution.

A buzz from your phone makes you stop barely feet away from the entrance of your home. You reach out for it to see a reply to one of the strings of messages sent to your ex.

How is he?

I haven’t seen him in a week.
— Sent a week ago.

It’s been two weeks and I haven’t received a response from you.
— Sent two days ago.

I want to talk things out with you.
— Sent five hours ago.

Like hell I will.

You think I don’t know what you’re doing over there? >> Attachment: 1 image <<

You click on the attachment and wait for it to load. The image shows you holding onto the white Pomeranian from the park with one hand, and walking side-by-side with Sans. What makes the
picture stand out is how close you’re walking beside him and the smile that shows on your face.

You were with that Sam guy again, real close to be just a goddamned tutor.

How long did it take for him to end up stuck with you?

What the hell.

How did you even take that picture?

Aren’t you supposed to be overseas?

I am.

But that doesn’t mean I’m not watching how you dig yourself deeper into a hole.

More than angry, you turn off your phone, look back one final time at your neighbour’s door, and rush off back home. Anger and adrenaline fuel your flame in an instant while your hand continues to squeeze the phone in your hold.

As soon as you reach the privacy of your home, you sit down on the smallest couch and cover your face with your hands, letting out air through your nose. A shaky nose flare makes it clear you’re not ready to be facing all this yet.

It was becoming harder for you to keep your patience now that you’d gone two weeks without hearing anything from Faust. Jessie was persistent when it came to doing things their way, and you were losing hope of taking a less strict approach to solve the problem. With each ignored phone call and text message came a frustration you couldn’t seem to shake off during your sleep, and the lack of it only worsened your situation.

You decide to stand up after a few minutes pass, not wanting to wallow in your doubts and errors despite how much your body pled for you to stay and rest a bit longer. You head to the kitchen and stand in front of the refrigerator. There, you retrieve a water bottle and lean back on the counter after closing the door. The only thing you manage to do is to open up the bottle and drink half of it, right before another noise and vibration from your phone interrupt you from your attempt at distracting yourself from the problem in hand.

A scowl shapes your mouth when you pull the phone out of your (jeans’/skirt’s) back pocket, mind
already speculating around what other accusations Jessie would come up with. It’s a pleasant surprise when you see a different name marked on the caller ID. Relief makes you smile as you take the call and press the phone against your ear.

“Hello?” you answer.

“Hey,” Sans replies, his background quiet while yours carried the sound of the refrigerator running. “I have Faust's credit transcript printed out. Tori gave 'em to me yesterday, but since you're still trying to figure things out, I was wonderin’ if you wanted to hold it back for now.”

“Yeah,” you reply, voice shaking with fury despite your better judgement. One thing you didn't like about having specialized in criminal justice, only to quit your job barely a year into was just how downgraded and ashamed you felt when being put against something like this. “I'm gonna file a case against them, so please don't send it out yet.”

A reflective hum comes out as a low, soft breath from the other line when you say those words. Anxiously, you swish and swirl the contents of your water bottle as you wait for a response.

“Alright,” he speaks, the once silent background broken by the sound of papers shuffling and a drawer being shut closed. “I won't do that yet, but you'll have to keep Tori updated about it.”

You open your mouth to speak up, though Sans beats you to it.

“But you doing okay over there, (Y/N)? You don’t sound too happy.”

Choice #2:

What will you do next?

a.) Tell him it’s nothing.

b.) Tell him the partial truth.

c.) Ask how he’s doing instead.

d.) Come up with a white lie.
You tell him it’s nothing.

“I’m just tired,” you add after that, strengthening your resolve by not letting the truth of the situation slip from your tongue.

Sans sounds reluctant and generally unconvinced by your response, though he doesn’t push further from that. You ask how’s work going for him to make up for it, yet the conversation falls short the second he gives you an answer. The last thing you say before hanging up is a quick goodbye, not knowing what other topic of conversation you could bring up that wouldn’t involve anything personal.

It’s at that moment that you realize that -- if it weren’t for Faust -- you would have never met with Sans in the first place. Almost all of the time you had spent with the monster was when Faust was around. Now that he wasn’t, it was harder for you to keep what you had with the tutor of your son.

You finish the remaining half of the water and toss the empty bottle in the recycling bin. Then, you lean on the counter again and huff. The time you had to spare now that you didn’t have the responsibility of looking after Faust makes you wish you could find something else that could distract your mind.

A scoff in annoyance leaves your mouth the moment your phone rings once with a new notification. You look at it to see the one thing you were expecting: another text from your ex.

Remember to bring me Faust’s grades and transcript as soon as they’re out.
You tell him the partial truth.

He stays silent all the way until your last word, and only speaks up when you’re done.

“So you’re gonna bring this to court, then?”

“Yeah,” you reply, chewing on the inside of your lip, a custom that had grown on you ever since Faust went missing around the house. “I’ll use the messages, the missed calls, the note, and a witness as evidence. Sunny, my co-worker, she. . . She accompanied me on the way back from work. I had to work overtime that day, so she saw when I entered the house and came back out to her with the note in hand. I . . . I just hope it’s enough.”

“If it ain’t, something’s wrong with the judge,” Sans comments, chuckling. “You look like you’re covered on that part, but you don’t sound too good right now. If you’re gonna go up there to the judge, you gotta be sure about it.”

“I’m worried I’ll lose Faust,” you add, voice trembling at that sole sentence, the mere thought of not getting to see him again making your knees quake just as much as your words. “I don’t want to think what would happen if I lost the case.”

“You’ve said than ten times already, (Y/N).” Sans laughs again, though it isn’t mocking. If anything, he sounds genuine from the other line. “I get that you’re worried about him -- Hell, Papyrus’s is all I got, so I get that feeling whenever he comes home late, or whenever there’s an accident close to where he works. I know you don’t wanna lose him, but you gotta stay calm first. It won’t help you if you can’t think clearly.”

Breathing in and then out, you feel weight fall from your shoulders as you conclude your conversation with him. It’s already been an hour by the time you’re finished talking.

“Thank you -- I really can’t stress this enough,” you speak up, ready to say your goodbyes. “It was. . . It really helped having you listen.” You pause, mind feeling lighter since picking up the call. “Talk to you later? I know you must be busy.”

“Sure -- Sounds good,” Sans replies. “Talk to you later, (Y/N). I miss having you and Faust around the school -- It’s a real change without you two.”
The call ends with that last sentence, one you weren't able to reciprocate fast enough before he got to hang up. Happy all the same, you look down at the call history with a smile. Then, you lock the phone and set it back down on the kitchen counter, only to have it ring again -- with the exception it was a text rather than a call.

**Remember to bring me Faust’s grades and transcript as soon as they’re out.**

It’s a message from Jessie. What helps you not want to scowl or frown at that name is the talk you had with Sans.

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**Choice C**

You ask how he’s doing instead.

“I appreciate the sentiment and all, but I don’t think it’s me you should be worryin’ about right now,” he replies, his tone firm yet teasing all the same. “Did somethin’ happen with Faust? I figured somethin’ bad came up now that you’re asking for that credit transcript.”

“It’s Jessie,” you explain, sighing as you pinch the bridge of your nose with your fingers, and use your other hand to keep the phone pressed to your ear. “They want it asap, but I’ve... I’ve had a change of heart. I don’t want to negotiate with them anymore.”

It’s quiet on the other line for a few seconds, until you hear him speak again. “I’m guessin’ they ticked you off for the last time? It doesn’t sound like you’re doing this for no reason.”

“Well, actually...” You trail off on your words, wording out your thoughts and doubts before getting to say them out loud. “I’m going to bring this to court very soon.”

A smile forms on your face as you’re finally able to be honest with yourself. You tell him all about
the evidence, the witness, and the note you had found in your room. Once you’re through with that, you can feel your thoughts weighing less on you, and you finally ask how things are going on his side.

“I’m doing good,” he replies, a snicker being heard from the other line. “Better now that I know you’re gonna try and bring the kid back home. It’s a big difference without him and you around.”

The call ends shortly after that, and you’re left once more to the silence of your home, with the exclusion of the notification sound that makes your phone vibrate in your hold.

**Remember to bring me Faust’s grades and transcript as soon as they’re out.**

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*Choice D*

You come up with a white lie.

He doesn’t believe you for one second.

“Is that really the best you can come up with?” Sans teases. You can picture the bashful look on his skull in spite of not being able to see him. “I’m surprised you’re such a bad liar, (Y/N) -- white lie through a telephone, where I can’t even see your face and all.”

“Stop laughing!” you exclaim, furrowing your gaze at nobody in particular besides the refrigerator next to you. “I was trying to be serious -- Not all of it’s a lie, y’know?”

“That’s why I called it a white lie,” he defends, chuckling. “I figured you’d be better at this given what your specialization’s about.”

“My main job was to ticket people for passing red lights,” you joke, giving in to his teasing and
following with it. “I’m basically that bunny from Zootopia on that scene with the parking meters and stuff.”

“I can picture that like daylight.” He stops with his mischief, his tone changing for a more serious one. “But really, (Y/N), what’s up? I doubt the sale you missed at the supermarket’s what’s making you sound so sad.”

“You underestimate my dedication for affordable prices.”

“Gonna get back at me for playin’ around with ya, huh?”

You both burst into laughter at that final comment of his. The conversation carries on after that, and you manage to avoid telling him what was really bothering you. You don’t feel too good about it when you hang up, though remembering the laughs you shared with him helps to some extent.

Letting out a small breath, you aim to place the phone down on the counter, but are stopped by the notification sound going off once. You pick it back up and scoff, the person you least wanted to think about showing on the screen.

**Remember to bring me Faust’s grades and transcript as soon as they’re out.**
“So how’s yer (girlfriend/boyfriend) doing these days?” Gerson asks, setting down a small stack of papers on his desk before getting to look at Sans, who was busy helping him move twice the amount of luggage into the office.

Though the turtle monster had lived a long life and accomplished numerous things ever since he was young, some things were becoming harder to do with each passing year. Now, he needed help with simple tasks. Simply moving a stack of graded papers and diplomas back into his office was hard for him at his age. Sans had offered to help, given the school was clean and the students were all inside the classrooms, busy taking their two p.m. classes.

“My what?” the skeleton questions, arching an eye socket as mirth slips from his tone. “I’m not going out with anyone.”

“(Miss/Mister) (L/N),” he clarifies. “Haven’t heard from ‘em in a while. Didn’t ya always visit their house on Fridays, but then stopped aluva sudden?”

Sans places the papers down on the desk and wipes a few drops of sweat from his forehead, the hot day letting him know summer was just around the corner along with its companion: humidity. Not even the air conditioner seemed to be working with how high the temperature was.

He slides his hands inside his front pockets and turns to look at the elderly monster, aware he was in danger of being reeled into a long conversation about his relationship with (Y/N) -- a topic he’d been trying to avoid ever since the turtle found out he was printing the credit transcript for Faust.

“Yeah, but their kid switched schools, so I don’t get to do that anymore.”

Gerson hums at the former tutor’s quick response, a smile making his wrinkly expression soften and for his working eye to narrow with interest. Sans grows even more uncertain of what direction he’s about to be pulled into, fearing the conversation would only deepen further if he added too many details regarding that topic.
“And why’re ya acting all chummy with a human, anyway? Didn’t ya say you didn’t trust most of ’em a while back?”

“I never said that,” Sans objects, sending a disapproving look his way. “I just don’t like how some of ’em treat Frisk and every other person who’s in favour of Tori foundin’ this school.”

“Yer hung up about the past, ain’t ya? None of us were ready for what happened -- Not even Fluffybuns expected that much hostility from the Surface.”

“I ain’t thinking about the past. That’s just how things are.”

“Sans, my boy, I’ve lived long enough to know you're stuck right now. Heck, I’ve lived through plenty of those feelings myself! Sure, life ain’t always pretty or peachy -- most of the time it's not. But now that you’ve made friends with (Y/N), you should pay attention to how much distance you’ve kept and how much of it you’ve closed with them.”

“I’m doing that already,” Sans remarks, setting another stack of papers down with a dull thud.

“I figured you’d say that!” Gerson comments, a cackle making his smile grow wider. “Why, it was yer brother who convinced ya to make friends with ‘em, wasn’t it? But even then -- Think about what I’ve said, Sans. I don’t wanna see ya lose that friendship with them now that their kid’s outta the picture. You’ve got no pretext to hang out with them now, but you can still keep in touch if you like (Y/N) enough.”

“Sans?”

(Y/N) calling out his name makes him stop and think about what he’s doing. He looks down to see his hand on their knee, the fabric of their work uniform being the only thing to keep distance between him and them. A little too quickly, he pulls back and scoots away, facing every other direction except their eyes. They don’t seem fazed through plain sight, though by further observation, he can see they’re just as reluctant to face him directly.
Sans shakes his head and dismisses their worry with the wave of his hand, falling back into the swing of things with the sound of the city and people walking to and back the streets. (Y/N)’s work uniform and the yellow folder they’re holding onto makes him remember just what he was talking about before he drifted away from the conversation.

“Sorry about that,” he speaks up, coughing away the startle from being caught with his head in the clouds -- plus a hand on their knee. “I was talkin’ with a co-worker before this, and it just got me thinking.”

“How about what?” they ask, a smile on their face.

He stops to think on whether he should truly say what’s on his mind or not. It’s hard for him to put it into words without making them think he didn’t enjoy their company. Though he had tried his best to follow Papyrus’s advice on how to maintain his friendship with the human, he wasn’t too sure about it now that Gerson had called him out on that. He was still getting used to the subject of making new friends, and it was harder to do now that he couldn’t seem to feel at ease when being too close to (Y/N).

After some thought, Sans settles on the former, realizing he kept silence for just a little too long. “About how I’ve been acting around you,” he replies, meeting with their curious stare. He stops to find further words to include in his explanation, already seeing confusion settle on their face. “I don’t know if I’ve been too distant or not, but I want you to know that, uh, you’ve been a pretty good friend, (Y/N). That phone call we had the other day... You can call me when you need someone to talk to -- You don’t need to keep everything all to yourself.”

He stops to look at (Y/N), their raised eyebrow and barely contained smile making it known he’d been rambling. They don’t say anything, however, and only wait for him to continue with his train of thought.

“So I guess what I want you to know’s that, aside from the former tutor of your son, I’m your friend -- And I’m sorry if it didn’t translate as that before.”

“What are you even saying, Sans?” (Y/N) asks, an honest, spirited laugh making their face light up with joy. “That’s about the last thing you need to clarify with me. After all the things you’ve done for me -- for us. . . How can I not see you as a friend?”

Sans leans back even further when having them shift on the park bench, their presence just a little too close for what his mind was going through at the moment. A single, loud honk from one of the passing cars makes him snap out of it and encourages him to look at (Y/N) again.
“I can’t reject saying that hearing you say all that helps clear up some stuff, but you don’t need to act that way around me. I’ve said it once and I’ll say it again,” The human stops to grin at him, playfully jabbing a finger against his chest -- more specifically, the center of his ribcage. “You’re a dork... But I wouldn't have it any other way.”
You pick up the yellow folder Sans had given you the day before and begin scouring through its contents. The first thing you retrieve is Faust’s semester-long report card: D & B in Math, A & A in English, C & B in Spanish, B & B in Physical Education, and so on. You smile at the sight of the Math grades and then at the Spanish ones, grateful you had people like Sans and Solana around to aid in the education of your son.

The next thing you take out is a neatly folded paper. Intrigued, you unfold it and flatten out its few wrinkles with your hand. Your eyes widen when seeing it’s a drawing of five people: Jessie, their new lover, Sans, Faust, and yourself. Below the drawing is an eight sentence paragraph with the title ‘Family’ above it.

Family

It is very weird and confusing, but I like it. I have a (mother/father) named (Y/N), a (mom/dad) named Jessie, and a stepparent named Lucy. Lucy lives with Jessie at (hometown). There is also a tutor named Sans. (Mother/Father) likes to spend time with him, and I do too! He is nice and funny. He is different from (Y/N), but they are still good friends. My real mom and dad could not take care of me, but I am happy with my new family.

A few tears are running down your face by the time you finish reading. Hastily, you wipe them away and breathe in, swallowing the tension stuck on the very center of your throat. There’s a little 20/20 scribbled at the bottom, along with the sketch of a smiling goat woman resembling Toriel. You figure English is given by her and wonder briefly over how she managed being both a principal and an English teacher at once.

Snapping back to the present, you gasp and quickly wipe away the paper when noticing a few drops had fallen on it, being careful so as to not damage either the drawing or the words written above it. A sudden thought of sharing the drawing -- or at least, part of it -- crosses your mind.

Grinning, you pull out your phone and snap a picture of the doodle Faust had made of Sans. You make sure not to include your ex, their lover, or yourself for that matter, wanting to deflect unwanted assumptions and to not make him feel uncomfortable with them.

Good afternoon. :-))
You see some dots already moving next to his profile picture, the sight making your heart race in spite of how silly it was.

s’that me?

who’s the artist?

Faust drew it for English class!

Isn’t it cute?

very.

the kid’s got some talent.

really knows howta capture my eye sockets.

And your smile, too.

It’s just as goofy as I remember it being.

wow.

first cute, and now goofy?

didn’t know you thought that way about me, (y/n).

You feel heat rise over your ears at that last string of replies. A tad flustered, you gulp away your nervousness and shuffle a bit on your seat before typing up a response.
wanna meet up somewhere tonight?

i’d like to see ya outside of work, even if you’re not around the school anymore and all.

That’s real sweet of you considering what I just called you.

Where to?

does the park near the gas station at 7 sound good?

it’s the one near your street, close to where we met up yesterday for the documents.

Sounds good!

See you at 7, then.

Your mind is a puddle by the time you send that last text. You hear one side of you yelling that you shouldn’t be getting this close to Sans, though the other yells back just as loud, calling you silly for worrying so much about something so simple as meeting him at the park. Fleeting crush or not, you didn’t want to screw up your friendship with him -- and even more now, knowing he’d taken up the courage yesterday just to say he feared he wasn't showing he cared for his friendship with you.

Sans is already there by the time you arrive at the park. It’s still a bit clear out with summer just a couple of weeks away, so there’s a few people walking by and idly chatting to themselves. You can tell it’s Wednesday by how little parents and children you see around.

“Hey,” Sans greets, his voice sounding just a few feet away from where you stood. You turn to see
him and notice his attire is different from his work uniform and his casual wear composed of a blue jacket and some basketball shorts. To differ, he now wore a simple, plain grey t-shirt along with some baggy jeans -- a look you never expected him to enjoy wearing. “What’s up?”

“Wow. You look . . . different,” you comment, a smile on your face. It takes all your willpower not to let your eyes linger on the change for too long. “In a nice way, I mean.”

You can catch a glimpse of surprise flicker on the light of his eye sockets, though he masks it just as quickly with a snicker. “Thanks. You clean up nice, too.” He stops, though speaks up again before you have the chance to come up with a remark to his comment. “I mean it -- It’s nice to see you outta your uniform every now and then. Makes it feel like I’m seeing another version of you besides the overly anxious parent, and the baker who forgets when they have flour in their hair.”

“Can’t go a day without prodding me like this, huh?”

Though your words are meant to be taken lightly, you catch a hint of the same, foreign emotion you had seen yesterday when having him drift away from the conversation. You wonder over what Sans’s co-worker said for him to worry this much over something so trivial.

“It’s become a tradition, I’ll say.”

He closes off the distance by taking a few steps forward and taking his hands out of his front pockets. A welcoming visage shows on his skull when he makes a hand motion for you to join him.

“Wanna go to the mini-mart over there? I wanna talk with you about stuff.”

You nod and walk side by side with Sans, sparing a subtle look at him every once in a while until you’re at the front of the gas station, steps away from entering the mini-mart. Cold gusts of wind begin to settle the hot and humid temperature down to a comfortable degree as the noisy background of the city exchanges for peace and tranquility. It turns a bit darker by the time you enter, though the large, neon orange sign with the letters ‘Open 24/7’ assures you there’s no need to rush on your outing.
“I didn't know this place was open twenty-four hours,” you comment, taking this opportunity to look at the inside of the cozy mini-mart the gas station had to offer. It was rare for you to look around too much -- You were only used to paying up for gas and leaving right back out.

The coolers on one side of the building are packed with all sorts of groceries, drinks, and alcoholic beverages, and the shelves are just as equally distributed to aid in last minute errands. The small café of sorts set on a different corner of the premises is illuminated by the bright, yellow lights hung above as the distinctive scent of coffee permeates through the air.

Sans takes a detour to the café and asks if you want anything from the menu. You smile and dismiss that offer, telling him you would pay for whatever you decided to order. He doesn’t seem convinced by your words, though he doesn’t insist further when you ask if he wants anything for himself.

“I was the one who made the initial invite, so I’m the one who’s supposed to do that,” he objects, rejecting your offer of paying for the soda he had picked up from the coolers.

“Did Papyrus give you a lecture about that or something?” you ask, a smile playing on your lips. You try masking it before getting the chance to say anything else, but to no avail. “You sound really sure about this.”

“I really gotta stop messin’ with you so much if you’re gonna do the same,” he comments, grinning when he looks up at you. “You’re really startin’ to get back at me, huh?”

“It’s self defense,” you remark, returning his gesture. “Can’t let you have all the fun, y’know?”

The talk ends as a tall man clad in a pink polo shirt comes out of the door placed behind the counter of the café. He offers you a small, polite smile and asks what you would like, to which you respond
with the words ‘Coffee, please’. He nods firmly and walks to the electric coffee brewer next to him, where he prepares your order in less than a minute, and with equal -- if not more -- swiftness than the female bartender at Grillby’s.

You thank the man and take the foam cup from his hands, using one hand to hold the cup while the other holds onto the napkins and sugar packets he hands you over. Sans is already sitting by one of the two tables, waiting for you to return. Your surroundings are pleasantly quiet with the exception of the faint noir music playing in the background, which is soon interrupted by the broadcaster to ask the listeners what song did they wish to hear next.

Your hearing perks up at the sound of a can being opened, and you turn your eyes to the sound to see Sans holding the soda he’d picked up earlier. You glance another look at the label and hesitate to say what’s on your mind.

“So, you don't drink?” you ask, treading carefully in that question to prevent it from coming out as disrespectful. You settle down on the chair set opposite to his, holding the coffee with both hands after placing the napkins and sugar down on the table.

“Used to, sometimes,” he replies, setting his drink down to look at you. “But I’m more of a fast food kinda guy. Used to hold up a hot dog stand back when we were underground.”

“Ah,” you breath in, a small smile stretching your lips. “That’s cool -- Sorry if I came of as nosy.”

“What about you?”

“Aside from when I tried to impress someone to make them think I was grown up. . . I don't really drink unless it's for a toast or celebration.”

“Mind me asking who that person was?” he asks, the way an eye socket furrows slightly making it know he was curious but waiting to see whether you would say anything about that matter, or if you would rather keep it to yourself.

“Not at all,” you reply, stifling a laugh. “I was sixteen. Jessie was eighteen. I thought they were pretty cute, but still two years too old for me. . . And the rest kinda just fell together after that.”

You cough in the middle of your confession, embarrassment threatening to follow up with your next words. “Now that I think about it. . . We're lucky we weren't compatible to have a kid. We were both half-drunk and didn't think much about the rest.”
You stop talking, realizing you'd said far too much for just one question.

“Oh man, I've said too much, haven't I?”

You can feel your ears burn as you meet with his gaze. Guilt-ridden, you quickly look back down, not knowing what to say to lessen that feeling.

“Hey,” he calls out, making you look up at him when you feel his hand briefly brush with yours. “If it makes you feel any better, I still don't know how to reject someone who's flirted with me ever since Grillby first set up his business.”

“You mean that bunny from last month?”

“That same one,” Sans answers, chuckling. “I went on a date with them once, but I didn't really want that at the time. So it was mostly me just tryna dodge whatever move they tried to pull next.”

“Are you...okay now though?” you ask, concern making your gaze furrow. “You shouldn't feel forced to do something like that.”

“Nah, they're a good bun when they're not drunk and lashing out at other people.” He lets out a short and earnest laugh, casting his faint, white irises on you again. “They stopped when I told them I didn't like them in that way, so it's fine.”

You feel uneasy when you swallow the next two sips of your drink, not knowing whether it was the coffee you were drinking or how personal the conversation was that was making you feel this way. As subtle as possible, you look to your left and try to get a grasp of your reflection through one of the metallic shelves located behind the payment counter, hoping to see you didn't look as much as the mess you felt you were currently.

“You sure you don’t want me to treat you to anything?

If you hadn’t been holding onto the coffee cup, you would’ve most likely jolted like a cat. You look down at the beverage when you turn to his side, not knowing how to face him after that conversation. “It's fine, really,” you assure him, trying not to falter in your words. “You paid last
time we went out, so it’s only fair.”

“Can I get you two anything else?”

The man in charge of the café pops out from the door behind the counter and the shelves you had been looking at. A hospitable smile shows on his bronzed face when he catches you staring at him.

“I’m fine,” you reply, placing the empty foam cup down in front of you.

“Same here,” Sans adds, doing the same with his drink.

You thank the man before he disappears back behind the door and wait until you hear a click to focus back on your companion. To your surprise, he’s staring at you rather than at his drink, the look on his irises letting you understand he wanted to have another conversation with you.

“About what I said yesterday,” he begins, picking up the near empty can of soda to swirl its contents around. “So you’re really okay with us being friends?”

“Of course I am, Sans,” you reply, a half smile and a raised eyebrow being used to scrutinize him. “Why do you ask?”

“I figured I’d ask in case you thought I was pushing you to keep doing this, after what’s happened this past month and all.”

You toy with the brim of the coffee cup as you maintain eye contact with him, flaring your nose slightly in amusement. “I honestly don’t feel that way. I actually really like spending time like this, and exchanging recipes with your brother is a huge plus -- I wouldn’t change these experiences for the world.”
Timeout, Part Three

The night is entirely darkened by the time you make it out of the 24/7 gas station. There's almost no one around the area besides a few people -- mostly truckers and bus drivers -- refilling their tanks and stomachs. Sans accompanies you to your car before he goes to wait for the last bus.

“Want me to drive you home?” you ask, stopping in front of your car. The few lampposts surrounding the parking lot allow you to see which key you were meant to choose from the rest. “You usually take the bus, right?”

“Thanks,” he replies, stopping a few feet away from you. “But I’ll take the bus. It’s late, and the road there’s about an hour away from here.”

You hum at his response, pensively toying with your keys while using your index finger to hold onto them. “Then what about staying for the night? It’s better than being back home real late.”

His face turns a bit brighter at your comment before he gets the chance to speak up. “If it’s really fine with you, sure -- I’m damn lucky tomorrow’s a holiday, else I’d be in for a bad night.”

With that thought moved out of the way, you nod and unlock your car, waiting for him to get on first before you do the same. Silence takes over until you turn the key, the engine spurting a few times before actually getting to turn on. You make note of saving up a little more to get it checked.

Breathing in, you grab onto the steering wheel, change the gear, and move out of the parking lot, the sound of the air conditioner along with the faint static of the news playing on the radio making you feel more drowsy than you already were. It was a good thing you took a bit of caffeine back at the gas station.

“(Y/N)!”
You feel hair spike up on your arms when you hear an all-too recognizable voice calling out from Solana's front yard. Your eyes snap over to said direction, where you come across Faust standing next to Solana, who lets go of his hand to let him run after you.

“(Y/N)!” he calls out again, short legs rushing to get to you.

Shock makes you unable to shorten the distance, though by the time you snap out of it, he’s already pouncing on you, small arms wrapping around your back as he buries his face against your torso. You can feel all sorts of emotions by having him in your hold -- from surprise, to relief, to worry and fright. Your eyes search around for any signs of Jessie, though they’re nowhere to be seen.

“Where’s Jessie?” you question, quirking an eyebrow once you’re let go. “Are they waiting for me somewhere?”

Faust leaves your side a while after the hug, giving you space to ask Solana a few of the endless, burning questions running rampant in your mind.

“The lil’ rascal here snuck away from home at around eight, an hour after you left. Don’t know how Jessie hasn’t bothered to check if he’s here yet,” Solana explains, making you look back at her front yard. She’s now sitting on the stairs of her balcony, busy tucking a strand of curly hair behind her ear as she casts her eyes at you. “I didn’t call you, ’cuz I didn’t wanna interrupt your plans. Figured Faust also didn’t wanna go back if he went to the trouble of taking two buses to get here.”

“Two buses?” you ask, the words not quite fitting together with you. “And Jessie hasn't called yet?” Disbelief is clear in your tone, though you can't bring yourself to lessen the anger surging along with it. The mere thought of Faust traveling a long distance on his own made wish you could confront Jessie right at this moment. “How... How did you know I was going out, anyway? You didn't have to worry about that! I don't want to burden you with something like this.”

“Honey, I would've done that if you hadn't actually taken time to change outta that goshdarned work uniform.” she asserts, a giggle softening her expression. "You looked happy when I saw you leave earlier ago."

“Told ya you looked different,” Sans comments, chuckling.

You look to Sans's side to see Faust hugging him tight, the sleeping child resting his head against the monster's shirt and clinging onto him. It makes you wonder how he finds it remotely
comfortable, given who he’s leaning against.

“Let me help you,” you state, refusing to acknowledge either Sans or Solana’s prodding compliments. You approach the monster’s side and take Faust away from his hands. “He’s in for a scolding as soon as he wakes up.”

Heat begins to gather on your cheeks, ears, and neck as you continue to process the situation, already sensing your voice was about to break with the suddenness of Faust’s return. You stand and wobble when hoisting the child up in your arms, though you soon stabilize yourself by resting your back against the car door. Sans takes the keys from your free hand and locks the car.

“Thank you, Sol,” you speak up, holding Faust tighter as you make eye contact with her again. “I . . . I really owe you for all this!”

“I did it ‘cuz I wanted to,” she replies, warm smile bright, even from far away. “You need your time off too, (Y/N). Just make sure to contact Jessie first ‘fore they decide to pull something funny for what’s happened.”

“I will,” you assure her with a firm nod, a smile showing on your face.

The night grows quiet once you tuck Faust away in bed, being sure to leave some space for yourself in order to let Sans have your room. You yawn when leaving the child’s bedroom, though it isn’t out of tiredness. You lost your sleep the second you saw Faust running after you. If anything, you’re certain that yawn was out of hunger with how long it had been since your outing. It was now almost three in the morning, yet you were still wide awake.

“Still up, (Y/N)?” Sans asks, emerging from the stairs. He’s now changed into the most appropriate clothing you could find for him, it being an old Uni t-shirt a size too big and some loose pajama pants he had to hoist up to keep the legs from dragging across the floor. “I’m guessin’ you’re not tired anymore.”
“How’d you know?” you tease, leaning your back against the door of the bedroom.

“Just a hunch,” he replies, mimicking the tone you used on him.

You smile and straighten back up, heavy eyelids making it hard for you to focus your gaze on just one place. Now that you’re beginning to process everything that went on, you can’t seem to think clearly anymore. The only thing you feel is in the right place is remembering Faust is safe in his room.

Through the past few hours, your riptide of emotions ranged from nervousness to anger. In included the fact that your ex didn’t pick up neither of the two calls you made -- one right after you made it home with Faust in your arms, and another right after you finished setting everything up for him. There was an hour difference in both of the calls, and they had yet to call you back. You were close to putting an end to their game if it weren't so late in the night.

“I want to wait a little bit before I go to sleep,” you speak up again, nodding your head over to your bedroom. “My room’s all set if you want to go there.”

The snicker you hear from the monster is enough to make your eyes grow wide and for you to rush on fixing your words.

“I’ll be sleeping with Faust in his room once I get in contact with Jessie. If not, then I’ll just have to talk with the police department about this,” you speak, breathing out your exhaustion through your nose. “Don’t let me keep you up, else you'll get tired of me too soon.”

You mean your last words as a joke, though the look on his face is the opposite of what you hoped it to be. You see he’s not too convinced by your dismissal, though you shake that off by smiling at him. If it was one thing you couldn’t do right now, it was talking things out with someone else. That single ‘So how are you feeling?’ people often asked led you to break down with emotions you didn't want to make public.

It didn’t help knowing the day of the custody trail was getting closer with each day, nor remembering the fact that Jessie was back at your home country -- assuming from the child who'd taken two buses just to get back home.

You're not sure where to begin or what to do now besides wait for the sun to rise and for your
phone to ring at least once.
Extra: Easter Sunday

Chapter Notes

As a heads up, the following extra does not follow the current storyline, but it does take place sometime after the custody trial. The results of the trial’s final judgement are left undetermined here due to the current progression of the main plot.

“So you like your partners with a bit of baggage, huh? It’s usually the other way around.”

“Whaddya mean by that?”

Family drama.

That was something you could never avoid when having your family over for holidays. Easter, especially, was an infamous time for nosy aunts and uncles to dish out their strongest arguments at someone labeled as a threat through their eyes.

Today, it was your aunt and more-than platonic relationship with Sans.

“Well, you had a. . .thing for Ms. Toriel too, no?” your aunt prods, narrowing her eyes at the monster in front of her. “And now you’re dating my (niece/nephew), with a son and a divorce in their bag!”

“I don’t think those two things really go together, ma’am.” Sans objects, trying to ease the growing pressure of the conversation by letting out a rough, constricted laugh. “Toriel’s just a friend, and it doesn’t matter if (Y/N)’s divorced or not. I just like them for who they are.”

You gain a better hearing and view of their conversation by inching a bit close to the door, not knowing when it would be most prudent to interrupt, or if was simply better to wait until they finished talking. Everyone else was already gathered at your backyard, yet the pair were still engaged in a heated conversation at your living room.

“That’s sweet and all, but I don’t think you should go after someone with an ex and a kid in the picture. You should seek someone else and let (Y/N) fix things with—“
“I don’t think I can agree with you on this one,” your date interrupts, a hint of annoyance cutting through his words. “I get that you liked the other person (Y/N) used to date, but—“

“Hey, guys!” you exclaim, heart pounding in your chest as you burst through the door of the living room. “Mind if I borrow Sans for a bit, auntie?”

Tension is almost palpable between them as they exchange a look, though your aunt relents. She sighs and gives another warning glance at Sans before you take him by the wrist and bring him out of the living room. Your hands interlock as you rush in your steps and make your way to the kitchen.

You both enter the room and stay silent. You’re more than certain he had to know you were eavesdropping in his conversation with your aunt with how flustered and soul-drained you looked right now. Before he can bring that up, however, you take the tray of marshmallow treats from the refrigerator, place them on the kitchen island, and take one from the batch.

“This may sound silly, but I’d like you to try one first before anyone else,” you explain, approaching his side. “First, because you’re honest, and second. . . ‘Cuz, well. . . we’re kinda-sorta dating now.”

Sans nods as you sit down next to him on the kitchen island, though an idea interrupts your actions right as you’re about to give him the treat. Carefully, you place the marshmallow bunny between your lips and urge him to get closer to your side. Then, you take him by the wrist and close off the distance as soon as he leans into you.

You intend not to touch his teeth, but he thinks contrarily of it. His teeth press against your lips the second after he bites down on half of the marshmallow treat.

“What. . . What do you think?” you ask, trying with all your might at maintaining eye contact with him despite how on-edge you felt right now.

“It’s nice,” he replies, backing away into his seat. “A lil’ too sweet for my taste, but it’s good. The design’s pretty cute-lookin’, too.”

You smile at his review, though it doesn’t last when you remember the main reason you pulled him all the way here. Although you did want him to try the marshmallows first, it wasn’t until five
more hours that you would actually start handing them out to everyone attending the Easter dinner.

“Sans?” you speak up, placing a hand on his lap.

“What’s up?” he asks, looking away from your hand to face you.

“Listen, I . . . I’m sorry about my aunt -- I really shouldn’t have pushed you to attend. She means well most of the time, but she doesn’t have a filter when it comes to this kind of stuff.” You spare him a look before continuing, not quite ready to bring up the next subject yet. "I . . . I told her I was through with Jessie ten times already, and she even knows about what happened in court. But she still thinks I should get back with them.”

The droning of the kitchen filter grows louder when you finish talking, silence falling like a rock on ocean water. You feel the urge to speak again, but hold back your tongue with the sheer force of willpower.

“I came ‘cuz I wanted to. Nobody said it’d be easy gettin’ in a relationship, so I was ready for backlash when I had your aunt say she wanted to talk with me in private.”

You’re relieved for Sans's response, though you’re not convinced by his level of preparedness. “Are you sure, though? I know she brought up some personal stuff. You don’t have to keep quiet if something’s bothering you.”

“I’m fine,” he insists, chuckling. “Didn’t ya say I was honest?”

“You are. But I don’t think you are when it comes to being honest with yourself.”

He seems taken off guard by your statement, a surprise which is exchanged for curiosity when you take another marshmallow from the tray -- choosing a chick this time around. "If you think otherwise, you can reject this marshmallow.” You place it between your lips, gesturing for him to do the same as before. “If not, you can take it.”

Your last sentence is muffled by the sweet, but the message still comes across. You observe him for a while before he settles on an answer.
Slowly, he starts to lean in again, stopping once he’s about to bite into the second marshmallow. You wait, not wanting to encourage or discourage either of the two choices he had available for himself.

An answer is given when he grabs your face with both hands, cold fingers digging lightly onto the warm, (s/t) skin of your cheeks as he brings you forward enough to oblige you to leave your stool and suspend yourself over him. You lean down a bit more to match his height and return the kiss with the same amount of -- if not more -- adherence, onset on not being caught off balance in your own game.

The kiss is broken when you let go, shaky breaths leveling down when you sit back on your stool. You face forward, expecting to see him looking back at you. Instead, you see him staring at the tray of marshmallows, two empty spots on each row now that the game had come to an end.

“I won’t deny I felt angry at what happened back there, but I can take it, (Y/N). If there’s one thing I like going by, it’s that I don’t like empty promises.” Sans pauses to hold your hand, making eye contact with you now that the adrenaline of the moment cooled down. “When I accepted that invite for a first date, I meant it. That ‘sure’ I sent through text is the one damned thing I’ve been really sure about in a long while.”
You hug Sans before he steps foot out of your home. He hugs back after a few seconds, his body radiating a faint, almost ghostly warmth the longer the hug lasts between you.

“You hug Sans before he steps foot out of your home. He hugs back after a few seconds, his body radiating a faint, almost ghostly warmth the longer the hug lasts between you.

“Thanks for helping out yesterday,” you speak up, letting go of him and taking a step back. “I... I had fun, and I didn’t really think you would stay after what happened with Faust last night.”

“Don’t mention it, (Y/N). I had fun, too, so I’d say we’re even.”

Stepping in, Faust approaches the skeleton with a hug himself, though he gives it with much more strength than you do. He doesn’t hesitate and asks the monster when he would visit again.

“It’s a bit tough to say right now, but if things work out, you can ask me again later,” Sans replies, placing a hand over Faust’s head as he ruffles his hair and lets out a laugh. “For now, make sure ya don’t fall back in math, alright? You need to keep going now that you’re getting better at it.”

Their conversation ends with another quick, final hug on the child’s part. Faust waves goodbye at Sans while you do the same, closing the door only when you see him take the bus and drive off.

You head to your room as soon as he’s gone, hurrying to tidy everything up before you ring your ex one final time. Faust follows you up the stairs and heads back to his room while you enter yours, flicking on the light when you step in.

Looking around, you begin to feel strange. Though the bedroom’s as tidy as you left it yesterday, there’s hints of someone being here recently, mainly by the wrinkles on one side of the bed and the pillow sunken a bit more compared to the other one next to it. You approach the bed when something catches your eye. Under the raised pillow is a small, sphere-like object projecting a natural sparkle and closely resembling that of a star. Below the item is a cut-out of a nice cream
wrapper labeled with the same flavour as the one you bought at the park. You turn it around and read the words on the packaging.

“You rock!”

You burst out a laugh after reading that sentence, conserving both items in your drawer as soon as you’re done inspecting the star-like object a second time.

The mood grows sour when Jessie shrugs off your questions. They keep some distance and refuse to sit down for a breather, leading you to do the same. You’re staring directly at them while Faust stays back, conflicted on what to do as his eyes go from Jessie, to you, and then to the set of rooms waiting upstairs.

“Where were you when he ran away? I tried calling you so many times, I didn’t call anyone else waiting for you to show up!”

Faust flinches at the sudden raise in your voice. He clings onto your leg, hiding himself behind your back. Softly, he tugs at your shirt as if to keep you from doing that again. You clench your fists and press your lips together into a tight line, holding back the impulse to lash out more at Jessie to avoid scaring the child further.

“I was busy working.”

“Working where? I thought you were supposed to be away.” You breathe in, heart pounding as anger continues to grow within you. "You take him away from me, you tell me you’ve moved back overseas, you ask me for the credit transcript. . . And all of a sudden, you-- you’re sending me pictures of times I go out with friends! You--“

The feeling of two hands on your torso is accompanied by a push and you losing your footing. You
fall back on the couch behind you, Jessie now standing in front of you while Faust moves away to a corner of the living room. His choice of finding refuge reminds you of the day he got an ‘F’ in Math, and the days when you were still getting used to being patient for him to open up to you more.

“Shut up already! I didn’t ask for this. You think you’re being so goddamn progressive living with monsters and going out with Sam, but you forget you used to jail up monsters barely two years ago. You were in charge of arresting monsters, but then you take a huge turn and decide the way they’re treated is bad!”

“Because it is!” you exclaim, eyebrows closing in as a deep, unrestricted frown forms on your lips. “Some of them were being imprisoned even though they did no harm.”

Your attempt at standing up from the couch is prohibited by your ex. They trap you on one place by placing both their hands on your shoulders, hovering above you as a bead of sweat trails down their forehead and all the way down their face. Their body is shaking and their jaw is clenched tight enough to make you fear they could break it.

“Did you forget why you used to love me? Look at me in the eyes and tell me you don’t like me anymore. Prove you like that Sam guy more than me, and I’ll take you seriously when you say you like being with monsters.”

Their breath hits your face as they press closer and continue to hold you back. You don’t dare to push them away or fight back when seeing Faust frozen on one place, shock denoting through his eyes and quivering mouth.

“Tell me,” they persist, squeezing your shoulders enough to make you scowl at the sensation.

“I . . .”

You look at Faust again and hesitate, a pang in your chest making you close your eyes to take in a breath and let it out.

“I do like him, but we’re not going out. I’ve made good friends with him, his brother, and a few others, too.”
“What about me, then? Don’t you still love me?”

You look down at your lap to process your thoughts, looking back up once you’re firm on your decision.

“I used to,” you reply, the feeling of their fingers on your skin growing more intense after you say those words. “You used to be a great (husband/wife), but not anymore. I’m sorry for what I did that made you stop liking me. If you could tell me now, I would be more sincere in my apology.”

A single, loud cackle makes your eyes grow as you face them directly. Jessie lets go of your shoulders, though they still keep you on one place by pushing you again and pressing down on your body until the back of your head hits the armrest.

“You really don’t know what you did wrong? Even after what I just said?” Jessie leans in close enough to graze their nose with yours and grab onto your chin, a deep frown on their face. “You left me behind. You didn’t think about how I felt when I saw you quit your job just ‘cuz you didn’t like how monsters were being treated by the law. I only adopted Faust with you because I thought that would make you happier, and you would stop thinking about all that stuff for once. But I was wrong. You betray me a year later saying you’re gonna take him to a school run by monsters! All that, and you still dare ask why I left you?”

“Listen, Jessie, I--”

You feel Jessie’s body freeze over yours and see Faust push himself between the two of you. The boy tries to separate you and lets out a broken breath, his body trembling in the process. Tears stain his reddened face as he pleads for the fight to end and for Jessie to take a step back. You can feel yourself shaking when they get off of you and leave you be on the couch, body going limp when being set free.

Faust stays by your side, an action that makes Jessie glare at you with even more displeasure than before. They take a few steps back and let out a huff, calming their heaving breaths before making their way over to the door. They stop when grabbing onto the handle, looking back at you one final time.

“I’ll see you in court this Saturday. You better have a good reason why you’ve changed so much. You’re a goddamned hypocrite and a traitor, (Y/N) -- And you know it.”
The door finally closes shut, leaving you alone with the uncomfortable silence of your home and Faust wiping his tears away with the sleeve of his shirt. It’s not until a few seconds that it hits you, the reality of the situation making you cover your face with your hands, trying your best not to let your anger or sorrow burst.

It doesn’t last long when Faust asks if you’re okay. Without a word, you hold him tight and close your eyes, trying to forget the scenario and the day that awaited you soon.

After today, you didn't want to see their face again.
“So that’s the one?” Gerson asks, pointing with his working eye at the (s/t) skinned human chatting with a middle aged woman sporting long, curly hair. In between them appears Papyrus, who greets them both with a hug.

“Yeah,” Sans replies, leaning back against the wall. “I kinda followed your and Grillby’s advice, so we’re friends now.”

“Well go ahead and wish them good luck, then! I’m gonna stay here a lil’ while ‘till my legs start working again.”

“I’ll just wait here.”

Gerson shakes his head at that response, though he doesn’t say anything else to counter that decision. He lays back on one of the empty benches set just a few steps away from the door to the courtroom and pats at the space next to him.

“C’mere, then. Help me kill time while the judge shows up.”

Sans nods and sits down, looking back at (Y/N) before getting to talk with the turtle monster next to him. The human turns to look his way, a smile forming on their face when spotting him nearby. Caught off guard, he expects them to be looking at someone else close by, but waves back at them when taking note of the opposite.

The moment is short-lived when Undyne arrives next to them. She holds up a hand for them and lets out a roaring laugh when (Y/N) proves capable of high-fiving her without wincing or stumbling back from her strength. Alphys arrives next to the fish woman and holds out a hand for (Y/N) to shake. The pair exchange a few introductions and end their conversation when Toriel and Frisk step in. It takes no more than a few minutes for the human to fade away from his sight, already surrounded by too many people for them to look anywhere else.
“What’re ya laughing at?” Gerson asks, directing his words at the skeleton after hearing him chuckle under his breath.


Half an hour passes with (Y/N) still surrounded by the group. One by one, they begin to leave until everyone settles down. The human is called out by the guard watching the entrance and urges them to step inside. The doors open and close behind them, the thud that follows making everyone look to that direction, quiet falling upon the waiting room.

"Please state your name and relation to Faust.”

“My name is (Y/N) (L/N). I’m Faust’s adoptive (mother/father).”

The same question is asked for Jessie, who’s standing on a podium opposite to (Y/N)’s. Unlike them, Jessie is quick to respond and holds more confidence in their tone. The pair are asked for the reasons behind them being here today, and the same happens again.

Pleased with the responses, the judge nods and casts his eyes over to the audience standing by. His lips are a tight, unshakable line as he brings his glasses up to the bridge of his nose and hits the mallet once.

“Settle down, everyone -- Humans on the right, monsters on the left. This should take no longer than a day if both parties are cooperative in their interrogation.”

Murmurs and whispers overcome the silence of the courtroom as everyone around moves accordingly to the rules stated by the judge. Almost all of the audience present settle themselves in their seats, with the exception of Toriel, who -- conflicted by having to leave Frisk alone in the opposite side -- frowns as she thinks over what to do.

(Y/N)’s neighbour gestures for her to leave Frisk in her care, making Toriel break into a smile at
the offer. Frisk finally rushes off with the rest of the humans gathered on one place and waves at their family on the other side as soon as they sit down.

"What events led to this outcome?"

"(Y/N) failed to keep their part of the compromise. We agreed that Faust could stay at the school for humans and monsters as long as he didn't bring any monsters home. They were supposed to tell the tutor that he couldn't give the lessons at Faust's home any more, but they didn't listen. I have pictures of Toriel and Faust entering the house together, and of (Y/N) and Sam not long after I took Faust with me."

Jessie walks away from the podium and stands in front of the judge. They take a firm step forward when he extends his hand out in wait for the pictures they mentioned. With a nod, the judge dismisses Jessie as his eyes scan the three images one by one, checking the first one again and setting the other two aside.

"What was Toriel doing at their home without the guardian around?"

"(Y/N) was working overtime. They preferred to work a few extra hours than take care of their son. I saw that, and decided he was better off living with me."

"And what about the second and third pictures? Why do you still choose to point them out even though they were taken after you took Faust with you?"

"I believe it shows how incompetent (Y/N) has been acting lately. They seem to favour spending time with Sam and other monsters more, rather than with their own son. While they could've been trying to contact me to see how Faust was doing, they were out on a date with Sam and had the audacity to bring him home."

The judge stays quiet after Jessie’s answer ends. He locks his hands together and sets them over the podium as he casts his eyes towards (Y/N).

“(Miss/Mister) Jessie seems to mention Sam quite often. Is he here, by any chance? I would like to have a word with him before we continue with this case.”

“Well. . .” (Y/N) hesitates, turning back to the audience in search for the monster in question. Sans
raises his hand to stand out among the monsters, an act that seems to surprise the human by the way they raise their eyebrows and open their mouth, mouthing the words ‘are you sure?’ at him.

Nodding, the skeleton stands up and walks forward, taking place on the podium set next to the judge. Content, the judge nods and focuses his attention on Sans.

“Are you romantically involved with (miss/mister) (Y/N)? You must be aware of the consequences for someone born in this town. Even though they may have moved to the city, that still does not erase the fact that they are native to this town and must keep in mind the laws set here.”

Sans maintains a stoic expression as he spares a look at the audience, then to Jessie, (Y/N), and finally, the judge. The only aspect that remotely gives away his confliction are the white pinpricks of his eye sockets, which begin to falter the longer it takes him to respond.

“We’re not.”

“But you are still friends, correct?”

“Yes, Your Honor. I, uh, asked them if we could be friends a little while ago.”

“And they agreed to it?”

His chest heaves when he takes in a breath, glancing at (Y/N) from the corner of his eye socket to see what their reaction was. They notice him staring and nod firmly, appearing a bit more confident than before.

“Yes, they did.”

“Very well,” the judge speaks, looking away from the skeleton to look down at the book spread open in front of him. He turns back a few pages before getting to speak up again. “While the law does not prohibit friendships between humans and monsters as of recently, that does not exclude the intimacy both parties seem to be exhibiting as of late. The pictures shown by Jessie do not seem to be that of mere friendship.”
“I have proof of them staying together in (Y/N)’s place. It happened last Wednesday night, actually. Sam stayed over until the next day and Faust was present, too -- meaning that (Y/N) was also breaking our agreement of not letting a monster wander around the house while Faust is near.”

“What was Faust doing in his primary home? Were you not still keeping him under your care?”

Sans holds back a chuckle at the sudden turn in questioning. A shocked look shows up on Jessie’s expression by the way their posture stiffens and their confidence falters.

“If I may, Your Honor,” (Y/N) intervenes, certainty present in their voice. The confidence and determination Jessie lost appears to have been absorbed by them. "I’ve been taking care of Faust since Wednesday night. He ran away and took two buses just to get to my house.”
“Settle down, everyone!”

The crowd grows rowdy with the sudden reveal of information, and the noise only increments when Faust is called out from the audience. His steps are meek and careful as he makes his way to the front podium, exchanging seats with Sans. You can’t shake off the ache dwelling in your chest when you see him. He’s teary eyed and his legs can be seen shaking from where you’re standing.

“Is your (mother/father)’s statement true?”

You stare at his direction as you wait for him to answer the judge. He stops looking at the floor to face him, uncertainty crossing his eyes.

“Yes, . . . Your Honor.” You hold back a smile when hearing him say those last two words, happy he remembered that courtesy despite the state he found himself in. “I ran away because I was angry. Jessie wouldn’t let me see (mom/dad) anymore and. . .” Faust grows visibly frustrated at his sudden loss for words, and faces back down as he clenches his palms into fists.

“Take your time, child.”

Faust nods softly and breathes in, managing a small smile before it fades away back into a crooked line. His eyebrows furrow as he tries to gather courage for the interrogation.

“They said that (Y/N) was always busy, and that they didn’t have time for me anymore, but. . . But I heard them talking on the phone with (Y/N). Jessie didn’t tell them where I was and hung up when they kept asking about me.”
“Is there anything else that made you consider running away?”

He gives a slow, reluctant nod, looking at Jessie’s side for a second before continuing. “The next day, Jessie came home and started... fighting with (Y/N) on the phone again. They said it wasn’t (mom/dad) even though I saw the name on the screen. Th-- There was a fight after I ran away, too. . . Jessie came to pick me up, b-- but then. . .”

Faust hesitates again when taking another look at Jessie’s side. A frown stretches his mouth as he grits his teeth and furiously wipes away the single tear going down his cheek. He covers his face with his hands and hides away from the audience by letting his knees hit the floor, the height of the podium covering him away from your sight.

“Very well -- You are dismissed for the moment being, Faust. Please return when you feel better,” the judge speaks up, casting his eyes at the social worker and bailiff waiting nearby. “For now, please follow the brown-haired lady standing next to the guard.”

It takes a few seconds of you staring at the podium for Faust to stand up and appear to your eyes. He refuses to make eye contact with the judge, though he still nods and mutters a quick thank you before leaving. With a smile, the woman mentioned escorts him out of the courtroom and shuts the door as soon as he’s out.

You wait for the judge to continue, unsure what to expect. Faust was close to telling him about last Thursday, yet it was clear by the way he looked at Jessie that he was still conflicted by that day. At first, you worried he feared going back to living with them, but the second look he had sent had been one of need and concern for his other parent. You didn’t know which of the two looks to lean on more, or which one was worse for the situation you were in.

“(Y/N)?”

The way your name is called out by the judge makes you realize you’d closed off touch with your surroundings. Looking up, you make eye contact and apologize for not hearing him the first time, and prepare yourself for what’s next.

“Why was Sans with you that day, and in such late hours of the night? Did you not consider it dangerous for him to stay under the same roof as your son?”
“I am aware that people -- monster or not -- should not be trusted easily with the care of a child, but I made sure to stay in a separate room with Faust by my side,” you reply, the rehearsal of that subject helping you recover from the previous distractions. “Sans only stayed since he would be home too late while he waited for the last bus.”

“What were the both of you doing alone at such a late hour?”

“We were only hanging out as friends, Your Honor.”

“That’s the both of you having a romantic time, Your Honor. No thoughts beyond that of being his friend?”

You bite the inside of your lip and try not to look down as you speak. “I have, Your Honor. I admit the thought has crossed my mind as of recently.”

The judge closes his eyes to contemplate your words, letting out a hum before opening them again. “Very well.” He pauses to glance at the door Faust had passed through a few minutes ago. “If you state so, confirm that Faust has been under your care for the past four days, and Faust mentions you have called but have been refused multiple times, that disproves what Jessie has interpreted from your past actions.” Another halt in his speech makes you ease the pace of your heart. “Do you have your cellphone with you? I require both yours and Jessie’s to verify if they have indeed ignored all your attempts at contacting them.”

An awkward harrumph makes the judge stop facing you to see the bailiff standing next to his podium. Clearly a newbie by the way he withers under the judge’s countenance, he stutters before getting his message across. “The time is up, y- Your Honor. Should we extend the time?”

“I’m afraid that is not possible today,” he states, shaking his head slightly. He breaks eye contact with the bailiff to stare at you and the rest of the audience present. “The trail will continue tomorrow at the same hour. Given how much progress was made today, I expect we culminate the judgment by then.”

With the hit of his mallet, the bailiff stands up straight and rushes to the doors again.

“Audience dismissed,” he states, setting the mallet down next to him.
The crowd begins to stand up while the guards hold the doors open. Murmurs overcome the courtroom once more, these fading away when the last person exits and the doors are shut. He looks at the both of you once he’s certain there will be no interruptions and that everyone has left the room.

“I would be needing both your cell phones and Faust to stay for interrogation. Details on the argument are necessary before tomorrow’s trial.” Nodding, Jessie hands him their phone first and your follow after. “You will be provided with government phones while these go under research. Faust will be taken under temporary foster care until tomorrow.”

You can’t stay in one place while you wait for the line to end. Hunger lessens more with each second of wait, worry and anxiety making it hard for you to keep your appetite intact. Next to you is Solana and beside her stand both Toriel and Frisk. The usual calm of the night on busy weekdays is exchanged for people talking and pop music blaring in the background.

“Next.”

Quickly, you step forward and stand in front of the cashier, one look at the menu making you think back on Wednesday night. The flashy, three-dollar promotion of artisanal beer reminds you of the confession you made to Sans about how you ended up dating Jessie in the first place. Anger and temptation both have a conflict in your thoughts, but you try to shake that off by ordering your meal.

“What drink would you like with that?”

Clenching your jaw, you look away from the menu and face the woman again.

“What drink would you like with that?”

“Soda, please.”

The cashier smiles and marks your order down on the register. After a few more taps, you make your payment and receive a receipt for the meal. With a thank you, your temptation ends and anger stays. You stand in wait for your order and continue to glare at the menu, what if’s starting to make their way into your head.
You wonder over what would’ve happened if you hadn’t ended up with Jessie that day -- if you hadn’t asked them out in the first place. Past friends encouraged you to go for it and take a drink or two to gain courage. The idea of doing the same with Sans crosses your mind again, though you can’t help but shake your head and let air out of your nose when remembering what he'd said about the bunny monster he once dated. The reaction gathers Solana’s attention to you.

“What’s up, (Y/N)?”

She places a hand on your shoulder, the squeeze she gives making you stiffen under her touch. “It’s nothing,” you reply, letting out a small although honest laugh. “Just thought of doing something stupid again.”

Clearly unconvinced by the way she raises an eyebrow and frowns, you fear you’re in for another question on her part. She relents, however, when your order arrives -- the sight of three trays instead of one making her narrow her gaze at you again, though it comes off as playful this time around.

She helps carry a tray while Frisk steps in to take the other one. Toriel thanks you for ordering in her place and aids her child by taking some of the weigh away from the tray. You take the liter of soda with your free hand, walking with the group to the nearest table you can find.

Barely mid into setting the table, you're startled by the arrangement of flowers that fall next to your tray. You look to your left when feeling a presence close by, eyes dilating when you make eye contact with the gifter.
“Sunny!” you exclaim, hugging the small Whimsun as soon as you recognize her. Her thin arms wrap around you as she flaps her wings to elevate herself and match with your height. You let go seconds after, facing her with a smile. “Where were you? I didn’t see you before.”

“I-- I didn’t want to distract you, but I was there waiting in case you needed my testimony.” A smile of her own forms on her face while the conversation keeps going. “You did really good out there, (Y/N).”

You thank your co-worker and offer her to sit down. She refuses when you ask if she would like to join you and the rest for dinner, though she still greets your company before getting to speak with you again. “I need to go now. . . B-- But call me when you get home, okay? I want to know you made it safe.”

The conversation ends on that note. You give your gratitude again -- this time for the flowers she had given you -- and bring her in for one final hug. She returns it with a bit more strength this time, and you notice a barely traceable hint of embarrassment on her face when she lets go of you.

Sunny exits the diner and leaves you be with your company. Toriel and Frisk are busy talking with each other while Solana’s attention is focused mostly on you. Her eyes darting to your back makes you realize she’s giving you a heads up rather than looking to have a talk with you.

Turning around, you see Jessie and Papyrus talking with each other. A deep, saddened expression is present on the skeleton’s face while Jessie’s is left unknown due to you facing their back. You nod at Solana and she nods back when you stand up. You try to be subtle by taking your serving of soda in hand and chugging most of it down, making it look as if you were ready to throw the cup away.

Near empty cup in hand and ready to take action, you walk close to where they’re having their conversation, passing by a few tables and greeting the few acquaintances passing by. You arrive near the trash cans located close to where they stood, listening in on their conversation.

“My brother and (Y/N) have the right to continue their friendship,” Papyrus objects, furrowing his gaze at Jessie, who you could now see held a stern visage and arms crossed defensively in front of them. “I do not see why Faust cannot do the same, either -- He has made many friends at his new school!”
“Says who?” Jessie asks, challenge in their tone.

“My brother says so,” the monster replies, pride in his tone. “It is a tutor’s duty to observe the progress the student makes. He was the one in charge of providing you the credit transcript, in fact!”

“I don’t see why he’s allowed to meddle so much in my son and (Y/N)’s life,” your ex disagrees, shaking their head. “Things are the way they are for a reason. A tutor shouldn’t butt in on whatever’s going on with me and (Y/N). I don’t know why you think it’s fine for your brother to hang out with a divorced parent in the first place.”

“If you would excuse me, I believe everyone has the right to move on. You have found another partner, haven’t you? Why should it be any different for (Y/N)?”

“Because (Y/N)’s responsibility’s taking care of Faust now, not mess around with a monster like--“

“Hey.”

You almost jump at the sound of Sans’s voice from behind you, the feeling of a finger poking the side of your waist adding to that experience. Calming your heart and holding back the surprise in your eyes, you turn to meet with him, an instant sense of guilt rising when being caught nosing around.

“Uh.. Hey,” you speak up, voice shaky with the earlier startle. “How’s it going?”

“Weren’t you just overhearing a conversation?” he asks, grinning.

“And weren’t you just watching me overhear a conversation?”

He snickers at your line of defense, visibly taken aback by the change of expression shown on the white dots of his eye sockets. Aware of the risks of standing nearby Jessie and Papyrus’s argument, he signals for you to follow him outside. You assent and make your way out, excusing yourself from the group for another moment.
The mild warmth of the night hits your skin when you step out. You're promptly greeted by lampposts shining over you and a few cars speeding right past the empty streets. Not exactly knowing what the monster planned to say besides his accusation of seeing you listening in on a conversation, you stand right beside the door and wait for him to take any sort of action.

The sudden memory of what you confessed in court makes you have a change of plans. Gulping your tension away, you press back against the wall before standing straight and passing a hand against the back of your neck.

“About what I said back there, Sans -- You... I don't want to make you feel uncomfortable, so forget about what I said, alright? I'm really fine with us being friends, and I remember what you said about your last relationship with your friend. I only said it to be honest with the judge, so don't worry about it.”

You observe him from a distance, the look on his skull unknown to you. His hands are in his pockets while his irises are facing down at the worn path of concrete beneath him. You lean against the wall of the establishment again and cross your arms over your chest, the humidity of the air blowing past warning you over the approaching rainfall. The silence grows unbearable as you wait for him to say anything.

“It's fine,” he states, a dry chuckle leaving his teeth. "I didn't bring you out here for that -- I just wanted to ask how you're doing. I know the kid wants to stay and that he liked being at Tori's school, but what about you? How've you liked being here so far?"

You're caught unprepared by that question and break eye contact with him as soon as you take a second too long to speak up.

"If I'm going to be honest with you, I want it to be tomorrow already. I don't want to let Jessie have their way with any of this -- That's the reason why I don't live in this town any more in the first place. Faust's been on his happiest ever since the day we adopted him -- the school's amazing for him, and. . . it's amazing for me, too." Heat settles on your cheeks and ears as you take a breather and continue with your train of thought. "I... I like what we have here now, and I want it to stay that way."

Sans looks straight at you once you're done with that confession, a quick trace of surprise displaying itself on his skull. Slowly, he takes a step forward and closes off some of the space kept between you.

"(Y/N)..."
What he plans to say dissolves away, and quiet quickly falls between you as a few drops begin to land on your skin. One by one, these continue to fall consistently enough to make the two of you seek shelter below the empty gazebo set for people who wanted to eat outside. The breeze blows stronger, lashing out the thin rain right at you. Sans notices and furrows his sockets, staring at the sky before looking at you again.

"Let’s go back," Sans speaks, the way those words come out leaving no room for additional topics to be brought up between you. “It’s gonna fall harder soon, and your food's gonna go cold.”

Nodding, you manage a strained smile and stand firm, burying down the pang of disappointment at him dismissing that topic entirely.

You enter the diner and say your respective goodbyes, sitting back down with Toriel, Frisk, and Solana to finally begin eating your part of the family meal. Sluggishly, you bring a piece of food to your mouth, appetite entirely gone by now. The lukewarm food is no match to the constricting feeling that remains on your chest. Though you try not to dwell on it too much, it’s hard for you to forget when you see him and his younger brother standing in line from afar.

Whatever he was about to say, you blamed the downpour for interrupting him and leaving you wanting closure on his thoughts.
The judge requests silence as he carries on with his final judgement. People are impatient as so are you, in wait for what he was to say next now that Faust had been put under interrogation, and both your and Jessie’s evidence were looked over -- twice by the judge, and once by the police department.

“It appears that, while Jessie has photographic evidence of why they chose to take Faust away, that does not excuse the way they obtained it. Police traced the source of the pictures, and these were all taken on Jessie's cellphone,” the judge gives commencement to his speech, stern look being brought down at the yellow folder on his podium. "No evidence that they went back overseas was found. This concludes they did not leave at any point, but rather stayed close by, watching to see what (Y/N) would do. It appears Jessie has been present ever since Sans was assigned as Faust’s Math tutor, which dates back roughly six months ago. This explains why Faust was able to return to (Y/N) with two buses rather than a passport.”

Pausing on his conclusion, the judge looks at you and the crowd does the same. You freeze in place, the strong sensation of all eyes on you making you beyond uncomfortable. If it weren't for the situation you were in, you would rush out of the room and refuse to look back.

“As for (Y/N)’s evidence, Faust and miss Sunny both testified in favour of their reasons for bringing this matter to court. Their respective testimonies allowed us to uncover domestic violence, and both written and verbal threats.”

You can feel your legs shaking and cold sweat build up on your palms. Your eyesight goes blurry and you can feel your stomach churn when you overhear what the audience behind you whispers and murmurs to themselves, a few being purposefully louder than necessary for the sake of being spiteful.

“Oh dear. . .”

“I dunno why (Y/N) didn’t say something about that earlier -- They used to be a cop! Why did they chicken out aluva sudden?”

“What a pity what Faust has to go through.”

“(Y/N) had it coming for messing around with monsters. That guy they're with is just a janitor.
bragging he knows basic addition.”

“I just hope the kid’s--“

“ Silence! ”

All mouths collectively shut at the sound of the mallet hitting twice. Visibly bothered by the interruption, the judge casts a disapproving expression at the crowd before facing Jessie’s side.

“ Jessie, ” the judge speaks, gaining the attention of your ex. The one mentioned grows rigid under the call of their name and faces the judge with an impassive gaze. “ I am afraid you are to be sentenced to two years in prison--”

“What?” Jessie snaps. A loud scoff leaves their mouth as they look up at the judge's podium, incredulity in their eyes.

“You are charged with two years in prison for assault with a minor as the witness.”

Surprisingly, the spectators behind you stay quiet. Nobody dares to utter a word, though you can’t discern whether if it’s for the judge’s request for quiet, or if there’s a reason besides that. Still in the process of growing aware of Jessie’s sentence, you look to their side and see them clutching onto the podium, eyes casting down as they slam their hands against the wooden surface. A loud thud follows up to the abrupt explosion of anger in their voice.

“That’s ridiculous! Faust would never send me to prison,” they exclaim, wide eyes darting back and forth in a quick pace, searching for the one responsible for the judge's sentence. “Where is he? I-- I want to hear from him personally.”

“I will not allow that. If you wish to see his testimony, we have a recording available for you to see, but I cannot permit you to see Faust or (Y/N) any longer, until you have finished your sentence and proven you won’t resort to physical violence again.”

“You call that physical violence?” Jessie asks, a loud chuckle leaving their mouth. “(Y/N) used to be a cop, for fuck’s sake -- Even the crowd agrees with me on that one! They can take a little push and shove.” Their chest heaves sharply when they pause, the sight reminding you of when they’d pinned you down close enough to feel their breath on your face. “I’m sure their old job was way
worse than whatever I did.”

“Past officer or not, that only makes you look worse. If (Y/N) were still a cop as you say, that would also count as an additional penalty and increase to your sentence.”

“But that doesn’t even make sense! (Y/N) should know better than to--”

“Silence, (sir/ma’am),” the judge intervenes, slamming the mallet once against his podium. “Bailiff, please escort Jessie out of the room. I would like to have a word with Faust and his (mother/father) now.”

With a stuttered ‘right away’, the man from yesterday’s trail arrives between you and Jessie’s podium. He tips his hat when he sees you staring and proceeds to bring Jessie in his hold. Carefully, he puts them in a tight arm lock and orders them to walk along with him.

The judge fixes his posture once the pair are gone. He casts his tired eyes over to you and gestures with his hand for you to take a step forward. Hastily, you do as told and look up at him, waiting to have him continue with the trail.

“I request two things from you if you wish to keep Faust under your care.”

You take a second to think and send a subtle look at the audience. The courtroom is quiet and everyone is calm, standing by until your sentence is determined. Pressure builds in your throat and you have to compose yourself before getting to raise your voice.

"What would that be. . .  Your Honor?” you ask, a frown marking itself on your face when you delay in between your words.

The judge takes the envelope lying in front of him and hands it to you. Meeting with his eyes, you stand slightly on your toes and reach out a hand for the item. You can feel the crowd already criticizing you from all directions when the envelope begins to shake in your hold.

“Firstly, you must refrain from introducing any new partner into Faust’s life -- until he is old enough not to react the way he did during the interrogation,” he explains, making stern eye contact with you. "The changes have been too much and too frequent since the day of your divorce. He has had to adjust himself to moving away, entering a new school, and seeing you grow attracted to his
Math tutor, who -- may I add -- is also a monster. The assault he witnessed did not help the situation, and we mustn’t forget he was once taken away from your care, only to then run away barely a month under Jessie’s care.”

Quietude falls upon the courtroom. Anxious, you look down for a split second to gain some sense of calm and look back up once he raises his voice again.

“If you wish to keep seeing other people, that is fine. But I forbid you bring that person into the household or near him. For the child’s safety and psychological well-being, you must wait until he grows up from these experiences.” A break follows with his words. The judge's deep stare is more intense than you can manage at this point. "You must promise to refrain from entering a serious relationship if you want to keep looking after Faust.”

Rigidity builds up on the back of your neck as your mind goes into an instant state of overthinking. It doesn’t take long before you’re imagining all sorts of farfetched outcomes based on the judge’s words. Your throat is as dry as chalk by the time you snap out of it.

“Can . . . Can he still go to his old school? He was doing well there and he liked being with his friends.”

“Yes, he may -- He has told me himself how much he likes miss Toriel’s school and how many friends he has made there. As for his former tutor, however, he will be assigned a different one if he requires so. Even if you do not have the funds, Jessie’s child support should be enough now that they have been given additional charges.” Each stop the judge takes only makes it worse for you. The envelope is pressed against your torso as a way to mask your nervous body. “Though I did not find it controversial to let him keep his old tutor for the sake of their friendship, it is best he moves on and finds a more stable resource to rely on. Your confession of your feelings for Sans also adds to the reasoning behind my decision.”

"Does this mean that--“

You find yourself unable to say your next words. Catching onto your doubt and inability to finish that last sentence, the judge nods and lets a minuscule frown tug his lips down.

“A restraining order will be applied to Sans. For the next three to five years -- until the child grows past his ten years of age -- Sans is forbidden to cross paths with either one of you.”
The sight of the human face-calling him is admittedly something beyond his expectations. Sans rolls to the side and grabs his phone charging by the night table, pulling off the chord and scooting back to where he was. He answers the call barely two rings in, the fast action making him take note of the mess of his bedroom.

Remembering Papyrus’s advice about good impressions, he moves to the edge of the bed and presses himself against the wall. He does so just in time to greet (Y/N) from the other side.

“Hey. . .” the human begins, the awkward tone of their voice making him forget about everything else and remember the reason why they were face-calling him in the first place. “How are you feeling?”

He stares at their moving image and sees they’re in the living room. Faust is nowhere to be seen and the only sound he hears is of their own voice.

“I’m fine,” he replies, shrugging off their worries before shuffling on his seat and speaking up again. “But how are--“

“I’m serious,” (Y/N) interrupts, frowning and furrowing their eyebrows right at him. “I want to know for real now that I got you into this mess.”

Sighing, the monster falls back on the bed, angling the phone so it doesn’t show anything besides him -- He was still onset about good impressions, no matter how silly and trifling it was in this situation. The human has a sudden shift in expression at that change of angle, an observation that makes him furrow his eye sockets, only to realize the reason behind their surprise is due to how close to the screen he is now.
“You look like you’re hiding something,” (Y/N) comments, a smile causing their face to light up.

“Why do ya say that?” Sans asks, chuckling under his breath.

“You were standing behind a wall, and now you won’t let me see anything else besides your face.” They look the least bit convinced about his well-being -- gaze restless and searching his skull for anything out of the ordinary.

“Can you make things work even with the monitor holding you back? It must be hard covering it up at school.” The look on their face matches the worry behind their voice, urging the monster to take action and speak up. “I really don’t want to ruin your reputation anymore than it has with the trail.”

“It’s fine -- I’m covering it up for school. Don’t worry about that now.”

“Still. I’ll try to do something about this, alright? I . . . I know it’s been more than a week and I haven’t gotten anywhere with this, but I’m gonna keep trying to--“

“I’m not asking you to do that,” he intervenes, holding the phone up just enough for the human to see the bedsheets, but not the mess scattered about. “Though I won’t lie that I miss havin’ you guys around.”

He sees a grin replace the worry on their face and hears a few quick knocks sound on their line. Faust’s distinct voice calling out for his parent is heard as clear as day from behind them. Another emotion overcomes the previous one on the human’s face, and he can tell they’re not sure what to say.

“I’m not supposed to let him see you, but . . . I really wish I could. You’re-- You’ve been a great tutor and friend. And just a cool person in general. I don’t know if you’re busy right now, but if you give me a minute I’ll be back to talk with you about something.”

“Go ahead, (Y/N). I’ll wait.”

The human gives a nod and flips the phone down so it faces the surface of the couch. Now void of
a view of their living room, Sans waits and listens as (Y/N) instructs Faust to head upstairs and shower. Steps can be heard going up the stairs and, not long after, he can see a hand turn the phone around and take it from the couch. (Y/N) covers the camera quickly before another set of footsteps -- these louder in comparison to the child’s -- rush in their pace. The camera is then uncovered to reveal the human now sitting on their bed, a bashful look showing on their (s/t) complexion as they sit up straight, huff, and brush some tousled hair away from their face.

“I have something for you, Sans.”

He watches them put the phone down on the mattress and waits while they pull out a gift box from behind them. It’s much larger than what one would call a regular present, the size big enough to be considered more of a child’s holiday gift than an ordinary present.

“I... figured you’d need these now that you have that thing around your ankle. I can give you the receipt if they don’t fit.”

Another grin makes their eyes and entire demeanor spark with anticipation, hands shaking the present to tease him over the contents. Sans pays close attention to the noise it produces, the sound similar to something soft making friction with cardboard -- most likely some sort of clothing or fabric, given he would need to try that on.

“Faust helped pick the colors,” (Y/N) mentions, setting the gift box down in front of them. “Is it okay if I send it to you by mail, or should I leave it with Toriel at her office?”

“It’s fine if you leave it at the office. I’ll just pick it up after my shift ends.”

“Great! I guess I’ll talk to you la--”

“Thanks,” he mutters, stopping the human when he sees they’re about to hang up. “Is it cool with you if I call you back sometimes?”

“Sure,” they reply, letting out a laugh. “It’s not like I made the order -- I’m not the one who wants you out of my life.”

The longing in their tone is enhanced by the their droopy eyelids and strained smile. They sit up straight and put a hand on the present, the other falling on their chest as they tug at the fabric of
their work uniform and break eye contact by facing down at their lap.

“Faust just came back from his tutoring lessons. . . But it’s just not the same, y’know?”

“Warmed up to me that much, huh?”

“I guess so,” they confess, smile widening and eyes finally facing him again. “I never thought it’d be possible, but it really did felt like we were starting over. A new school, new job, new people. . . Having you here every Friday was just another thing I liked about all this.” They bring a hand against the back of their head and rub their neck, looking more troubled the more words left their mouth. “It might just be my sleepiness talking, but I hope that all made sense, at least.”

(Y/N) hangs up after that, leaving him no time to say anything about that sudden burst of words. The monster sighs as he rises from the bed and looks around his room, the pile of clothing on one side and the mess of papers and books on the other threatening him each time they got bigger. He lets out a groan and stands in front of the mess of papers and books, giving a head start to his piled up work -- however begrudging a task it was for him at the moment. It was the only thing he could think of doing that would distract him from the call.

The ankle monitor wasn’t too much of a bother itself seeing as he could hide it under some long, baggy pants and keep going about his day, yet the reminder he received each day the bell rang was what made him remember why it was there. Every other weekday, when it was time for the students to leave back home, he had to wait until (Y/N) and Faust were gone for him to get anywhere near the school gates. He never dared to get close enough to see the pair and wave at the two from afar, the warning the judge had given sounding more on his mind whenever he thought of doing anything like that.

Though he wasn’t entirely in favor of the discrepancies between Jessie and (Y/N)’s sentences, he was in no place to fight against them. Unlike his time on the Underground, his title of judgment was almost entirely stripped away from him the moment he arrived at the Surface, both for the sake of being a monster and not being relevant enough to hold the same power as he once used to.

The monster wanted to give up, yet something nagged at him whenever the thought so much as crossed his mind. Then again, it was most likely just his sleepiness talking right now -- quite like the human had stated before.

He would’ve left his room and head straight to Grillby’s, if it weren’t for the fact he felt too lazy to get dressed and make the effort of covering the device around his ankle.
Decisions, Decisions

Chapter Notes

Updates have been changed to Fridays and Saturdays, with an additional update every 1st and 4th Monday of the month! This means the story will update 10 times a month instead of 8 from here on. :-)  

(Note that this is until I catch up with the story's progress on my main publishing site.)

You decide to spend your lunch break at the school, in dire need of discussing what you were planning to do with someone else. Undyne beats you to it first, however, having spotted you from afar now that she was in charge of covering up for Sans each time Faust was near. That thought haunts you as you wave at her and try to keep a neutral expression.

“What’s up?” she asks, arriving in front of you. The sound of the soccer ball being kicked around by the children drown out part of her voice, though she speaks just loud enough for you to hear her clearly. You both sit down on one of the benches while you greet some of the parents you're acquainted with by waving at a distance. “I heard you guys still keep in touch after what happened -- Papyrus told me that much, at least.”

“Yeah, we... We still do,” you state, feeling strange at the mention of that subject. “I called him a few days ago, and I’ve been thinking of doing something about all this. I don’t think I can stop thinking about it until I give it a try.”

“What’s on your mind, then? I can help.”

You smile at her and hesitate, looking down at your palms and closing them when you make a decision. “I want to talk with the mayor of my town. I’ve been drafting a bunch of letters explaining the problem, but I don’t know what else to do from here -- Or if the letters are even any good to send to the mayor.”

The severity of the situation falls upon you right as you finish speaking. Many times you told yourself to keep calm when discussing the topic, yet you couldn’t manage that now that you were actually taking action. You remember Jessie and the confidence they carried up until the end. Even as they were being sent off to jail, they looked shocked at the knowledge that Faust had betrayed them with his confession of what he witnessed, rather than for the mention of their two-year sentence in prison.
“I should’ve done something earlier, but things just came one after another, and now I feel like I’ve lost that chance. Sans, he... He looked off that time I called him, but he tried to hide it. I doubt he feels okay with what happened, but I... I don’t even know how to get him to open up. And now that I think about it, why should he?”

“First off, calm down, (Y/N),” Undyne intervenes, a chuckle leaving her mouth. “You went off on a spiral stronger than the ones Alphys has.”

She scoots closer to your side to have more privacy and stare more directly at you. Her eye softens a little as her expression grows distant, most likely lost in thought. That lasts for a few more seconds, her eye turning back to you.

“We all agreed to be careful with what we do,” she continues, words firm as so is the look on her face. “We’re all monsters except for Frisk, so we don’t want to risk having Faust taken away or anything like that. Hell, we even thought of Frisk also being thrown into it if we acted too rashly. That time Toriel had to sit separately from Frisk got to all of us. We were scared we were gonna lose them and everything they represent, even it though it was just that one time.”

She leans back on her seat and looks up at the sky, a different emotion showing on her expression. You look up at her, feeling as if she had something left to say out of everything else she had mentioned.

“I doubt it’ll be easy, but if you’re also onset about doing this, that says a lot -- ‘Cuz it’s not like we asked you to do that. You started taking action all by yourself.”

Her gaze finally breaks off from the sky and a more familiar emotion crosses her face this time around. She looks at the watch tied around her wrist and checks the time.

“I have to clean up now, but we can talk more about this later. Do you have me on Overnet yet?”

You reply with an ‘I don’t’ and hand her your phone when she requests for it. She accesses the app and gives a few taps, nodding and handing it back to you as soon as she’s done. You thank her and take to phone back to see her profile along with the message of ‘request sent’ at the top right of the screen.

“I don’t know if the thought’s crossed your mind lately, but he’s still your friend. If anything, I think he wants to talk with you again. He was all busy yesterday calculating when you’d be out of
work to call you, but then I made the mistake of making fun of him about it.”

The smile that shows on your face catches you off guard, giving you no chance to fight it back or cover it away from her gaze. You stand up from the bench and search for Faust around the playground, remembering you were still on your lunch break and that you had to be going back soon.

You wave at Undyne as she waves back and walks away, leaving you to yourself and with only fifteen minutes left to get back to work. In a hurry, you rush to Faust’s side before preparing to leave and plant a kiss on his cheek once he approaches you.

Faust smiles and hugs you, giving you the exact same look he gave you lately whenever he wanted to ask about the situation between you and Sans. It was the same look he gave you after he found you writing the letters and the one when he heard the two of you talking during your face-call last Friday. He had been persistent to know, yet you reminded him of the rules of the judge and how he wasn’t meant to meddle in that subject.

Instead of acknowledging his look with words, you give a look of your own right back at him, your firm eye contact, stern frown, and furrowed eyebrows enough for him to get the message. He pouts and relents with a huff, rushing with his friends back to the playground.

Eight minutes late mark when you clock in. In admittance to your defeat, you slump and let your forehead make contact with the wall. You stay in that position for a while and hold back a grin, waiting until Sunny flies in and places a hand on your back, asking if you're okay. You start to feel guilty about your charade, mind already imagining how worried the Whimsun would look when you turned around.

"I'm gonna send that letter," you mutter, lifting your head away from the wall. You can feel a smile creeping on your face with how dramatic those words come out.

"R- Right now?" she stutters, pulling her hand back.
"As soon as I get out of work. I can't stand to wait. . . and it's only been a few weeks."

You turn to her and smile, a laugh finally bursting through when you see her panicking for you. She looks more stressed than she's supposed to, and you feel guilty despite your attempt at teasing her.

"How do you even like hanging out with me after I make you worry so much?" you ask, smile widening as you walk with her to the coat hangers to pick up your apron, gloves, and hairnet. "You gave that testimony even though you're not one for crowds, and yet you still put up with me."

"I thought it was ex- exciting, actually," she speaks, waiting for you to finish setting up for the second part of your shift. "Seeing all those officers and the judge watching. . . waiting to hear me talk. I- I felt. . . determined all of a sudden. When I saw Faust tell what he witnessed, his bravery gave me courage, and that's when I knew I had to tell about the threats you were getting."

Unable to stand listening to her without doing something about her words, you give her a careful nudge and offer her a hug. Her small eyes grow bigger when she sees that, and it takes her a while to shake off her surprise. You bring her close and hug her just tight enough not to hurt her -- her body and wings being frail and less sturdy when compared to a human's average physicality.

"Thank you."
You receive a response from the mayor faster than you're expecting to. Having sent your letter the day after talking with Undyne -- Wednesday, to be more exact -- you weren't expecting to receive a response until next week. Your hands begin to shake when you take hold of the letter, closing your eyes when you pull the paper out of the envelope and opening them when you're done. Your eyes skim past the pleasantries and concentrate on his reaction to your complaint.

"While I do not plan to change the laws, I am interested in your complaint, (miss/mister) (L/N). Your short-term service to our community the past year was questionable, but I commend your unwavering dedication towards your beliefs. I assume the fellow you mentioned is your partner, correct? Otherwise, it would be strange for you to worry about him as much as you do. I still do not approve of you leaving your position as an officer to side with the monsters, but do as you wish. I will deem whether your complaint is worthy or not based on our first meeting this upcoming Monday at one thirty in the afternoon. You have three to four days to prepare until then."

A knot forms on your throat when you finish reading. You fold the paper by the same lines and slip it back into the envelope. Your sight turns blurry and you feel nauseous at the thought of what awaits you ahead. The pressure builds and you find yourself at the need to sit down for support, pressing the back of your head against the couch and letting your body find ease.

Sans actually lets you see his room the second time you call him. You're sitting on the edge of the bed with your back facing the mirror of your dresser, already out of your work uniform and door locked in case Faust woke up in the middle of the night.

"Hey," you greet, a smile showing on your face. Your eyes take in the room behind him: a twin bed, a small work desk, and some laundry on a basket lying at the corner of the room. The lighting is dim, the moonlight that enters the windows casting nature's shadows on the floor. Sans is sitting on what looks to be a black office chair with wheels and -- unlike you with your gray and blue pajamas -- he doesn't seem like he's ready to call it a night yet. “Are you . . . feeling better?”

“Sorta, yeah,” he replies, honest response made seem less important by the way he shrugs it off with a laugh. “That gift you sent me helped a lot.”
“So, they fit?” Excitement is present in your question. That feeling grows when he nods and you see him stand up to reveal the clothing he now wore. The pair of dark-coloured pants reaching right below the ankle and their thick fabric were able to hide away the monitor Sans was obliged to carry everywhere he went. “I didn’t think I’d get your size right.”

His irises flicker once and grow brighter when he sits back down, expression appearing less dreary to your view. He rolls the chair to your left and arrives at his work desk, where he retrieves a small, black box from the top drawer.

“I, uh, got somethin’ for ya, too.” The monster breathes in and tugs at the collar of his shirt with his free hand. He looks troubled to speak up again. “I... had a lotta time to think these past few days about what you confessed over in court. These past three weeks without you around kinda made me realize how I feel.”

“And about what you said to me before the final judgement,” he intervenes, facing you directly enough to make you waver and pull back slightly from the camera. "I don't think I can return your feelings just yet, but I care about you."

A tidal wave of self-directed I told you so's make way into your mind, the fact that you so much as kept hold onto the hope that he felt the same way vanishing. Restless and drained of your calm, you immediately fault yourself and take it you had been too hasty with your expectations the day he pulled you out of the diner, and that -- one way or another -- you had pushed him to give you an answer at the most inconvenient time possible.

"Don't get me wrong, (Y/N) -- I don't wanna put you in a tough place with this stuff, since I know I ain't exactly rejecting or accepting your feelings here. If you like someone else by the time this is all over with, don't wait for me. But right now, I can't be in a relationship with you -- or pretty much anybody else -- knowing what’s been happenin' these days."

A slow nod's the only action you're capable of now. You look away and breathe in, trying to bury your despondency in order to face him back. You want to be reasonable and avoid letting your thoughts go too deep into the subject, but your mind persists and your pulse speeds up the more you think about it. Going through the mail before making the call had been a mistake -- the pressure was too much.
“Anyway, I . . . heard from Undyne you’re tryna to talk with the town’s mayor now,” he continues, changing the subject. He toys with the box in hand by flipping it and setting it down on his lap afterwards. “So you were doing this on your own all this time?”

“It just felt like it was my responsibility.”

You pull back slightly when you see Sans’s face grow dull. The sudden change of expression and the heavy silence that overcomes the conversation reminds you of what often happened right before you started an argument with your family or (ex) spouse. “It ain’t supposed to be like that -- I thought we were past that stage now.”

Angry, you inch forward and press your eyebrows together. A frown falls on your mouth and your tongue is ready to snap at him. “You wouldn’t tell me what was bothering you last week, either.”

“Just like you told everyone in court about what Jessie did to you, when I knew nothin’ about it.”

“It’s in my right to choose what I want to say, and when I want to say it.”

“Then it should be my right, too.”

Exasperation shows by the way your chest rises and falls with each rough breath. You both look at one another for a long, excruciating while, until you stare at his clothes and he looks down at the box. Expressions simultaneously soften, and you’re the first one to shake your head and laugh at the shift in moods.

“How did this happen? I just called to check how you’re doing.” You pass a hand through your hair as you say that, emotions running high now that the spontaneous argument came to an end. “It’s- It’s not like we’re a family, or a couple, or anything like that. I mean, friends fight too, but. . . .” You cover your face with your hand and groan before facing him again. “This is so damned frustrating.”

“Tell me about it,” he replies, chuckling. “I’m not sure what we are now, but this is honestly one of the things that keeps me going. I really like the time we spent together, (Y/N) -- Faust included.”

Bewildered by his last statement, you sit up straight and stare at him directly. He picks up the box he previously set on his lap and opens it, revealing a dark blue phone strap with a circular locket
dangling right beside it.

“I was gonna give you this after you won the custody, but then that happened.”

He opens it up and displays the image of you and Faust standing by the garden on Toriel’s home. Faust is in your arms while he holds onto the sunflower Sans had given you, warm and bright smiles closely matching with the faint rays shining above you. The background is the small pond you had spent hours on talking, and you can almost make out every little detail despite how compressed the image is.

“Paps helped out with the locket. He thought it’d be nice to hang it on your phone.”
Chasing Justice, Part One

"Nothing that matters is easy." – Miss Fisher Season 1, Episode 2

It’s Monday.

You’re all dressed up for the occasion: a plain dress shirt, a suit, and a tie. The weather is against you, the wind that blows when you get out of the car spitting needle-like rain on your clothes. You guard your attire by taking out an umbrella and opening it, using it until you reach the entrance of the town hall. A guard steps in front of you as soon as you stand before the doors and asks the reason for your visit. She gives you a quick once over and tries not to let her recognition be seen -- something that seemed to happen often at your hometown ever since the mention of your trial was plastered all over the newspapers they gave out.

“Good afternoon, (miss/mister) (L/N). The mayor has been expecting you,” she states, looking at the small watch on her wrist to check the time. Wary, you check the hour on your phone, relieved when you see you’re twelve minutes early for the meeting. “I will escort you to his office shortly, but I will need to perform a security checkup first.”

Nodding, you follow her lead and pass through the entrance, stopping when she does the same. She takes you to her station composed of a single desk and chair, complete with the equipment needed for security, all located in one small room kept hidden from the waiting area of the town hall. She instructs you to stretch your arms out and begins patting your suit for anything that might stick out. You wait and see her take out your phone and wallet, handing you back the latter and keeping the phone in her hold.

“We will be confiscating your phone until the meeting is over,” she explains, her blue eyes staring deep into you while she passes a hand through her ginger hair. “If you can’t find me here by the time you’re out of the meeting, another officer will be waiting for you.”

“Understood,” you speak up, a polite smile showing your agreement. The locket dangling on the phone makes you hesitate, and you try to find courage to say your thoughts out loud. “But may I still keep the locket? It’s... very important to me.”
The officer raises an eyebrow, subtle action giving away her interest for knowing the reasons of the importance behind the locket. She inspects the item and uses a metal detector to verify it’s safe. Once she marks it as such, she takes it again and unlatches it from the phone, giving it back to you.

“Here you are, (ma’am/sir).”

“Thank you, officer.”

She pockets the phone and continues walking after taking a turn to the left. Her broad shoulders are firm in place as her heeled dress shoes tap against the marbled floor, the rhythm quick and consistent to your hearing. You follow close by her side, careful not to fall behind on your steps and make her point that out when noticing.

You’re tempted to stop when you catch sight of something shining from the corner of your eye, but settle with a double-take before you keep walking any further from it. It’s gone by the time you look again, though you can’t bring yourself to shake it off as your imagination.

“Here we are.”

You dismiss those thoughts and wonders at the sound of the woman’s voice. Her voice is firm, and she’s holding the door open with one hand, the other she uses to lead you in. Her expression is unreadable as you step in, dull mouth and severe eyes making it hard to see beyond her composed nature.

The door closes with a thud, leaving you no option aside from checking out the room when you realize the mayor is not on his desk. (E/c) eyes scan the area from east to west, taking in the stuffy, if not imposing look of the thick curtains blocking nature from your view. The mayor’s desk is clean aside from his silver name plaque and a thick, yellow file with your information on it. You take a step closer, curious to read the words scribbled on top of it.

“(Y/N) (L/N)’s Child Custody Case. Case File Number-“

Lightning striking close to the windows interrupts you from reading. The lights flicker and warn over a possible power outage while the air conditioner shuts down in entirety.
“These darned thunderstorms keep messing with the air conditioner!” a man’s voice exclaims, almost scaring you out of your skin with how quiet it is now -- it was a large difference without the cooling device making noise.

Your gaze falls upon the mayor, who emerges from the door located on the right side of his desk. He’s busy holding onto more documents in his hands, a soft smile welcoming you to sit down.

“Come now, (miss/mister) (L/N),” he greets, walking to his desk and setting the pile of papers and folders down on it. “I have been eager to talk with you again.”

The mayor’s friendly attitude lasts until the most part of your meeting. His words are calming and considerate whenever you mention your troubles, though one question in particular makes his smile quaver.

“Why do you agree with Sans’s sentence despite acknowledging him as my partner in your response letter?”

His countenance twitches as he folds his hands over the desk, straightening his posture before answering. “I simply do not believe this will last between you -- It has only been seven months, hasn’t it? Your marriage with Jessie ended in spite of you knowing them for many years. Who is to say you won’t lose interest in Sans after a period of separation?”

You’re at a loss for a response to his statement. Your mind racks for a quick response, though all of them fall short when you plan to say them out loud. So far, the meeting had gone smoothly and you had even retrieved the hope of it resulting well. Now, you think differently. The mayor’s smile shifts into a grin, warmth and amiability falling away from his gaze.

“I’d like to object on that, sir. Jessie’s views clashed with mine, so I had to leave them. Sans, though, he. . . I care about him, and I think I have the right to move on just as much as Jessie has with their new lover.”

“But now Jessie is in jail because of you, aren’t they?”
“Jessie is in jail because they attacked me right in front of Faust.”

You reach into your pocket and clutch onto the locket, squeezing it in hopes of easing out your mind and gaining some sort of calm. You had gone too far to let things go to waste now.

“Still, I believe you would know better with your past experiences in the workforce, correct? One of the main requisites was practiced knowledge on self-defense for a reason.”

That comment weakens your resolve. Your thoughts go out of order as buried memories of the times you were brushed off in a similar manner surface again. It had been this way ever since you left your old job, and things didn’t seem to be changing anytime soon.

“I didn’t want to scare Faust -- He ran back home, and he was shaking when Jessie showed up yelling.”

“Then perhaps you should’ve thought first about who you were bringing in home with you. If you had listened to your-”

“It was already proven Jessie didn’t keep their part of our agreement. They went as far as stalking me to get evidence in their favor.”

You tighten your hold on the locket one final time before letting it go, determined to say your mind for at least once in a lifetime. Many times you had been reluctant and indecisive when it came to choosing something for your own good and the good of Faust. Hadn’t you received upfront support from your next-door neighbour and a few of your friends, you wouldn’t have gained courage to face Jessie like you had in court.
“They may have chosen a wrong way to execute their beliefs, but they were still trying to keep your son out of harm's way.”

The mayor's words are final. He leans back on his desk chair, defiance showing underneath the well-mannered expression he tried to keep with you.

“If you still can’t see the wrong Jessie did even with all the evidence brought up in court, then I won’t keep bothering you, mayor. I think you of all people should know how wrong it is to be that unjust with people.”

It takes all you have in you not to bring up the disbalance between Sans and Jessie’s sentences. You still believed it to be incomprehensible that one would receive almost five years of sentence while the other got only two. That single thought is enough fuel for your anger to rise along with your pride.

You stand up and fix your outfit, trying to keep your head up despite the itchy feeling of your eyes and the dryness of your throat. You can already tell you’ve lost this case by the unimpressed features of the mayor. His lips are a straight line and his hands are still neatly folded over his desk, not budging to move or do anything in protest to your leave. He keeps quiet until your hand reaches the exit door, ready to push it open and leave.

“Good day, (L/N).”

“Good day, mayor.”

A tear escapes your eye when your close the door behind you, feeling your chest tighten when you remember it’s only been a month since Sans was given his sentence. You missed him -- there was no other way to put it. You missed having him over on Fridays and planning the days when you would hang out as a pair, or by Faust and the monster’s family by your side.

The officer notices you when you take a few steps down the hall leading back to the main entrance. Concern seems to fall on her visage when she sees you quieter and gloomier than when you first made it here. She doesn’t say a word, however, and instead signals for you to follow her down the hallway, steps slowing down for your sake.
“You’re mister Sans’s partner, correct?”

Her voice catches you by surprise when she decides to speak mid into your walk back together. She’s looking up at you, her shorter height and soft look never dampening the drape of authority she carried within.

“We, uh... never got to that point.”

“Really? Not even a kiss or anything of the sort? He looked genuinely worried for both you and your son.”

“Nothing, really. We’re still friends -- It got tougher now that we’re technically in a long-distance relationship.”

“Platonic relationship, I’m guessing?” she teases, nudging you on the shoulder.

“Kind of,” you reply, a tiny, amused smile replacing the sorrow you carried fresh in your thoughts. “We talked about our relationship a few days ago, and I guess he wouldn’t mind dating if we weren’t in this situation.”

You can see the officer bite her lip and hesitate on her steps. It looks like she has something she wants to say, though she doesn’t speak when you make eye contact. The walk back together feels longer to you with how many turns you take to get there. The same, sudden flash of light appears at the corner of your eye again, but the same as before happens when you look back at it.

The woman passes a hand through her curls as she looks at you. “What about finding another solution if this doesn’t work out? Have you tried talking with the judge directly? I’m not supposed to say this, but... He might have a soft spot with you now that he worked on your case.”

“I...” You’re left dumbstruck by her words, not quite expecting that from her. “Thank you. I didn’t think about that.”
The constant thunder and increase in rain force you to stop trying. No matter how many times you turn the key and fruitlessly slam your hand against the car, it won’t start. You forgot to check up on it with the last warning you got.

Muttering hostile words under your breath, you press your forehead against the wheel and flinch back when the car honks at you. You lower down the glass just enough not to let the rain in and lock the doors, letting your back rest against the seat when you’re done. Another flash of lighting is enough of an encouragement for you to sit up straight and try again, the proximity of that last bolt threatening you into taking quick action.

The engine sputters complaints right before it manages to start up. You turn the air conditioner off in hopes of lessening the vehicle’s struggles, change the shift out of parking, and buckle up. Bracing yourself, you step on the gas until the car finally gives in, a side smile inviting itself on your face at that small victory.

Rain continues to fall harder as you drive out of town and towards the city, the thunderstorm never ceasing to surprise you. In a pinch, you allow yourself to take a shortcut in your usual route to Faust’s school, checking the time to make sure you wouldn’t make him wait. You pass by a series of tall buildings, wooden houses, and flooded terrains until you drive past the final trace of old, rundown edifices to reach a small hill overtaken by countless trees and wildflowers sprouting from all directions.

The engine starts to pull again, unable to put up the strength it needs to go up the hill, and you can see the speed meter lower not long after. The shortcut you took is useful in the sense that there's no vehicles nearby honking for you to move when your car slows down, but it still has its disadvantages. In sync with the next strike of thunder, the engine coughs and shuts down, leaving you right in the middle of the road. Begrudgingly, you turn the key around and take it out of the slot, pocketing it along with you and securing your phone inside the drawer next to you.

You set the car on parking for extra safety measures and take hold of the umbrella under the front passenger seat. Remembering the hour and destination you had to reach by four o’ clock, you gain determination to get out of the car. The sky is still pouring for you to see too much ahead, but the familiar look of the place makes you want to look around some more. You're not too far from Toriel's home, the greenery around you closely matching from the time Sans had driven there for you to see the garden. The umbrella serves as your shield when you step out and squint your eyes to see through the rain. You take off your suit jacket and throw it back in the car, walking on ahead with your dress shirt and shoes.
Your heart sinks at the sight of Mt. Ebott closed off with police tape long-past drained of its bright, yellow colour, the image bringing back memories of the day you locked up almost fifty monsters for allegedly attacking Frisk to no end. You remember peeking into the social worker’s office to see the young ambassador trying to explain the innocence of a great majority of the monsters, that scene being one of the first to make your purpose waver.

All thoughts are shaken off when you feel someone hold you from behind, your guard falling and body gaining relaxation when you make note of who it is. Height difference and scent are the principal factors to give out the person's identity, his absence making you take in the feeling more than usual. The umbrella is taken out of your grasp by a different person and warmth quickly falls on your shoulders as a towel is placed over them.

“What the hell were you doing out here? You’re soaked.”

The pull of your soul ceases when you hear him talk. You break your eyes away from Sans’s back to see Frisk and Undyne out in the rain, umbrellas and plastic ponchos shielding them from a likely cold. The uniform Frisk is wearing reminds you it’s already three in the evening and that Faust leaves school at four.

Despite his words and how damp your clothes are, the monster doesn’t seem to want to let go. His hands are careful not to go any lower than your back, though he’s still close enough for you to hear his shaky breathing.

“Aren’t you supposed to be at school?” you ask, voicing out the first thought that comes into mind.

“I was. But the kid got suspended, so I’m looking after ‘em till Tori’s back from work. Undyne’s gonna cover the rest of my shift.”

“This is heartwarming and all, but why don’t we talk about this somewhere safe?” Undyne's voice suggests. “You guys already broke a law here, so you might as well keep on breaking it until we’re done talking.”

“Oh God, I’m sorry,” you mutter, pushing Sans away when you remember the sentence he was under. You look at his uniform and take note of the monitor now visible through the soaked fabric of his pants. “I swear I’ll explain before they try to fine you for this.”

A clash between a nearby tree and a lightning bolt makes everyone present flinch and huddle close.
You inspect the area around you to see another car parked not too far ahead, waiting behind yours.

“Seriously, punks. Get in there before I pick you both up and throw your butts in myself.”

“Right,” Sans agrees, sparing a look at Undyne before looking at you. “I'm guessin' that's your car over there?”

"Yeah, it... it shut down on me."

"Then c'mon in, (Y/N)," Undyne speaks up, gesturing with her hand for you to follow her out of the rain. Frisk smiles and mimics her actions, waiting for you to join them. "I'll deal with that after we make it to Toriel's place."

You thank the fish lady and walk in a group with the four of them, Frisk marching happily about while you stay a bit far behind, keeping up with Sans's slower pace. He notices and closes off part of the distance between you, Undyne's earlier words of wisdom being taken into account.
Chasing Justice, Part Three

Thunder becomes less frequent when you make it to Toriel’s home. You’re sitting on the guest bed with a towel wrapped around your body, waiting for your shirt and pants to come out of the dryer. Your phone rings during your wait, and you pick it up to see a message from Faust under Toriel’s phone number.

*Im at miss Toriels office. We can ride the school bus, but we cant leave until the rain stops. Im playing with my friends until then :))*

You smile at the message and type back a response.

*Got it. Do you want me to pick you up still? The car broke down, but I can get there before 5 pm.*

*I wanna take the bus!! My friend always takes it so I wanna go with her*

*Alright. Take care, dear. <3*

“Undyne hauled up your car at the garage.”

You look up from your phone and see Sans leaning by the doorway, a cup in hand and a folded towel in the other. He walks over to you and sits down by your side, handing you the cup. It feels warm to the touch and you stare down at it to view a serving of hot chocolate topped with mini marshmallows and a dollop of whipped cream.

“. . .With a car crane?”

“With her hands.”

The monster hands you the towel and laughs when he sees the shocked, if not stupefied look on your face. He scoots closer to your side and places a hand on your lap, avoiding contact with your skin. “I’m serious, (Y/N),” he states, snapping you out of your awestruck daze. “She just lifted the back up a lil’ and pushed it all the way up to the garage.”
“I knew she was strong, but woah,” you speak up finally, shaking your head lightly as a laugh prevents you from taking the first sip of your drink. “Wasn’t she part of the Royal Guard back then?”

“Yeah,” he replies, placing the towel over your shoulders. You quirk an eyebrow at that, but it falls back when you take a look at the towel you’re wearing. It’s still cold and humid from the shower you took to wash off from the aftermaths of the storm. Catching on, you take a gulp of the drink, place it down on the floor, and pick up the towel from your shoulders, placing it over the old towel before letting that one go. “She can’t be with the law yet, but she’s damn good with heavy work, and she’s been coverin’ up for my shifts ever since I got that sentence.”

“What about Papyrus?”

“He’s an assistant cook at the food court a few miles from here.”

Nodding, you pick up the cup and take another sip, checking the time on your phone before deciding to bring up another topic. “Did you make this?”

“Frisk did.” Sans stands up from the bed and takes the old towel along with him, folding it over his arm as he stares at you again. “You can walk around if you want. Frisk’s down at their room in case that’s what’s keeping you here.”

“It’s fine -- I think the clothes should be done drying soon.”

No other words are exchanged after you say that. Sans is already by the door frame when you decide to say something else. Though the argument from a few days ago had been dealt with as quick as it came, it was made apparent that he still felt uneasy about your relationship with how much he tried to keep distance with you just now.

“Wait,” you call out, standing up from the bed. Your hand keeps the towel from slipping when you head toward his side. Less than an arm’s length away, you lean down slightly and place a kiss on his cheekbone, lips lingering for just a second before you pull away. “Thank you for the locket.”

Your face is still in front of his when you say that. Though his regular expression doesn’t change much on a first glance, the single flicker in the white lights of his irises and the hand he places against your torso show his surprise over that action. He removes his hand back and closes off the
distance, bringing you into another hug, this one softer and less in duration compared to when you greeted him out in the rain.

You slip off the towel and stand before the dresser's mirror with nothing else besides your underwear, dry clothes laying by the bed. The feeling of a rougher material under the soft fabric of the towel is accompanied by the sound of crunching. Startled, you unfold the towel completely to reveal another sticky note similar to the one Sans had placed the time you met up at the library.

"betcha didn’t expect this gag twice in a row, huh? flip the paper around."

The note is wrinkled but legible to your eyes nonetheless, though you still have to squint to make out some of the words, these faded and smudged by your hand. A longer message is present on the back side of the note.

"i'd been feeling stuck lately, but not anymore. that argument we had helped, and it made me think about how much we've opened up with each other. just like how i didn't give a single damn about myself a few days ago, i didn't give a damn about this thing 'round my ankle when i saw you today. i wanted to hug you, and so i did just that. 'course that doesn't mean i can do that again whenever i want, 'cuz i'm sure this'll come bite back at me soon. but one thing's for sure, it was well worth it."

You drop the note at the last sentence, mind shutting down the rest of your surroundings to focus solely on that small string of words.

"i like you, (y/n)."

Those words make their rounds on your mind as you stare down at the note now lying on the floor. It's already four o' clock sharp and you're just about ready to head back home with the next bus at four thirty, eager to get there first before Faust grew any more suspicious of your whereabouts again.

You crouch down and pick up the paper, hand shaking with anticipation. Not quite believing your eyes, you read the letter for a second time, against being hasty regardless of the time crunch you were in.
Choice #3

What will you do next?

a.) Confront him.
b.) Dismiss the note.
c.) Leave it for later.
d.) Hold onto it.
You decide to confront him about the note. Still in your underwear, you begin dressing up as quickly as you're able to and check yourself in the mirror once before stepping out of the guest room.

The exit leads to a hall with a few potted plants set next to each door. You turn to your left and arrive at a small living room composed of a reclining chair, a couch, a coffee table, and a bookcase. Sans is sitting on the couch with a small pile of papers set on one side, a briefcase in the other, and a pen in hand. He’s facing down at a piece of paper, busy correcting it with blue marks, though he stops when he hears you enter the room.

“Hey,” you call out, directing a small wave at him.

“Headin’ out already?” Sans asks, setting the papers down on the table in front of him.

“Yeah, I. . .” you trail off, taking another step into the room as you decide whether to truly approach him or not. “I just. . . came to say goodbye.”

Sans lets out a breath through his nose cavity as his smile loosens up at the sides. He stands up and stretches his bones, appearing more relaxed once he does so.

“You read the letter, didn’t ya?” he asks, playfulness in his tone.

“I might’ve,” you reply, refusing to acknowledge the taunt behind those words. You approach the monster and close off the distance left between you, though you stop when you get too close to his face.

As if taking note of your doubt, Sans stands to close off the remaining height difference and presses his teeth against your cheek, his left hand finding its way to the back of your head to keep you still while the other stays back. He lets go not long after that, the bold, shameless expression on his face making you wish you could wipe it away.
“I’d take you out right now if I could. Did anyone ever tell you how *smokin’* you look in a suit?”

Stunned, you blink once at his words, mind incapable of registering them in order to make sense of them. Of all the things you were expecting from him, this was *really* not one of them. Refusing to accept those words as his own, you look around for any possible accomplice and catch Frisk peeking in from the kitchen door. They notice and hide as quickly as you spot them.

“What can I say, (Y/N)? The kid’s good at this stuff -- They even made a frog blush once with their compliments.”

You want to say something, but you’re cut short by your phone’s alarm ringing. It marks four twenty-five when you pick it up, hurrying you to make way to the bus stop. In a race against time, you say your goodbyes and thank both people present for their help -- Frisk for the chocolate, and Sans for taking you in.

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**Choice B**

*Dismiss the note*

You dismiss the note, any possible happiness you could obtain from it perishing when you remember what Sans said during your argument. Though those written words reached your heart, you couldn’t accept them wholeheartedly without thinking about the situation you were in. There was still the obstacle of his sentence keeping you from getting anywhere further than you had. Giving into those thoughts, you crumple the note into a ball and throw it away into the paper bin nearby, incapable of looking back at it when you finish getting dressed and exit the guest room.

Frisk is the first to greet you with a wave when you step out, smiling at you as you pass through the hall and walk past various doors and potted plants until you arrive at the exit of their home. You don’t have the necessary courage to see Sans in person or much less talk to him with his letter still fresh in your memory, so you settle with casting a quick look at him sitting at the living room’s couch.

Looking away and reaching for the doorknob, the door opens with a single turn and allows you to
step outside. The only thing you manage before walking away is to sign a haste ‘thank you’ and offer Frisk a smile right as you close the door behind you.

The alarm on your phone starts to ring and you take it out to see it’s four twenty-five already. You turn it off and hurry down the road, in search for the bus stop before it was too late.

You don’t know where those minutes went by or why you took so long to come up with a single decision, but you don’t have time to think about it now that you’re falling behind schedule. The bus is already waiting for you, and it’s close to driving off when you get there.

Choice C

Leave it for later

Not wanting to risk getting home late, you save the note for later by putting it away in your pants’ back pocket along with your phone. You ready yourself to go out and close the door behind you, checking you have everything with you when you make it to the living room.

Sans and Frisk are there when you reach the room. You thank them both for helping you out and say your farewells afterwards. They return your gesture and wave as you step out of the house, four twenty-five marking itself on your phone’s screen. Time is limited, but you’re able to reach the bus stop before it leaves.

★

You arrive home to see Faust already waiting for you, backpack on one side of the living room and shoes placed near the door. He smiles at you and runs your way, giving you a hug.

“Did you have fun with your friends?” you ask, returning his smile.

He nods firmly and grins, performing a victorious pose by straightening his back and placing his
“I won at hide-and-seek today!”

Faust beams when you compliment him over his achievement. You instruct him to go shower and wait until you see him go up the stairs, letting him know you were waiting for him to follow your instructions. He looks like he wants to protest and ask for some time instead, though he doesn’t say anything when he sees the stern look on your face. It’s noticeable by the way his eyes spark and how he pouts that he’s suspicious of you again.

“We can talk later, dear,” you speak up, ushering him to go. “I promise I won’t keep so many secrets from you, but you have to listen to me first -- Now go shower and come back after you’re done.”

He mutters a reluctant ‘okay’ before looking away and making his way up to the bathroom. You enter your kitchen and turn on the stove to heat up the food you left before going off to work. While you wait, you reach for your phone and look for Sans’s Overnet profile, taking a peek of his social media to view his most recent posts and clicking on ‘send a message’ once the screen loads.

_I like you, too._

_Though I guess you knew that already._

_i’m gonna be frank with ya and say i have no clue when it comes to dating._

_so, in a way, i wasn’t really sure you did ‘til you told me upfront._

_Are you really sure about this, though?_

_I know you said you couldn’t date anyone because of your sentence._

_i like to gamble sometimes._

_and not gonna lie, having you so close today motivated me into giving you that letter._

_So you’re sure about this?_

_definitely._

_i’d take you out today if i could._
but i hope this’ll be enough for now.

An image pops up after that last message. As soon as it loads, you can feel blood drain from your face. It’s a stock photo complete with a watermark and the generic brand name ‘Best Value’ sticker placed on the fruit.

. . . A date?

the best kind.

Choice D

*Hold onto it*

You choose to put the note away in your wallet, hiding it behind your driver's license. It takes you no longer than a few minutes to get dressed and leave the room, remembering you had to make it home soon. The door closes behind you as you exit and pass by various doors decorated with potted plants, until you make it to the living room, where Sans and Frisk stand. The human child is busy organizing a bookshelf while the monster is sitting down on the couch nearby, going through some papers and setting some apart.

The child greets you the second they spot you and offer you to stay a bit longer. You think of declining their offer, but one look at your phone gives you security that you have a few minutes to spare until the next bus made it to the stop.

Frisk asks if you enjoyed the chocolate they prepared while Sans keeps to himself, making eye contact with you when you answer the younger one’s question. You smile at the skeleton when you see him, though you can’t bring yourself to do anything beyond that. Instead, you mention you have to leave five minutes before the next bus arrived and wave goodbye without exchanging a word with him. You do, however, pull the note out of your wallet, wave it at Sans discreetly, and wink, said actions retrieving a flustered look from his part. He looks away and concentrates back on organizing the papers scattered about, sparing a quick look at you before you leave as he waves.
You almost take it as your imagination when he winks back right after.

★

Your heart leaps when you step out of the kitchen. The two dinner plates on your hold almost topple over when you see the wrinkled note now in Faust’s hold. His eyes are narrowed as he reads through the paper’s contents, the fact that the wallet was still in your possession making you wonder just how it slipped out. He seems concerned for the most part of reading, though a smile breaks his tension away when he reads the last bit. You don’t move an inch, paralyzed by the sight of him having caught onto one of your (not-so) well-kept secrets.

"Are you guys dating now?" Faust asks, tearing his eyes away from the paper to look at you. He seems excited by that thought rather than troubled or angered by the revelation.

“No,” is your response, that single word coming out stronger than you intended it to. You see him flinch at the sharp and sudden rise in your voice, noticeably caught off guard by your reaction. “Or, well. . . Not yet,” you correct, sighing as you take in another breath and place his plate on the center table of your living room. “I haven’t wrote back at him about the letter.”

"But you like him, too. . . Right?” Faust presses on, setting the note down on the table right next to the food.

“I do, but that doesn’t mean I can go anywhere with that yet -- The judge’s decision is still there, dear. We can’t risk it.”

"That doesn't mean you can't text him, though," Faust suggests, smug grin and tone making you wonder who he was hanging out with for him to say something like that. You can't believe him and his enthusiasm in discussing that topic.
You wake up to a hand against your mouth and another pinning you firm in place.

Still groggy with sleep, it takes awhile for the gravity of the situation to fall upon you, even more so when the attacker is a familiar face. Jessie’s standing on top of you, eyes wild and wide with anger as their fingers dig deep into your skin, nails piercing through. They let go of the hand over your mouth only to mash their lips against yours when you try to get a word in what they’re doing. You struggle to break free, repulsion manifesting quickly by the way your stomach churns at the feeling of their mouth on yours.

“What the hell’s wrong with you?!?” you shout once you’re free, pushing them away by grabbing their forehead and shoving them back, teeth smacking with theirs when you break the kiss. You hiss at the pain but gain the upper hand when they fall and hit the bed with their back, though it’s only temporary. Jessie stands up almost instantly and corners you in place again.

“You’re ruining everything!” they exclaim, wiping blood away from their mouth. You don’t notice you cut their lip earlier until they start bleeding, a short trail tracing all the way down to their chin. “Haven’t you seen the news? Your little friendship parade with those monsters is all over the papers, and people won’t shut up about the trail -- I’m the bad one now thanks to you!”

“Young go,” you demand, not daring to make a move in case your energy was deemed necessary for an escape route. Your eyes bounce from the locked door of your room to the curtained window just a few steps away from the bed. “I know I should’ve discussed with you what I wanted to do when we were married, but I wasn’t the one who took Faust away. And I wasn’t the one who attacked y-“

You’re silenced by their hand letting go of your shoulder to grab hold of your chin. They crane your neck up to make you look at them, unaffected when they see you scowl at the force of that action. “I made a big mistake, too, (Y/N). I would’ve never let you divorce me if I knew, and maybe then we wouldn’t be stuck in this mess. I’ve received nothing but backlash since I made it into prison, and all for what? It’s not like I threatened you with a knife -- You had your chance to
fight back!

“I tried to-“

“Shut up. I’m the one talking now.” They pull your chin higher and bring you closer, a wide, complacent grin marking their face. “Would you believe me if I said I still love you? I can’t believe it myself, but you’re still nice to look at. You’ve still got your charm, (Y/N) -- pajamas and all.”

“I thought you moved on,” you object, pulling the bedsheets over yourself when you notice Jessie’s eyes linger a little too much on your body. It doesn’t help when you see the traces of blood on their lip, reminding you of how they chose to silence you the first time. “You told me you found someone else back when Faust started school.”

“I did, but I got tired after a while -- It’s just not the same.”

Your mind is close to collapsing with how much tension it’s set under. You try to stand up and push them away, yet they keep you from doing so by digging their fingers harder against your skin. They keep you still and refuse to back off, no matter how soft with melancholy their expression turns after they say those words. Cornered, you try to keep some degree of calm and brace yourself to fight back, planning out your first attack.

“I’m gonna have my way with you before I put an end to this completely.”

You direct a punch at their jaw the second you feel their hand slip under your shirt, earlier words making you nauseated. They budge and curse but stay firm in their decision, using their other hand to grab your face and pull you in for another kiss, tongue attempting to pry into your mouth.

“Screw off!” you exclaim, kneeling them in the gut.

Their hold on you loosens as they bring a hand to their stomach and double over, groaning in pain. You scramble out of bed, tugging your shirt down as a shudder makes your entire body shake. The pungent taste of blood is present in your mouth and you feel nauseous when you remember their tongue trying to force its way into your mouth. Too shaken by Jessie’s actions, you don’t notice their recovery until they grab you, pushing you down in bed again.
Jessie’s hands find their way to your neck, hold tighter than a snake’s. You gasp for air while your foot tries to aim a kick at their stomach again.

“Faust hates me -- Everyone I love hates me because of you!”

They prevent your kick by tightening their hold on you. You try again, refusing to give in despite your blurry vision and lack of oxygen. It’s weaker than you intend to, but it’s just enough for them to tumble and loosen their hold on you slightly.

“(Y/N)”

Faust’s voice rings clear, halting your plans of fighting back again when you lift your head to see him and the same bailiff from court next to him. The newbie officer rushes to your side with a gun in hand and badge on his uniform, warning Jessie with the weapon by ordering them to stand with their hands up. Obligated to follow his orders, Jessie grits their teeth, scoffs, and gets off of you, giving you one last, dirty look before the man in blue takes hold of them and brings out handcuffs to keep them still.

You melt in bed when you’re set free, chest rising and falling as you close your eyes and shudder once more. Faust calls your name and approaches you, hair tickling your face when he climbs up in bed and nestles close to your side.

“I’ll be taking Jessie with me now, (ma’am/sir). . . Do you need me to call someone for you?”

“No. . . It’s fine.” You stumble on your words, chest and mind tight with pent up emotions. “Thank you, officer.”

You feel helpless, but you don’t want Faust to know that. Declining his help is the only thing you can come up with to put on a stronger facade.

The atmosphere of people talking and the performer singing her heart out from the jukebox set in a
corner grant you relaxation, though you still can’t help your shaky hands and the constant flashbacks from this morning. Grillby sets a plate of fries down in front of you, a scrutinizing look on his face despite having no distinct features besides his glasses. He orders an employee to go fetch you a bottle of water while he sets the dish rag on the counter, crossing his arms together afterwards.

“. . .” (“Are you sure that’s all you want? You look ill.”)

The device wrapped around his wrist helps translate what he means to say. You ask over who designed it and receive the name Alphys as a response. It was in many ways helpful -- both for the privacy it gave now that you didn’t need a person to translate for him, and that it was able to replace that person when they weren’t available to translate for you.

“Thanks, but I’m fine with this -- I’m not too hungry right now.”

You touch your lips with the tips of your fingers when you say that, patting the cut you received yourself the second time Jessie kissed you. Sickened, you swallow and grab the bottled water as soon as it's given to you, chugging down half of it in one swig.

“. . .” (“I won’t press on, but I assume it has something to do with your case, right? I read about it in the newspaper this morning.”)

“Really? What did it say?” you ask, unaware of any updates from the news. You were too caught up with the previous matter to worry too much about that. Grillby answers by holding a finger up to excuse himself as he crouches behind the counter, retrieving a newspaper not long after. He sets it down in front of you, pointing at the headlines.

“Former officer (Y/N) (L/N) takes their first step towards monsterkind’s rights,” you read to yourself, glancing at the smaller font below the title. “(Miss/Mister) (L/N) confronted the mayor Monday afternoon, pointing out the disbalance between Jessie and Sans’s sentences. Most monsters agree with their actions as do a handful of the human population, inspiring a small chain of movements to erase the laws keeping the two races apart.”

You decide to read the entire article, too engrossed in the topic to back away from it now.

“Rebellion tampers with the sharp rise in (L/N)’s reputation when local police contact both them and Sans to question over broken laws after the monster brings (L/N) with him to what appears to
be miss Toriel's home, the school principal he currently works for. Both people involved failed to follow the rules, though they both claim it was for the sole sake of helping (L/N) when their car shut down in the middle of a storm.”
Dust flies when you take out your suitcase, a fit of sneezes taking over when you breathe in the stuffy air of the room. It had been long since you used the suitcase -- ten months having already passed since your move to the city. You still can’t bring yourself to believe you had spent almost a year here and that Faust was already finishing his second semester, just two weeks away from it being eight months since he started studying at Toriel’s school, and the same if you were to count the time you knew most of the monsters you befriended along the way.

You stop scavenging through your belongings when you hear your phone ring and feel it buzz in your back pocket. That was the third time it rang today since you woke up -- and it was still only ten in the morning. Word traveled fast with the newspapers announcing Jessie’s breakout from prison and their break-in into your home. Two days had passed since that incident, and you were wasting no time on getting out of the house as soon as possible. Not only did you fear for Faust’s safety, but you couldn’t sleep well at night without waking up every other hour, remembering Jessie on top of you.

“(Mom/Dad)?”

Faust emerges from behind the door, leading you to stop looking at your phone to face him. He looks scared to step into the storage room, though you smile to encourage him.

“Where are we going now? Do I have to switch schools again?”

“Of course not,” you reassure him, patting at the floor for him to sit next to you. “You can stay there ’til graduation if you want, but we can’t stay here. You’ll be safe in school, but not in this house.” You face down at the suitcase, using a rag to wipe away the sheet of dust left on it. Faust helps you tidy up by taking his own suitcase, though you instruct him to cover his nose with a rag first before he got to helping you out further. “I’ll use our savings to find a safe place.”

Your phone rings again, this time a call rather than a message, and with Sans’s name showing up
on screen. You try to cover it away from Faust’s hawk-like line of sight, all to no avail. He catches on quickly and lets a grin show on his face, goofy look enhanced by the way he nudges your shoulder.

“You should answer,” Faust suggests, hope reflecting on his face. “I bet it’s important.”

“What's gotten into you?” you ask, incapable of fighting back your smile. “And why should I?”

“Frisk said you met up with him on Monday.”

“Yeah, ‘cuz the car broke down, dummy.”

You place a hand on his head and ruffle up his hair, though he looks at you with the same amount of mischief as before. “And he gave you that thing you have on your phone -- That means you’re dating!”

“Alright, Sherlock -- Hold up one second. You know I can’t do that.”

“Yet,” he objects, pointing a finger at you. “I read the newspaper, too. You went with the mayor to talk about it!”

“Remind me not to give you coffee again, Faust,” you scold, dodging his assumptions. “You’re way too hyped about this.”

Faust pouts when you put an end to the conversation, ignoring his frowns and dramatic sighs while you clean. He covers his nose with a clean rag and begins tidying up when you start to hum a tune over his speech, preventing him from getting another word in your situation with Sans.

The phone shows the unread message from your cousin and Sans’s missed call when you pick it up to check the time, fifteen minutes having flown past during your bickering with Faust. You start to hurry with your chores after that, wanting nothing more than to find a place today before sundown -- You couldn’t bear thinking about Jessie on a constant basis whenever you stepped foot into your room.
Faust notices when you stop humming over his protests and catches you frowning at your thoughts. Without a word, he stops clearing the dust to approach your side, cuddling up to you by leaning his head against your shoulder.

“Hey.”

You don’t know what to say when he picks up. It’s noon thirty by the time you call him back.

“How’re you holding up over there? We couldn’t really talk much yesterday.”

That last statement drives out a pang in your heart. Nobody knew about what happened on Monday. The day later, however, you had calls from every which way -- from concerned friends and family, to journalists and old co-workers in the force. Sans had been one of the first people to call, yet you couldn’t manage so much as a few words with him before another call interrupted.

“I’m doing better,” you reply, walking out of the storage room. Your steps are slow as you make it down to the living room, where Faust is multi-tasking by doing his homework and watching television. He doesn’t spring up to question if it was the person you had been trying to keep secret from him, though that still doesn’t erase his capability of lowering down the television’s volume a few numbers to listen in on your conversation. “I didn’t think I’d do it, but we’re moving again.”

"About that,” Sans intervenes and trails off after, Papyrus’s whispering sounding in the background. “I talked with a... friend about this. Didn’t get into too much detail 'bout what you told me, but he has a hotel business not too far from Faust’s school. I can give you the details if you want.”

You don’t pry on how strained the word ‘friend’ comes out, but it doesn’t stop you from wondering why he was reluctant to call him that way. Rather than questioning him over that, you accept his help and stay quiet for him to give you the information. He starts by saying the name of the hotel, the location, and how much it would cost to stay there. The price makes you think either it’s a humble place or that the word 'friend' meant he had to bargain his way to get on the owner’s good side. He doesn’t give you much space to object over the cost of the stay or why he was even bothering to go that far for you in the first place.
"The guy’s name's Mettaton,” he mentions, that last bit of information ringing a bell on the back of your head. “You can go there today if you don’t wanna spend anymore time at your old place.”

"Thank you,” you speak up finally, mind wandering in search for the familiarity of that name. If you weren’t mistaken, Mettaton was one of the monsters you were close to handcuffing -- both for the purpose of his creation and for the dangerous game show he put Frisk under. It was due to the child’s words he was set free, the second reason being he looked the most human out of all the monsters that rose to the Surface, a factor that made authority more lenient to letting him go. “But, uh, I don’t think I can do that.”

"Why not?"

"I. . . I was the one in charge of his background check when the Barrier broke. I was close to arresting him if Frisk hadn’t intervened in on that.”

"He told me that much,” Sans states, the sound of him chuckling making you wish you could hang up. Those words didn’t sound as nice when you said them out loud. “Shame you didn’t do it, but at least it has its perks.”

"I’m serious,” you say, mulling over your words. “I. . . Maybe he was built to destroy at one point, but Frisk. . . They- They were firm in their decision, and they wouldn’t let me take him away. I followed along with the first time our department started throwing monsters in jail without batting an eye, but I . . . I didn’t know what to do when I saw innocent ones being pulled in, too. I turned my badge in after the chief found out I bailed on my mission. And so he. . . He laid me off, and I walked away without thinking too much about what I was doing.”

"Whoa there.” Sans’s voice stops you from rambling. “Undyne wasn’t kidding when she said you turned into Alphys sometimes. Slow down -- I already know what you did back then.”

"You do?” you ask, surprise in your voice. "I'm sorry I didn't tell you about it before.”

“It’s impossible not to know when I’m one of the people in charge of looking after Frisk.” He stops talking for a moment, and you can soon hear him sit down on something soft. You figure he’s in the living room by the television drowned out in the background. “I knew you were the cop Frisk told me about way since we first met. I didn’t bring it up ‘cuz, for starters, that woulda made me look like a creep, and second of all, I figured you really did change your mindset if you were signin' your kid up in Tori’s school. You said it to me yourself you got laid off ‘cuz you didn't like the new laws.”
"But still, I-"

"We can talk about this later if you're still worried about it. But right now, I called you to check how you're doing."

"I'm fine, really," you assure him, caught off guard by the warmth tracing his voice. "You don't need to worry so much about this."

"That's gonna be hard to do considerin' how I feel about you now, (Y/N)."

You can feel your face warm up at that, mind remembering the note he had given you on Monday. The hand holding onto your phone squeezes the device tighter while you think over his words. You don't find anything to say, though you can feel a smile stretch on your face.

"Well. . ." you trail off, trying to wipe your smile when you see Faust spying from nearby. "Thanks again for helping me out with this. Take care, alright?"

"You too, pal."
It’s close to sundown by the time you finish packing. Faust is waiting at the dining table, chewing on a leftover muffin from work as he waits for you to wrap things up. There’s a thin thread of tension present in the kitchen, threatening to break if someone didn’t speak up soon.

“Where are we going?” he asks, taking another bite of his snack.

You feel your eyes burn at the sound of his voice. It was unbelievable to you that a seven year old was this determined to moving forward. The day after Jessie broke into your room, you had sat by his side to ask if he needed to talk, yet all you got from him was a smile and a question over your own well-being instead. You wanted to talk with him about that subject again, but you weren’t sure how to bring it up anymore without hesitating or without the possibility of scaring Faust out of his determination.

"We’re going to stay at a hotel for now."

"Mettaton’s hotel?"

Your grip on one of the suitcases freezes when you hear him say that. Frowning, you wonder how good he is at eavesdropping and how far his hearing can go. You had been quieter than normal during the phone call in hopes of making him less suspicious of your conversation.

"No," you reply, taking hold of your luggage. “I’ll have to talk with him first.”

Your voice breaks when you say that, thoughts becoming overwhelming when you make memory of all the things you’d faced in such a short time. You clear your throat and breathe through your nose, looking up at the ceiling to prevent yourself from shedding any tears. It felt like a monkey paw situation: you couldn’t obtain Faust’s custody without sacrificing something else for it. You still couldn’t bear to think about Sans and the ankle monitor restraining his freedom, nor about Jessie doing the least thing you expected them to do after your time together: break into your home, and do more than just threaten you. If it weren’t for the place you were still residing in, you would’ve called it a day by throwing yourself in bed.

"Now let's get going,” you add, slinging a backpack over your shoulder. Faust helps carry two backpacks while you carry on with both suitcases. “We have to get going before it gets too dark out.”
The words that left your mouth were incomprehensible even to you. The you from a year ago would’ve laughed and felt ashamed at the thought of you being fearful of someone else. You used to work late night shifts and face people -- both monster and human -- no matter their size. That confidence went away after your divorce and disappeared almost entirely during the long time trying to fight for your right of having custody over Faust.

Your face drains of life when you see Mettaton waiting for you, his back leaning against a sleek black car. Catching your eye, he waves and winks when you stare for too long.

"Can’t fault you for staring,” he comments, propping a leg over the other once he sits on the hood of his car. “Dear Alphys’s been updating my features since the last time we met.”

He wasn’t lying -- You could say that much by the lustrous shine of his metallic body and how life-like his hair was now. His once pale face now carried a tint of rose on his cheeks, making him look much more lively to your eyes. As if that wasn't enough, his voice was less compressed, and the only thing that gave out at him being a robot was the metallic echo that followed after every pause he gave with his words. You gulp and fumble with the handle of your suitcase, unable to stare at anybody or anything but him.

"What are you waiting for, sweetheart? Sans sent me to give you a ride for a reason.”

“Thank you, but. . .” You sigh, pain crossing your forehead. “I really can’t ask that of you.”

Mettaton smiles at your response, eyebrows furrowed as he props himself up and away from the car. “I did my wrong and was judged fairly for it -- I don’t blame you for doing your job. Maybe we both walked away from each other on a sour note, but there’s no harm in trying to make amends.”

“I still can’t accept this,” you insist, looking away.

“Think of doing it for your son, then,” Mettaton persists, crossing his arms over his chest. “It’s not
safe for you to be picking a random hotel at this hour. Don’t deny him of this opportunity.”

You look down at Faust to see him staring back at you, round eyes almost shining as he waits for you to say something. He seems impatient by how he chooses to stare at you, then at the suitcase, and finally at the car waiting for you. It was surreal to think the monster was looking forward to patching things up between you regardless of how rocky the path was.

“Alright,” you breathe out, passing a hand against the back of your neck. There’s points of tension present all around your shoulders. “Only for a while.”

Satisfied by your response, Mettaton smiles at you and then at Faust. He leaves the car be and approaches Faust’s side, helping him with the luggage. The two start up a conversation almost instantly, the excitement in your son’s voice and expression incomparable to any other. You wondered how he managed to get along with people that easily.

You don’t have much time to think further than that, seeing the two already making their way to the car. Faust is holding onto one backpack while Mettaton helps by carrying the other remaining bag and one of the three suitcases left at the entrance of your home. Left with no other options, you carry the baggage left beside you, propping them up and using the strength of your arms to carry them without needing to use the wheels. Mettaton waits until you make it to the car for him to take your luggage and set it in the trunk. You assure him you can do it on your own, but he insists on lending a hand out to you. Smiling, the robot tells Faust to sit at the back while you work together with him.

“Let’s get to know each other from here, alright?”

You’re surprised to see him reach out a hand for you, the other busy keeping the trunk’s hood up as he looks straight at you. The smile on his face eases out your feelings toward the situation, making it a bit easier for you to grab his hand in yours. “Alright,” you reply, shaking hands with the robot. “I’ll look forward to it.”

Mettaton returns your gesture and closes the trunk of the car. He invites you to sit at the front passenger seat and sits down after you, starting the car after he pulls the key from a little slot at his hip meant to imitate a jean’s pockets. The car starts with a roar, much different in comparison to your car -- or at the very least, what was now left of it.

"Buckle up,” he exclaims, grabbing onto the steering wheel. “I’ve got a staff meeting at nine!”
With that, he zooms out of your old home and drives past the highway. How this was any safer for Faust was beyond you, though that thought fades when you see Faust’s excitement and Mettaton’s eyes focused sharply on the road in front of him.

You feel safer after that observation and shake your worries away, excitement of your own rising when the monster lowers the car’s windows to let air hit your face. He does so when he exits the highway, the scent of fresher air and freshly cut grass welcoming your nose. You arrive at the hotel barely half an hour later, the speed of the ride and the mileage of the vehicle shortening the distance by three.

Mettaton parks the car at a parking spot labeled with the word ‘reserved’ and turns the engine off, giving you time to look at your new surroundings from where you stood. “Feel free to look around -- This place is my pride and joy. It’s not easy building up a business from scratch again.” Grinning, he fixes his hair and laughs when he sees Faust doing the same.

"I will,” you speak up, nodding in respect. “Thank you, Mettaton. . . Do you have a last name or title I should call you by?”

“Just Metatton’s fine,” he replies, winking at you. “Though I wouldn’t mind being called ‘handsome’ every now and then.”

A laugh bursts through your mouth at that, but you cover up with a cough and settle for a friendly grin. You look away to see Faust already out of the car and ready to take out the luggage from the trunk. The sight of him looking and acting hopeful makes the situation and every other worry you had going on in your mind a lot easier for you to cope with.

If he was marching forward without faltering, you were going to do the same.
Monsters surround you from all directions when you step inside the hotel. Your arrival attracts the eye of almost everyone present, though most are prudent enough not to call you out. It was way too obvious you weren’t meant to be here -- or at least, so you thought. Faust didn’t appear to mind seeing all sorts of monsters around him. For you, it’s a different story. You don’t know how to react when an origami monster asks if you need help with your luggage and much less when you see the receptionist stop painting the nail on her thumb to greet you. Having no eyes or pretty much anything else besides a hand for a body makes it hard for you to decide where to focus your eyes on.

Faust interrupts your interactions with the hotel workers as he separates himself from you and rushes off to greet the young rabbit monster from his school. You can feel your pulse quicken when the parents acknowledge you, but you manage to wave at them with a smile on your face.

“(Ma’am/Sir)?”

You realize the hand monster is still waiting for you to pay attention back to her side. She’s holding onto a yellow file when you look back at her, and she sets it down for you to see it’s a record of your stay. The register is under the name of Sans, but it clarifies you’re the one to book the week-long stay not too far below.

“Will we be expecting your boyfriend, too?” she asks, pointing with her index finger for you to sign at the bottom of the paper. “He never told me if he was coming back, but he did say you would have a child with you -- How old is he?”

“Uh, Faust is seven -- almost eight years old.”

“He’s qualified to pay less for his stay, then.” Although you can’t tell whether she’s smiling or not, her gentle tone lets you know over her hospitality. She takes the file away and checks the validity of your signature, putting it away afterwards. “Your room is 12F. It has a full bed and a twin one for your son. You can take a look at the pamphlets beside me for the restaurant, bar, and laundry hours, or if you just want to take info about the hotel.”

“Thank you,” you comment, smiling at her. “How much would it be?”

“I’m afraid we use monster currency here, so you would have to exchange it at the service stations
first. Part of it was already paid for by your partner, so you still have up until this following weekend to pay the rest.”

You make a mental note to talk with Sans about the subject, the cost he mentioned to you making much more sense now -- He had never mentioned the reason for the low cost of the stay, but you carried the idea as to why now. The reminder to thank Undyne for the help she gave you by hauling up your car is another thought that pops back in on your mind. Solana and the fact that she wouldn’t be your neighbour anymore also crosses your thoughts. You can’t even begin to count how many calls you had to make to settle things out with everyone.

The receptionist hands you the key and waves you off. Smiling, you do the same and thank her one last time before you rush off to Faust’s side. His friend and her parents had already gone back to their rooms, yet he still somehow found another person to talk with -- this one also about the same age as him. You approach his side and see him talking with a young fire monster about the luxury of Mettaton's hotel, demonstrating his awe over what surrounded him by pointing out the large fountain at the center of the lobby and the chandelier placed right above. He also comments his surprise at how many new monsters his eyes had come across with, mentioning how he had never seen an origami or hand monster before, while the fire monster tells him she had never seen a younger human besides Frisk until today.

“Are you Faust’s (mom/dad)?” the child asks, bright orange flames flickering when she walks to your side.

“Yes, I am,” you reply, looking down at her with a smile on your face. That seemed to be the only action you could manage best while your mind adjusted itself to seeing so much change at once. You couldn’t erase the judge’s words off your mind and your worry for Faust -- He kept quiet about what Jessie had done to you once it had been dealt with, and he refused to talk about it further whenever you brought it up again. “It’s nice to meet you, miss.”

She giggles at the name you give her and offers her small hand out for a handshake. You reach out with caution, not wanting to intervene too much without the granted permission of her parental guardian. “I’m Pepper! Can my brother Chilly and I play with Faust sometimes?”

“Of course -- That’s fine with me. But remember to ask your parents first, too.”

A frown shows on the girl’s face when you say that. Guilt flashes on her visage as she looks down at the tiled floor and furrows her thin eyebrows together. “I- I’ll try,” she stutters, the bright colour of her fire growing dimmer along with her voice. “They won’t let me make human friends besides Frisk, b- but I want to change their mind.”
You can’t find the right words to aid in her lament. Faust, however, is one step ahead of you. “You can do it!” he exclaims, grabbing the girl by both her hands as he squeezes them lightly. “(Mom/Dad’s) been fighting all this time just to be with their monster friends -- One of them’s even (Y/N)’s boyfriend now!”

It takes strength for you not to rush in and interrupt their moment, a few heads turning -- specifically on you -- when he says that. You try to focus on what he says next to distract yourself from the embarrassment and try not to dwell too much on how that word made you feel. Ignoring the curious glances from people nearby, your attention centers on the darker shade of orange that spreads on the girl’s face when Faust says that, and you can’t help but think back on a cartoon show he'd once made you watch with him. ‘Adventure Hour’, you remembered it being called. You recall you had been strict about him watching it, given you felt he was too young and guileless to know about the budding romance between the fire princess and the human boy, or the one between the bubblegum scientist and the vampire.

You wait until he finishes providing words of encouragement and order him to pick up his suitcase. He follows with a grin on his face and stops a few steps away from the fire girl to wave goodbye at her, his content expression managing to grow even brighter when he sees her wave back. You let out a laugh at that and cover up when he looks at you by taking the rest of the luggage and putting it in a cart.

Faust accompanies you with his suitcase and backpack while you push the rest towards the elevator. It’s empty on a first glance, but on a closer look, you can see a few Temmies huddled up at each corner. The door closes before you have the chance to back away from the elevator, leaving you with four Temmies shaking intensely, one of them growing red spots all over her body when she gets too close to you and Faust. Concerned, you ask if she’s alright, but she dismisses it by saying it’s her usual allergies. You give her a chewable kid's Bendadryl from Faust’s medicine bag, not knowing if it would work on monsterkind, yet hoping it would be enough of a gesture to show your concern for her health.

As you stare at the group of Temmies and contemplate all the stuff you had gone through as of recently, you begin to think about Frisk and Faust -- how neither of the two seemed to have much trouble facing life as it kept on going. You think about Jessie, the trail, and Sans, until you hear Faust calling out your name, telling you the elevator had opened up at floor F.

"C'mon!" he shouts, pointing at the hall at the left side of the hotel. "Our room's over there!"

You wave goodbye at the Temmies before the doors manage to close on you. Then, you start making your way to Faust's side, telling him you would be there in a second.

The walk doesn't last long until you're forced to stop by your curiosity. Your eye catches the same
light you had seen reflect twice at the town hall. Determined to see it this time, you stop fully on your tracks and turn to the light, head tilting up to see a bright, yellow object floating above you, closely resembling a four-pointed star. Allured, you reach out for it with your hand and flinch back when you see its shine grow brighter.

* It's a save point.
Into You

Third Person POV

Sans's Perspective

Sans adjusts himself on the couch when he sees (Y/N) answer his face call. Normally, he wouldn’t be calling someone right before his shift at school and much less would he bother looking decent for something like that -- It was the reason why he preferred texting and voice calls rather than this. He brushes those thoughts aside when he sees the human yawning against their palm and sporting a bed head. The human doesn't acknowledge him in spite of having answered, making him notice the reason behind that when they mutter unintelligible words under their breath, these along the lines of why had their alarm gone off earlier than intended to.

Humored, he stays quiet and decides not to hang up, seeing (Y/N) place the phone on the night table as they then begin to stretch their limbs. Their shirt rides up slightly when they do so, making him look away until they’re done stretching. It’s only when he sees they plan to change out of their night clothes that he hangs up, soul going a mile a minute when the screen goes black.

Chest rising and falling, the monster looks around the living room to see Papyrus from behind the kitchen isle, whipping up what smelled like buttered toast and fried eggs. The taller one acknowledges Sans when he sees him looking, unaware of the scare he had gone through -- It was a good thing he knew how to keep a cool exterior, no matter how dire the situation was.

Breathing out, Sans checks the time and decides it’s better to wait until the human finished their morning routine. Briefly, he wonders if Faust would be attending school today, given class was supposed to start in an hour and that (Y/N) was only just waking up. He finds some confront in the thought he had helped them in getting on time to both school and work, trying to distract his mind from the previous call.

Now half past eight, he decides to call again. This time, he's greeted by (Y/N) now with their hair brushed and sleep washed away from their face, though he can tell they're still at the hotel. The human is also in casual wear rather than in their usual work uniform, and he can hear Faust talking with another child from a distance. From his deduction, it really did seem like either (Y/N) had
forgotten it was still Friday, or that they simply did not plan to go anywhere today.

"Good morning," they greet, grinning at him. For a moment, he thinks they're about to call him out on what happened an hour and a half before, but their next words ease the pace of his soul. "I don't know whether to thank you or be angry that you did all this for us."

"Looks to me like you're happy," Sans comments, looking around the school grounds to verify the students were all in class. "Is the kid doing okay?"

"He is," (Y/N) replies, nodding. "But I didn't bring him to school today. I feel like he's been through a lot, and. . . he doesn't want to talk about it with me. I'm thinking of bringing him to a counselor like the social worker suggested."

"That sounds good. But what about you? I know you were against stayin' there, but I figured it'd be the safest place for now."

"I'll manage." They accompany those words with a laugh, concern flashing in their expression not a second after. "It's you who I wanna have a word with -- Why did you pay for our stay?"

"What? Can't I treat you every once in a while? I might always ask Grillby to put it in my tab, but that doesn't mean I don't pay back -- Just like I'm doing with you."

"What are you even paying me back for?"

"For starters, you bought me clothes -- And now you're dealin' with the mayor about my sentence."

"That was a gift," (Y/N) mentions, frowning. "I'm not asking for anything back."

Abruptly, Sans stops seeing their face as the screen goes black. Hearing Faust's shrill voice confirms the call is still ongoing.

"I'm not talking with anybody!" (Y/N) exclaims, defense in their voice.
"Y- Yes, you are!" Faust retorts, tone weaker than his (mother/father)'s, but determined all the same. "You can't fool me! That's your boyfr-"

"Don't you dare say it!"

Sans chuckles at the banter the two have going on, Faust's voice persistent and unwavering as he accuses (Y/N) of not being honest with him. The background changes to a blurry motion of Faust running with the phone in hand. He can hear footsteps chase after the child, the sound of feet against wood casting rhythmic thumps all across the room.

"Got you!"

The background changes again as (Y/N) takes the phone back from Faust's hands. The child is nowhere to be seen now, though Sans can hear him huff and walk away from the room, the sound of a door closing following after. Only the older human is left as the background goes calm and the screen shows them fixing themselves up from the effects of the chase.

“Sorry about that,” they breathe out, passing a hand through their messy (h/c) hair, hoping it would be enough to tame it back to its previous state. “I keep telling him to wait, but he won’t listen -- The social worker gave me a warning about this happening. I . . . doubt she’ll be any happier when she knows what’s happened over the course of this week. But one thing’s for sure, I can at least tell her he’s made more friends by staying here.”

“Wasn’t he talking with one of ’em before?” Sans asks, remembering the other voice he’d heard when making the call.

“He was -- The parents came over for a bit to talk, but then the friend stayed to hang out with Faust some more. I didn’t notice when she left, so I really didn’t think he’d come chasing after me like that.”

“Looks like he’s mad at you now,” the monster sneers, remembering the huff Faust let out before leaving the room. “You shouldn’t let this slip by.”

“It wouldn’t be the first time,” the human states, returning his laugh. “But you’re right -- I should go talk with him soon.”
Solemnity arrives on (Y/N)’s face when they say that. It’s not until then that Sans realizes there’s still a lot left to resolve before things could go back to a calm state. The banter between the two had been a good distraction from the monitor on his ankle, the newspapers dishing out updates about (Y/N)’s actions -- both in favour and against -- every single day, the prison breakout, the preparations for the move, and his recent confession. It was all too much for anyone to deal with. It was silly for him to think he was anywhere near close to asking (Y/N) out on a first date.

“I have to wait a week for the mayor’s response letter,” (Y/N) speaks up, facing him directly. “I... doubt it'll turn out like I hoped it would, but that won’t be the end of this. If Faust can keep up with this stuff, then I should, too. One way or another, I’m gonna get you out of that bracelet, and if you still like me by the time that happens... I wanna take you out on a date.”

Hadn’t the monster been through that incident barely two hours ago, his roaming thoughts wouldn’t have immediately plummeted to that one (shoujo/shouen-ai) romance anime Alphys had made him watch one once. That simple idea of sharing a kiss beyond the cheek with (Y/N) was a wild, wild thought, but one he looked forward to nonetheless.
Dead Ends, Part One

Chapter Notes

Warning/Hint for Part Two

Pay close attention to the next chapter part if you want to be ready for heavier topics in the not-so distant future. As always, I try to keep my content PG, but there will be material that may surpass that rating.

★

Also. . .

Double update today to make up for yesterday's! Updates will return to their normal schedule after that. :-)

"If you are not scared then there is no merit in being brave." – Kerry Greenwood, Death at Victoria Dock

A long line starting from the service counter to the waiting area of the lobby fill the hotel with all sorts of conversation. You stand at the end, against leaving the matter for last minute. It was the only place available that exchanged your usual currency for monster gold -- or at least, the only place you knew about. The time on your phone shows you have enough time before leaving the hotel to pick up Faust and take him to the counselor, though not even ten minutes pass when you’re interrupted from waiting, the echoey sound of Mettaton’s voice ringing in your ears.

“Come with me for a moment, (Y/N),” he states, appearing right between you and the person waiting before you. He grabs you by the arm and pulls you out of the line, his hand letting go once you’re free from the crowd. “I need you to talk with you for a moment.”

The robot leads you to the lobby, empty thanks to the late hour and the group of people waiting to exchange their currency. Only a few guests and clientele are around, too busy admiring the looks of the hotel to care about what you were discussing with Mettaton. He urges for you to follow him behind the counter now lacking a receptionist and scoots closer to you. His eyes are locked firm on you, denoting his stern feelings over what he was about to discuss with you.
"Jessie knows where you work, right?"

You remain quiet at that, the question being the last one you expected to hear from Mettaton. "Yeah. . . Why do you ask?"

"Do you feel safe there?"

"I’d be paranoid if I didn’t -- My boss won’t let me take graveyard shifts until things settle down. . . so I can’t complain, either."

"That still doesn’t mean you can’t be too careful," he suggests, casting a frown at you. "I have a job offer for you if you want to start over again. It wouldn’t be bad for you to live and work in brand new places." The robot’s cutting voice makes you look at him, the depth to his concern making his facial expression almost surreal considering he was made of metal. “I plan on putting on a show for our restaurant the following month, but I’m short staffed,” he explains, making eye contact with you. “How would you feel about catering for the event? I’m aware you’ve got a lot on your hands right now, but this won’t be until then, and you won’t be doing it for free.”

You feel short of breath when he comments on that. You immediately make the assumption someone had told him about your current job and that the robot had misinterpreted your level of professionalism in the field. Although almost a year had passed since you started the job, bread and sweet rolls were as far as your talents went -- You were still the one in charge of tending to the cash register for most of the time.

“I’m sorry,” you speak up, passing a hand across the back of your neck as a shy smile grows on your face. “But you’ve got the wrong person, sir -- uh, Mettaton. I mostly just work behind the payment counter.”

“I know that, silly,” Mettaton states, placing a hand on his hip. “Sans told me that part, but he also said you and Papyrus exchange recipes every once in a while. How good are you with savoury foods?”

“A lot better than with desserts, that’s for sure.”

“Good.” He nods, a pleased smile crossing his face. “Think you could show me your skills this weekend at the restaurant? You’ll have a bigger kitchen at your disposal.”
“Sure,” you return, smiling at him. “Do you have anything specific in mind?”

“I’ll be leaving that to you, (Y/N). I’m sure you can whip up something creative -- I’ve seen your potential, and I think it’s time you put to use on other things, too. Stress can wait until Monday, so just focus on enjoying yourself for now.”

The scent of vanilla wafts through the air when you step into the counselor's room. There's a single desk and three chairs: one for her and two for her guests, plus the short bookshelf set on the rightmost corner of the room. The simplicity makes the winged monster stand out more than customary, though her presence is inviting rather than threatening, her smile and eyes being the main reason for it. She offers for you and your son to take a seat, and you notice the product of the aroma when you accept her offer. A small incense burner is at the edge of her desk, dispersing small puffs of vanilla all across the area.

Pleasantries are exchanged for a while, until it's time for her to confront Faust for visiting her office. She concentrates solely on him as she interrogates him over recent events and how he was coping with them. Stunned, the child stays quiet for a while, though you give him a soft nudge on the shoulder in hopes of him regaining the courage he displayed with you for the past few days.

“Don’t be afraid, Faust,” the Whimsun soothes, handing the boy a napkin when she sees him tear up. She’s different to your co-worker in the sense that she talks louder and that she acts more confidently compared to her, though her appearance is almost the same as Sunny's. It’s a scenario similar to the one when Faust failed his first math test, with the exception it was the school counselor now, and that Faust hadn’t burst or made a fit. Unlike that day, he was trying to keep calm by blinking through the tears and looking down at his school shoes. “I’m here to listen.”

His persistent demeanor from the past few days crumbles as he grows sullen and starts to sob, covering his face with his hands. Unfit to see him like this, you frown and offer him support by putting an arm around him, pulling him close to you. He buries his face against your shoulder, hiccups, and pulls away, managing to smile right as it falls back into a quivering frown. “I wanna go home. . .” he murmurs, looking down at the floor again. Quietly, he sniffs and wipes his tears with the sleeve of his uniform, avoiding your and the counselor's line of sight.

“You can do that after you tell me how you feel,” the counselor persists, offering him another
napkin. "(Miss/Mister) (Y/N) here told me you were taking this better than expected, but that your mood changed whenever the subject of your tutor or other parent was brought up."

"Sans’s not my tutor anymore," Faust corrects, tone sounding angry and tired. You nudge him again as a way of scolding him for his behavior, though the Whimsun dismisses your intervention with the simple wave of her hand. "And Jessie’s not my parent anymore."

"Why do you say that, Faust?"

"(Mom/Dad) says I can't get near Sans 'cuz he has that thing on his ankle. Bu- But I know they're hanging out in secret! I've heard (Y/N) talk with him on the phone before, but they won't let me see him."

"And what about Jessie, then? Do you dislike them?"

"(Y/N) does," Faust replies, faint creases forming on his forehead when he thinks too deeply over the subject. "I . . . I don’t know if I do. But I’m angry at what they did to (mom/dad). J- Jessie made them upset before, but they hurt (Y/N) this time. . . And I don’t know if I can forgive them anymore."

"Go on," she requests, nodding. "What was it that you saw when you brought the officer home with you?"

"I- I saw Jessie strangling (Y/N) when they were supposed to be sleeping. . . I heard screaming and weird noises from (mom/dad)'s room, and saw Jessie hurting (Y/N) when I opened the door. I went there with a police officer who said Jessie escaped from prison, and that they broke into our house."

"Just how much did you see?"

"I . . ."

Faust tells the counselor of all the things he had witnessed ever since the trail came to an end. He tells her in detail of Sans’s sentence, of your hidden conversations with him, but most importantly, of the things he had seen when opening the door to your room. He almost grows petrified when he mentions what he’d seen. With a strained voice, he states kissing was only meant to be done
without forcing the other person into it. Faust had seen the last time Jessie tried to kiss you, and it was clear you weren’t in favour of them doing that based on the way you struggled to break free.

Remembering that day, you feel a shudder reach your spine and stand up involuntarily, excusing yourself from the two as you exit the Whimsun’s office.

A breeze blows past when you step out of the room, taking this chance to view the school’s east premises from afar. You can see a few students still waiting for their parents to pick them up, teachers talking with one another as they watch over the students, and Undyne covering up for Sans by sweeping the floors free from debris, taking a break every once in a while to have a talk with Alphys.

“Are you alright, (ma’am/sir)?”

You perk up at the sound of that voice, distant but familiar all the same.
The elderly turtle you had seen with Sans on the day of the trail is standing in front of you, the wooden cane in his hand propping his body up. Dark lines are present under his eyes and his hunched stance shakes regardless of the support the cane gave him. He leans back against the wall next to you, prompting you to do the same.

“I’m fine,” you speak up, facing him. “I just have a lot on my mind right now.”

A smile stretches on his mouth when you reply, the way it forms making it known he had trouble believing your first statement. “I doubt I’ll be here for much longer, so I’ll ask you this now that I’ve got the chance,” he begins, working eye staring up at the sky. “Has Sans told ya ‘bout his job as a sentry? I’ve seen ’im grow up from a kid to the short stack he is now, and if there’s one thing I know well about ’im, it’s that he closes off when you least need ’im to.” He takes a pause to catch his breath, eye facing back to your side. “You’re (miss/mister) (Y/N), ain’t ya? I was surprised to hear the boy found another friend up here -- let alone a (girlfriend/boyfriend). He’s told me a lotta ‘bout you.”

“Good things, I hope.” You smile back at the monster, reach a hand out, and complete a handshake with him, searching through your mind for his relations with Sans to make memory of his name. “You must be Gerson, then. What’s that about him being a sentry?”

“He’ll have to tell you that himself,” the monster replies, grimness falling upon his face. “That aside, don't you remember seeing a gardener around ’ere before?”

The oddity of his question makes you keep quiet for some time. You try to think back on when in the entire semester had you seen one around the school. You think way, way back on your time spent here, until your mind comes across the first day of school: it was the goat monster you had seen clipping the hedges of the school gates. He had been the one talking with Faust after he slipped away from your hold.

“The goat monster?” you question, raising an eyebrow. “What about him?”

“Doesn't that description ring a bell? A big, fluffy goat monster?”

Further puzzled by the elder's words, you try to follow up, but are met with more questions than answers. "You mean he's the former king of monsters? Why... Why are you telling me all this?”
you ask, head hurting when you try to process everything at once. You feel dizzy and your breathing grows scarce when you remember the harm Asgore did to other humans -- some of them supposedly young based on the dusty toys and kids shoes police found when investigating Toriel and Asgore’s respective homes.

“Whyddya think you've never seen 'im again?” the turtle monster remarks, tone growing sharp as he straightens his back. "He's meant to stay behind bars for his deeds, but he's also meant to serve the community by doing what he does best: clippin' leaves and makin' flowers bloom again. "Sans’s past job wasn’t all that pretty either. I’m not sayin' he hurt anybody, but he ain’t naive. Figured it’d be good for ya to know 'bout that before your relationship gets any more serious -- ‘Cuz from the looks of it, he’s really waitin’ for the day he gets to be close to you again.”

You slip your hands in your front pockets and face the floor. Processing all those words was making your mind foggy, not only for how much Gerson had shared with you in so short of a moment, but for the reminder that Sans sought after your kind at a certain point. The idea of him hating your guts had you fallen instead of Frisk makes your chest tight, and you have to take a breath to avoid letting your emotions soar too high.

“I’m not askin’ you to confront him immediately, but don’t wait too long and ask him when your soul tells you to.”

With Faust sleeping on the twin bed and the door to your hotel room locked shut, you slip on your night clothes, take the locket in your hands, and let your head rest against the pillows. You start to think about what the turtle monster meant to say with his advice -- Of course, you knew about the harm monsters had cast over Frisk in the process of defending their home, but the reminder that the King of Monsters had taken actual lives paralyzed you in your thoughts. You wonder how far would have Sans gone to fulfill his job as a sentry and over the reasons why he had chosen not to harm Frisk during their journey through the Underground. The thought of Faust being put in the same situation troubles you further, until you put the locket down on the night table and choose to stand up in search for a drink of water. You think about confronting Sans right here and now, though Gerson’s advice stops you -- Your mind and sight were a little more than clouded with the recent discovery and you felt far from ready to call him about it.

Arriving at the kitchen, you open the refrigerator, stare aimlessly for a while, and take out a serving of water in a paper cup, bringing it with you to the balcony, all while including with you a compact kitchen knife as a weapon when Jessie crosses your mind. It was late in the night, and you weren’t taking that risk.
The hotel’s garden appears to your view when you exit, displaying a wide variety of flowers and fruit trees, quite like Toriel’s garden, but more fitting to Mettaton’s vivid personality. Red and orange roses bloom on the left, while yellow and orange celosias sprout on the right, casting the illusion of fire dancing in accordance to the wind blowing past. A round patch of yellow flowers stand in the center, their bright colour capable of challenging the sun if it were still out. Your interest piques when the wind lessens in strength and you see faint, rustling movement in that same patch of flowers. Entranced, you wait for an animal to come running out of the flower bed, but it stops moving about, and you never get to see it.

Tired of waiting, you focus your eyes elsewhere, spotting the type of monster you were now skeptical of approaching: a seemingly harmless gardener clipping the trees and hedges around. Though he's a bear instead of the goat you were reminded of, you can't help comparing him with Asgore. He doesn’t notice you from the balcony, too concentrated on gardening to look up from tending to the flowers. It strikes you when you remember such a gentle-looking monster had once made the order of hunting humans for their souls if they fell underground.

Asgore had been one of the few monsters you weren’t assigned to for background check. Even so, you were aware of his notoriety, though not of his appearance. All you knew about him were the words -- mostly adjectives -- people often whispered, yelled, and spat about him: from heartless monster to beastly goat. It was now that it fully dawned on you he was the same gardener Faust had been talking with on his first day of school.

A violent shudder takes over when you delve too deep on that subject, the now lukewarm cup of water in your hands almost ending on the floor. You catch it just in time, however, half of its contents spilling on your bare feet. Your breath hitches, both anger and sorrow rising in the form of shaky hands and dewy eyes.

With all the change you had gone through since moving to the city, you had forgotten you were befriending what many of your kind saw as an enemy, no matter how clean or spotted their background was.

You don't dare to think too much on what light Sans saw you in since the first day of your meeting. His frequent avoidance when being too close to you and the long time it took for him to see you as a friend makes more sense to you, but in a different way. What you thought was him feeling the same way you did around him crumbles with your doubts, until you start to doubt over the sincerity of the note he left on your towel.

Signals mix when you reminiscence over the warmth of his tone during your voice calls, the pain in his look when talking about the ankle monitor, and the concern in both when finding out about what Jessie did to you. Conflicted, you feel your cheeks burn and the water in your eyes slide down
your face when you think back on him and Faust during tutoring, and of how his skull brightened when you told him about the prospect of dating. In adds the fact that you were now standing at a hotel booked by him, all those thoughts faltering back into nothing when you begin to doubt over what he truly thought about you.

If Jessie changed as much as they did with you, you had almost no trouble believing the same could happen with him, too.

Safely said, you're not sure what to think anymore.
Alphys hunches over and brings her glasses back to the top of her snout. Her fish girlfriend watches quietly from above, resting her chin on top of her spiky head when she decides to skim the letter again. Still unconvinced with what she read, she narrows her eyes at the letter in her hands, trying to search for anything abnormal -- a hint that would give out the strangeness of the writing. Sans is watching the scene from the camera on your phone, the face call marking already half an hour since Alphys began her investigation. It's unusually quiet for a place with three people -- four, counting Sans -- in one same room.

“I believe I have good news for you, (miss/mister) (L/N). Come to my office this Wednesday at two in the afternoon if you want to be informed.”

Alphys reads the letter a few more times after that, looking progressively puzzled with each read. She sets the paper down in front of her and huffs, eyes centered sharply on the letter and how empty it was compared to the first one you received from the mayor. You would be head over heels with joy if the letter didn’t sound or look as eerie as it did to everyone present. To everyone's agreement, it felt off and morose when compared to the hopeful words of the decision the mayor had come to.

“You shouldn’t trust this letter,” Alphys comments, standing up from her chair once Undyne steps back. She walks to your side and folds the paper in two, giving it back to you, an apologetic look on her face. “It- It may be the mayor’s handwriting, but. . . . it doesn’t sound right. You really sh- shouldn’t go there alone. It’s dangerous.”

“They wouldn’t even let me keep my phone with me during the meeting,” you mention, frowning. “I don’t think they’ll let anyone else pass.”

“You should still go with someone else,” Undyne intervenes, crossing her arms. “We’re not risking you getting hurt again -- You said it yourself the mayor excused Jessie over that time they attacked you. What’s to say he won’t do the same when he finds out Jessie’ll be in prison for a lot longer? Even if you want Sans to be free, you should still be careful. I’ll go with you even if it’s just to wait by the parking lot.”

“It’s alright. I couldn’t possibly ask for tha-”

“I’m not gonna fall for modesty, (Y/N). Now’s not the time for that. I’ll go with you, and if you’re not back or done with the meeting in an hour, I’ll ask the town hall about you. We wouldn’t worry if you at least had your phone with you.”
“Undyne’s right,” Sans speaks up, voice muffled by the sound of the school bell ringing from not too far away. “I don’t trust that guy if he’s willin’ to overlook what Jessie did to you. And I doubt it’ll be that easy to get ‘im to change his mind now that Jessie attacked you again.”

“D- Do you have any marks around your neck?” Alphys asks. She has her back to you and Undyne now, hurrying to tidy her desk before the next group of students arrived. “I know this is a touchy subject, b- but maybe seeing the damage will get the mayor to soften up a bit.”

With all the changes you had been exposed to, you had barely given much thought to the physical damage Jessie left on you. Your major fear was of waking up abruptly with them on top of you again, but -- beyond that reoccurring nightmare -- you really didn’t pay much mind to the cut on your lip or the sore pain surrounding your neck and shoulders. Finger and nail marks from when they tried to pin you down were still visible on your skin, but you tried to ignore them whenever you showered and by buttoning up the collar of your shirt more than usual.

Without a word, you unfasten the buttons of your work uniform, revealing faded marks around your neck and a few right below your collarbones. The room falls into a deep, uncomfortable silence, begging for someone to speak up.

“I really hope the cops do somethin’ more about this,” Sans comments, a hint of anger in his tone. “Jessie broke out way too easily.”

“Didn’t they get eighteen more years in prison after this?” Undyne asks, raising an eyebrow. “I agree that won’t help much if they don’t up the security at that place. If anything, that’ll just make them angrier.”

The sudden shift in attention from the conversation between the three towards you makes you stand up straight. Undyne stares at you, a stern, searching look present in her eye as her mouth falls into a perplexed frown.

“You should stay at Mettaton’s hotel for a while more -- At least, until we know you and Faust’ll be safe somewhere else.”

Your discussion comes to an end as the second bell rings, signaling it was time for students to start making their way into the next class. The same loud noise can be heard from the phone displaying Sans’s face on screen, the broom in his hold letting you know it was time for him to begin his next shift for the day. It was paining you to think you were both standing in the same school, yet unable
to get close to each other due to his sentence.

“Can I call you after work?” he asks. “I wanna talk with you separately.”

Alphys wiggles her eyebrows at the skeleton when she overhears him and laughs when you do the same. You take the phone off her desk and wave goodbye at her and Undyne, seeing students already entering the science teacher's classroom.

“Sure,” you reply, snickering. “You don’t have to ask me, though -- Just call me when you’re out.”

The cheery atmosphere at Alphys's classroom vanishes when you step out, Gerson's words popping back in your mind. You stare at your phone and calculate how long it would be until Sans ended his shift, but are met instead with a message from Solana asking when it would be good to catch up.

How does the par-

You erase the message the second you start typing the word 'park'. That had been one of the few places Jessie had followed you to in their time stalking you. The pictures they took are now fresh in your mind, forcing you to come up with another meeting spot.

How does the mall across from Toriel's school sound? I'm about to head back to work, but I was thinking we could meet there after.

Sounds great! Meet you there at six? :)

Sure, that works just fine. :)

You slip the phone back in your pocket as soon as you send that message. It had almost been a full
week since you last saw Solana in person, but you were no less eager to stay in touch. She had been one of the main people to encourage you since day one, cheering you on when you wanted to get something done, and putting you in place when you were thinking about giving into uncertainty and backing out.

You start your march back to work after that, recalling you had taken more than three days off since the day your car broke down on you. With the mild paranoia of crossing paths with Jessie again, you almost despised taking the bus as a replacement for the loss of your car. Working overtime was a tempting yet risky option now that you were thinking of saving up for a new used car.

Your eyes are glued to the time on your phone as you make it down the school's hallway, the screen marking roughly twenty minutes until it was time for you to clock in again. It was of no doubt you would get fired today if you were to receive a tardy mark again -- Almost four consecutive absences and two days late had placed you on thin ice, and you were a little too close to ending up jobless again.

Caught in a spiral, you don't notice you're blocking someone's path until you bump into them, their short height leading you to grow anxious at the thought of bumping into a student making their way to class. What leads you to stop altogether in your meltdown is the familiar sight of short, brown hair and a striped sweater.

"Frisk?" you speak up, a sigh making your body shudder from top to bottom. "I'm sorry about that - - I . . . I didn't look where I was going."

The child quirks an eyebrow and tilts their head to the side, curiosity sparking their expression when they inspect your state. "Are you okay, (Y/N)? You look worse than Alphys during public speaking."

You don't catch their entire sentence with how fast their hands form words, though you're able to understand enough to give an answer. "I'm okay."

“Yes you, really?” they ask again, a grin showing on their face.

"Maybe just a little overwhelmed right now," you confess, letting your shoulders fall. "I . . . I don't know what to think or do with my life anymore."
“And now you sound like Burgerpants.” Frisk giggles at their own comment, the way their face lights up adding some joy to your own visage. “Wanna go with me and Mettaton for dinner tonight? We can talk about your future love life now that Sans’s gonna be free.”

"Frisk. . ." you mutter, caught off guard by their words.

"I'm kidding -- But we can if you want."

"Thanks for the offer but . . ." You trail off on your sentence, the plans you made with Solana crossing your mind. “But maybe next time? I’ve kind of already made plans for tonight.”

“Let’s keep in touch, then,” they propose, a smile on their face. “You can’t keep this all to yourself, right? Figured you were with the grumpy face you had before bumping into me.”

You wave goodbye at them after confirming you would call them when you were free. Frisk doesn’t look convinced until you pinky promise, the incredulity in their expression changing when you assure them you wouldn’t break it. The last words you see them sign before you zoom off towards the next bus heading for work are ‘stay determined’.

It’s not until then that you remember they were the same person who faced the monsters Underground -- the same person who still chose to stand with the monsters despite the truth behind both sides: how neither humans or monsters were free from the aftermath of their choices.
Extra: Pride Month

Chapter Notes

As always, the following extra does not follow the current storyline!

It also features both Reader/You and Jessie as male.

1. Red (Life)

Your aunt’s squeaky voice makes your ears ring, the loudness of her tone triggering a headache. Between the vegetables you had cooking on the pan and trying to read the e-mail the social worker had sent you, it’s almost impossible for you to keep your patience. You huff and clench your jaw, not wanting to end up in another argument with her like you did the last time she came for a visit.

“So not only are you dating a monster, but a male one at that?” your aunt prods, taking a seat on one of the dining chairs of the kitchen.

You have her back on her as you turn to the vegetables, using the serving pincers to flip them over. “Jessie was a man, too -- What’s wrong with me dating a guy again?”

“He’s a monster! Doesn’t that count as beastiality?”

“Are we talking about him or Jessie? ‘Cuz now you’ve got me confused.”

“You know who I’m talking about,” she warns. You can feel her narrowing her eyes at you despite having your back on her. “He’s a janitor and a low grade tutor, too -- Why do you even like him?”

“Auntie, I don’t have time for this,” you comment, scoffing. “He’s not a mindless beast, and there’s nothing wrong with what he does for a living. Can’t we talk about this another day? I have a date with him tonight.”

“It’s only five, and I’m your aunt -- It’s rude of you to be throwing me out like that!”
Knowing it would be a waste of time trying to get her to change her mind, you take out the vegetables and set them on a ceramic plate, covering them with aluminum foil afterwards. The alarm on your phone marks your date would start in just two hours.

“I’m gonna go get changed now. There’s pasta in the pot if you’re hungry, auntie.”

With that, you hurry off upstairs, mind focusing sharply on the three main things you had left to do: shower, get dressed, and look your best. While you weren’t one for dressing up too much, Solana’s comment the time Faust had ran back home makes you want to try again. It felt good knowing both she and Sans had noticed the difference in your clothes -- it was a drastic change from the monotony of your uniform.

★

2. Orange (Healing)

“You look nice.”

Those are the first words the monster greets you with. You look towards the door to see him leaning against the door frame, a calm, if not relaxed expression present on his face. He has a gift bag on one hand and his phone in the other, and his casual clothes are changed for an outfit composed of jeans and an ironed, collared shirt.

“You do, too.”

You escort him to the kitchen, where you show him the dining table set up with two plates, two sets of cutlery, and two empty wine glasses. He approaches the table, sits, and hands you the gift bag, giving you specific instructions not to peek into the contents until the date ended.

“How did Faust feel about having two dads back then?”

The wine you’re pouring almost topples over when he comments that. You can feel your face grow warm with the hidden meaning involved with that question. “. . .Why do you ask that?”
“Just curious,” he comments, looking lost in thought. “Figured he’d be against you doing this again with what happened not too long ago.”

“Are you kidding?” you speak up, chuckling. “He’s the one who wanted me to set this up in the first place -- Said it’d be a good way to celebrate your freedom and all.”

“What about you then, (Y/N)?” Concern is present in his voice this time around, white irises staring directly at you now that you’re sitting across from him. “Are you okay to move on?”

“I won’t lie that I’m . . . worried about us. But I want to move on. I like you, and there’s no other guy I wish I’d be dating right now.”

He looks happy with your choice of words by the way his expression softens up, the warm, white colour in his eye sockets brightening up when he brings a hand over the table, reaching out for yours. Catching on, you do the same and lock hands with him, watching quietly as he leans closer to you. “Y’know, (Y/N), I was wonderin’ if-“

“Dad?” Faust’s voice sounds from the living room, his small frame appearing when he calls out for you again. He stares at the scene of you and Sans sitting at the dining table, warm dinner plates and cool wine glasses being the only things to occupy it besides your hands. “Did you really decide on this? I thought you were gonna leave me with auntie while you went to a restaurant.”

“See what I mean?” you speak, directing your words at Sans. He laughs under his breath when you comment on that, heart making a leap when he squeezes your hand tighter. “Auntie . . . doesn’t really want me doing that, so I couldn’t convince her in the end.” Your next words are directed at Faust, who pouts when you direct an apologetic smile at him.

★

3. Yellow (Sunlight)

The sun serves as your alarm, shaking you out of your sleep. You grumble a protest and shift to the other side of the bed, a curse leaving your mouth when you bump into something -- or better said, someone else. To your right is Sans, eye sockets closed as faint, consistent snores leave his teeth. Hadn't you decided to call it off at two wine glasses, you would've immediately jolted out of bed.
Still looking to catch some more sleep, you scoot close to his side and relax when you feel his arms wrap around your bare chest. It almost seems like he's awake with how much pressure he puts into holding you, but he looks completely knocked out when you turn to see his face. His arms aren't long enough to close in around you completely, but he makes up for it by resting his face against your neck.

★

4. Green (Nature)

You laugh when a dog starts to chew on his leg, the sight attracting the attention of everyone else around the park. A flustered owner makes her appearance between you, giving all sorts of apologies for the stunt her dog pulled on Sans. With a smile, you tell her it's fine whereas Sans reassures her by saying he was used to it thanks to the dog he kept at his place. His comment makes you wonder if it was the same dog you had seen jump on him the last time you hung out at night, and if the dog really did stay at his place -- Papyrus never commented about him much, after all.

The grass tickles your arms when you lay down on the ground, resting on your back so you can see the sun hidden behind the clouds.

"C'mere," you offer, patting at the grass next to you. "I'll keep an eye out if I see any more dogs around."

"I'd appreciate that," he replies, letting out a laugh. "Where’s Faust run off to, by the way?"

You nod your head to the side opposite to his, where your eyes come across with the slide and see saw set up near the Nice Cream truck. Faust is too busy playing with Chilly and Pepper to notice you staring. Sans looks towards the direction you're pointing at and sees the same scenario, the smile on his face appearing to loosen up when he sees more children join the group in their games. He sits down beside you after that, though you encourage him to lay on his back.

“It’s nice — The ground’s cool and you can see the clouds.”

★
“Didn’t know monsters could also be fags.”

You’re shaken from your slumber by those words and the feeling of Sans’s shoulder shifting underneath you. With the bus almost empty of people, there aren’t many witnesses around to either snigger or frown at the man’s words. You open your eyes and see his full appearance: a businessman clad in blue and with his hair brushed back with gel. Thankfully, Faust is still sleeping, his head resting on your lap.

“How’d you even manage to adopt a kid anyway? ‘Cuz I’m sure you’d be rejected to in a heartbeat.”

Sensing Sans was growing tense, you grab him by the arm and squeeze him, facing him with a stern, worried look as you then nod your head over to the man spitting insults at him. You think about how long must’ve he endured the comments with how grim his expression is. Determined to do something, you inspect the man’s attire again, a smile growing on your face when you spot something peculiar on his wrist.

"Scared of being yourself?” you taunt, staring at him. “‘Cuz that rainbow slap bracelet you have under your sleeve says so.”

Agitated, the man sputters a ‘what’ and casts his gaze down at his clothes, hurrying to hide the bracelet when he sees it peeking out of his long-sleeved jacket. “I- That. . . That doesn’t mean anything. It’s just a freakin’ rainbow!”

"Take it easy, pal,” Sans intervenes, chuckling. “We’re not out to get ya -- Just don’t be two-faced, and come out when you’re ready.”

★

6-7. Purple/Violet (Spirit)

“Wait,” you speak up, stopping him. “We. . . We can’t kiss yet.”
"Why not?" Sans asks. Concern flashes on both his voice and expression, irises searching your face for any negative emotion -- for any sign that he was crossing a line with you. "You doing okay?"

"I'm fine," you assure him, smiling. "We just haven't kissed in the actual storyline yet, so it wouldn't be fair to do that here."

"Shouldn't you wait to open that present later, then?"

"Wh- What do you mean?"

He leans away from you and stands up from the bed, irises turning towards the gift bag you had yet to open up. The date had extended to two days, and you intended to keep your promise by waiting until he left back home.

"You can't see what's in there yet."
**Hugs and Kisses**

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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*Third Person POV*

*Sans’s Perspective*

“Hey.”

Sans doesn’t know what else to say when (Y/N) picks up, what he planned to ask fleeting away from his mind. With a huff, he gives up on asking and instead stares at the background the human’s at. He sees a lamp turned on by the night table and the locket he had given them set neatly alongside their wallet. Though he’s happy to see they still kept onto the locket, he wonders why they decided to put it aside, roaming thoughts being shaken off when he notices he had left them hanging.

“Sorry about that,” he speaks up again, shaking his head. “I got lost for a second there. What did you say?”

“Just, how are you?” they ask, a small, expectant smile on their face. “You seemed a little pissed off when we were talking at Alphys’s classroom.”

“I’m fine. I just couldn’t stand seeing you so close, yet so far away.” Against himself, Sans can feel his emotions overtaking his expression. He tries to cool them back down by looking away from (Y/N), unable to meet their eyes without having those thoughts spike again. “It’s been what, two months? ‘Cuz it sure feels like a lot more. You don’t know how much I wanted to see you when you told me what happened with Jessie.”

“I. . .” He sees the human’s gaze stare down at their lap, (e/c) eyes growing dim for a split second. “I just hope you’ll be free soon. That letter. . . It- I won’t deny it got my hopes up. I didn’t think bad of it until Alphys asked me about it.”

“You need to be careful, though. Don’t just dive headfirst into trouble for me.” Finally regaining some composure, Sans stares at (Y/N) directly, irises lingering on what they were wearing. They were still in their work uniform even though the clock marked nine sharp, that observation leading him to assume it was just now they managed to have some free time. “But what about you? Haven’t heard from you since that time Faust ran off with your phone.”
“To be honest, there’s... something I’ve wanted to talk about with you.”

He sees the same, dim light flash on (Y/N)’s eyes when they mention that. Worried, he sits up straight on his bed and narrows his gaze at them. “What’s up?”

“Would our relationship be any different if... if I met you earlier?”

“Whaddya mean by that?”

“Gerson told me you used to be a sentry for the Underground,” they clarify, passing a hand against the back of their neck. “What did that job involve?” The emotion he feared (Y/N) was keeping to themselves shows up through the waver in their tone. Their face grows dull as their lips fall back into a grimace, eyes growing shiny with tears. “I- I know I’m probably rushing into this, and that’s the exact opposite of what he told me to do, but... I want- I need to know.”

The monster grows speechless with the sudden rush of words falling from the human’s mouth. Suddenly, the background they’re at and every other thing around him become trifles as he focuses on them entirely. It was more than apparent (Y/N) wasn’t ready to hear him talk about any of that - - that they would immediately go off on a tangent were they to take his words the wrong way. At the moment, what they needed was to find stability rather than doubt.

“Alright,” he speaks up, heaving a breath. “Can we talk about this after you’re through with the mayor? If he really is gonna set me free, I want to tell you all about that in person.”

“Can you promise me that?”

“Course I can.”

He briefly worries (Y/N) might see through him when he says that. If there was one thing he struggled with, it was with keeping his previous promise with Toriel. What made him decide so quickly on an agreement were the consequences that involved it, in including how serious he felt about his relationship with the human. The previous call where he had caught them just waking up had only furthered that wish -- that desire of having a relationship beyond family and friends. He did still see (Y/N) as a friend, but he also wanted to be on a closer, deeper level with them: to learn how humans tended to express their love towards another, to have them close without bothering about breaking bonds or making their friendship awkward, but most of all, to have someone beside
“Thank you,” he hears (Y/N) say, interrupting him from those thoughts.

Noticing he’s drifting away from the conversation again, he dismisses those wants for the time being and flinches back when he sees (Y/N) closer to his phone screen. He can view almost every detail of their face now: how their eyes had faint, dark lines underneath them, how a few strands of messy hair fell over their forehead, how their lips tugged the slightest bit upwards, and how their (s/t) skin showed faint marks from where stress-induced acne used to be -- a reminder that the human was still years younger compared to most of the parents at the school. He had almost forgotten what they had said about them rushing into marriage.

“Put your cheekbone against the screen.”

Amused by their command, he relents with a chuckle and follows their orders. He closes his eye sockets and listens closely, hearing (Y/N) press a kiss against the screen. Lured, he has to hold back a shudder when he hears their breath close to his hearing, almost making him sense as if they were sitting on bed with him.

“Stay strong, alright?” the human speaks up, voice sounding farther away now. "This'll be over before we know it."

The human’s beaming at him when he pulls back. They’re farther away from his screen again, sitting straight on their bed. Looking closer into it, he sees the weariness of (Y/N)’s face fade away with the grin on their face and their bright tone of voice. He would’ve returned that gesture weren't the phone's screen serving as a barrier for physical contact.

There’s only one thing Sans can think of doing when the call with (Y/N) ends. Were it the weekend tomorrow, he would’ve ran off outside and searched for a distraction: either by talking with Grillby or going to the hills to stare at the stars above it. The hour and day of the week limit his choices, his best option being to head down to the kitchen and whip up a late night snack.

He tries to be as quiet as possible on his way there, reminding himself Papyrus was already
sleeping. Tired, the monster takes it slow and stops when he reaches the room. Not exactly finding himself in a functional state, he slumps and bumps his head against the refrigerator laid out in front of him, closing his eye sockets as he then lets out a huff.

The meeting with the mayor was the day after tomorrow, yet he couldn’t help feeling as if there was something off with the news. What stopped him from voicing his doubts to (Y/N) had been first and foremost for the question they had brought up regarding his past job, and -- second -- for how stressed they looked when speaking to him. It would be troublesome making them think he was being superstitious, and even more if he were to bring up the constant uneasiness he felt now that he was at the Surface. Unlike the Underground, the Surface gave him no second chances -- He had seen and heard about humans and monsters dying without returning. This was the real world now, and he wasn’t sure how to feel about it. It had its pros and cons like almost everything else, but he feared more for the future than he ever did before. Now, the monster wouldn’t be given the precarious blessings that were second and third chances. He didn’t dare think how badly things could end were he to act the same way as he did underground.

What would he do if the human were to get into trouble with the mayor? What would become of Faust were he to lose (Y/N) for something like that? And if things weren’t to result as badly as he feared them to, how would he explain to (Y/N) about his past job without letting it taint their relationship?

He had gone too far to let things crumble back to pieces. What he wanted now was consistency: a calm, peaceful life he could share with his family, friends, and -- hopefully -- partner and adoptive kid were things to result well. He wouldn’t hesitate in his relationship anymore had he the certainty no further obstacles like Jessie or outdated laws would cross his path. A life alongside (Y/N) and Faust sounded like a dream too distant for it to be made real -- let alone in any manner plausible.

Buzz.

Sans flinches back from the refrigerator when he feels his phone buzz inside his pocket. Sluggish, it takes him a good minute before he gets to check what the notification’s about, though he can feel some energy return to him when he sees it’s a text message from (Y/N).

Goodnight xx

Faust taught me those xx’s were like hugs, so I’m sending you some.

Humoured, Sans waits when he sees they’re still in the process of typing another message.
Was that too many??

Sorry if I woke you up. I didn’t wanna hit the bed till I made sure I sent you this.

you’re good, pal. i couldn’t catch sleep in the end, so now i’m just raidin’ the fridge.

but here. have some, too.

xx

x

xxxx

xxxxxxxxxx

xx

My phone’s blowing up now!

Two can play it that game.

An impromptu battle of the x’s begins as (Y/N) sends a string of them in one message. He sends some back, the quantity growing with each message -- until the box reaches its limit. It’s a back and forth situation that lasts for well over ten minutes, the last thing they send when he surrenders making him burst out a laugh loud enough to sound throughout the entire kitchen.

(Y/N): 1  Sans: 0

I win, baby

did you just call me baby?

Who knows?

Maybe I did. . . Or baby I didn’t.

Feeling something cold run down his cheekbone, Sans sets the phone aside on the kitchen counter and wipes it away with his hand. He chuckles when he realizes it’s a teardrop, that observation reminding him of the last time he had ever laughed as wholeheartedly as he did tonight.
Having gone through too many emotions at once, he yawns once and decides to call it a night by taking water and a few chocolate chip cookies from the refrigerator, bringing those with him to his room right after he pockets the phone back where it was. It’s only when he reaches the bed that he finally feels at ease, the silly exchange he had with the human replaying in his mind as he finishes with his snack, ready to call it a night now.

\[g\text{'night to ya too, (Y/N).}\]

Chapter End Notes

To avoid confusion, the two other chapters that have been uploaded today are extras I only posted on my main publishing account at first. I've added them here as well despite the tardiness, seeing as my main intention for posting here was to have a backup for the story.

The new chapters are titled 'Extra: Easter Sunday' (Part #32) and 'Extra: Pride Month' (Part #53) both posted according to the order of when they were originally published.

Also, updates will now be thrice a week (temporarily), seeing as I'm already finished outlining the story in full! Chapter numbers have increased as well, but given how Ao3 organizes them, I figured it would be good to clarify that -- in total -- there are only 55 chapters. The reason as to why they extend to 100 parts is due to the prologue, epilogue, choice endings, extras, and chapter divisions -- said divisions a result of the word limit I set up since the beginning (2.5k words per update at max).

Sorry for the long note, but thanks for sticking until here! Figured it was necessary to bring this up to avoid confusion. :-)

Content tags have been modified as well!
The weather is clear the second time you travel to the town hall, not a single grey cloud present in the sky. You unbuckle your seatbelt, step out of the car, and say goodbye to Undyne, though you pause on that last action when she warns you about your safety. She reminds you that she would be back after an hour to check up on you, saying -- and you quote -- that she would come over and kick butt if you were in any sort of trouble.

You’re escorted into the mayor’s office by the same policewoman as before, her hopeful grin and kind words being the one push you needed to gain courage for facing what remained ahead. Bracing yourself, you pass through the doors and are welcomed by an environment colder than normal, though the sound of the air conditioner is nowhere near. Without that many options in hand, you choose to dismiss the uneasiness the silence and cold brought over you and conform with looking around the room as a distraction. The thick curtains are pulled back this time, revealing the sun and the few buildings and homes found close to the town hall. Regardless, the stuffy, confining feeling of the office doesn’t lessen, the sight of sunrays passing through the windows appearing to be a mere illusion. You couldn’t feel their warmth, no matter how long you exposed your hand to the sun shining over the desk.

“Take a seat, (miss/mister) (L/N),” the mayor’s voice speaks, the finality to that sentence making it a command rather than a simple act of hospitality. You stop looking at the sun shining on your skin and pull your hand away from the desk, eyes looking towards the door the mayor had come out of the first time. It’s barely possible for you to keep a neutral expression when your eyes meet his. The warmth -- however fake -- he radiated at the beginning of your first meeting wasn’t present any longer, blank eyes and straight lips making you feel smaller than him. His clothes are far more polished and his tone is empty of empathy. “I believe you’re here for your partner’s freedom, correct?”

You freeze in place. That feels like a trick question to you, and you’re not certain which way’s best to respond. “. . .Yes, sir. Did I misinterpret what you wrote in your letter?”

“Of course not,” he replies, a grin forming on his face. You have to hold back a shiver with how uneasy that change makes you feel. “Do you really think that lowly of me, (L/N)?” That I would go as far as to trick you?”

“N- No, sir,” you intervene, fumbling over your words. “I just found it strange you came to that decision. We. . . didn’t really end on the best note back on our first meeting.”

“It would be unfair and biased of me to base a decision on those emotions rather than on the gravity of the situation. Are you insinuating those things of me, too?”
Your chest feels tight, mind unable to cope quickly enough to his seemingly restless string of taunts. You can’t think of any words to say without them being put under the same scrutiny.

“Very well,” he comments, suppressing a laugh. “I can’t change how you think of me, so let us move on, shall we? I have all the documents necessary for Sans’s freedom in my possession, but I will need to have a quick word with you before I hand them over.”

He retreats from the door and walks towards his desk, where he takes a seat. His eyes break away from you to center on the papers in front of him, giving you time to compose yourself before he spoke again. Anxious, you gulp as your eyes then trail down to his shoes while you wait for him to finish, hearing something shuffle underneath his desk. You don’t see anything out of the ordinary when you look down, but the sound returns when you stare up at him again, the same scenario repeating itself a second time, right before you choose to give up and dismiss at as being paranoid.

“Here we are,” he speaks up, bringing you back to Earth. You stare at his desk to see a thin, yellow document under his palms -- similar to the one the judge had given you after you won the trial, but with Sans’s basic information on it. The mayor harrumphs, shifts in his seat, and pushes the document closer to you. “Whether you answer strong or weakly to my question doesn’t matter, but I still require you give a response before I give these papers to you.” He waits for your approval, to which you respond to by nodding, letting him know you awaited his interrogation. “Are you ready for what’s ahead, (L/N)? I’m sure you’re more than aware by now that it won’t be easy. What you’re doing now -- taking the monsters’ side -- it isn’t seen kindly by many. Jessie saw you as a traitor for a reason.”

Deja vu strikes when the chair underneath you shrieks right as you stand up, speediness making it tumble and almost causing it to fall over. Anger and alarm spike at the simple mention of that name, and you can’t contain your expression when you look towards the mayor again. The calm, unperturbed look on his face shows that’s the exact reaction he hoped to get out of you.

“Don’t worry, mayor,” you speak, tone dry with vexation. “I already know what I’m getting myself into.” The sight of him handing you the document is the only thing to bring some sense of calm over you. Your hand reaches out for it with caution, ready for him to pull back at any moment.

“Alright. I await nothing but good news from you, then.”
"So how's it going with you and Alphys?" you ask, bringing a spoonful of rice to your mouth. You're sitting across from Undyne, the Cuban restaurant Solana had recommended bustling with all sorts of people and food. You wanted to treat the fish lady to dinner as a way to thank her for her company, and for giving you a ride while your car went to repairs. "You look pretty close."

"Do we?" Undyne asks, chuckling. "I don't really know how to work with our relationship now that we're dating, but I've been trying to be bolder."

"I'd say you are," you assure her, smiling. "You were the one who kissed her first, after all."

A tiny blush spreads on her cheeks when you make that remark, eye looking down at her plate of food. Her bashful nature only lasts for so long, returning when she takes another bite off her empanada. Back to her strong character, she takes a swig from her drink and grins at you when she's done, a hopeful look on her face. "What about you, (Y/N)? Why did you keep your crush a secret?" Her grin widens at the sides when you shrink back, the confidence you found when making her blush dissipating with your courage. "It wasn't till I saw Sans get all goofy and defensive whenever I teased him about you that I realized who it was."

"Well..." You're at a loss for words. You didn't think she would still remember the time you helped her with her dating dilemma, nor of the things Solana had said about you being attracted to someone as a way to make up for mentioning you were a recent divorcee. "Uh... You know how Jessie's my ex, right?" The woman nods once, allowing you to continue. "It was only a year since our divorce happened when you asked me for some relationship advice. I thought it would look real bad if I said the truth."

"So you lied to me?" she questions, raising her voice. "And here I thought we were pals since the beginning."

Your eyes grow when she asks that, her tone gruff and annoyed. When you look up at her, however, you can see she's smiling at you, unpatched eye and intact smile giving out her mischief. "It was a white lie, alright?" you tease, grinning. "I already liked him by that time."

The conversation falls into comfortable silence as you both continue eating, enjoying each other's company without having to exchange any more words. You feel calmer now with the documents in your possession and Undyne's presence, the calid atmosphere of the restaurant adding levels to your calm. In between the cheery music playing in the background and the few drops of rain hitting the roof of the building, you can hear your and Undyne's cell phone buzz, most likely notifications asking how things had turned out. You're stirred at the thought of meeting with Sans tomorrow, the reminder you had seen him in person only once since the past two months
intensifying that feeling. Not even the approaching rainfall or the eerie words of the mayor were enough to tamper with that joy.
News about the achievement had inevitably spread within the past few hours.

The next day, you wake up to a newspaper tucked under the door of your hotel room, the blaring headline making you stare blankly for a good five minutes without moving. ‘(Y/N) (L/N), former police officer of (hometown), confronts mayor and gains the freedom of a monster they claim to be their partner’. ‘The town mayor mentions (L/N) was hostile in their approach, though he still pushed forward with his decision, claiming he would never be as biased as (L/N) had been with him on both meetings’ is written right under the title in smaller lettering. Anxious, you search for page number sixteen, where a full article of yesterday’s happenings is displayed. You can’t bring yourself to read beyond the first three paragraphs, the amount of backlash hidden in flowery language making the paper shake in your hands. Not only was it directed against you for more than half of the article -- that being as far as you could read -- but your face was all over those few pages, some of them using the technique of editing to distort your image. Stunned, your thoughts drift back to how cold and bound you had been with your last response and how the tension had only grown worse between you and the mayor. Your mind starts to form ‘what-ifs’, a needle of guilt piercing your consciousness when you remember how you lost your composure the second the mayor mentioned your ex’s name.

You set the newspaper down on the kitchen counter when you hear Faust exit the bathroom. With the premises being large enough for three people, it doesn’t take you further than a few steps until you reach his bedroom and come across him already dressed up for school, towel and toiletries placed aside as he moves on to brushing his hair. You check the hour on your phone, having lost track of time when reading the paper, and calm down after you realize there’s still time.

“Can I really go with my friend today?” Faust asks, incredulity in his question. He stops fixing his hair and sits on the edge of his bed while you stand by the dresser and lean against it, facing towards his side. “I thought you wanted to meet up with Sans!”

“He’ll be busy working,” you reply, a smile creeping on your face. “And I have to go to work today if I don’t wanna get fired, so I can’t really stay too long either way.” You halt in that statement, humoured by the restlessness tracing his voice. “But I thought you liked taking the bus with your friends?” Your words come off in a sing-song manner, mind already possessing the
knowledge as to how you could tick him off.

Unamused by your words, Faust gives you a dull look and shakes his head. You laugh at that, though you cover it up when he crosses his arms and narrows his eyes at you. “You’ve only let me ride the bus that one time the car broke down, but now you’re cool with it all of a sudden! Did you guys break up, or are you just being a chicken?”

“Just go take that ride with your friend, alright? I should be there by lunchtime.”

“You’re ignoring my question!” he exclaims, standing up from the bed.

You don’t pay mind to his words and pretend to be busy going through his drawer, an act that makes him further annoyed by your dishonesty when it came to talking about your relationship with Sans. With what you had seen at the counselor’s office, you didn’t really feel like he was ready to welcome Sans in that way -- That was the one thing you agreed to when the monster was given a sentence of his own. Perhaps you could have that relationship kept private, but you didn’t want to force it upon Faust knowing he had broken down when talking about Jessie and what they did to you. He was still fighting with his feelings, uncertain whether he could see Jessie as his parent any longer, and even less if he could bring himself to forgive them.

“She's here!” Faust shouts, making you jump. You shake off from those thoughts and see he’s running this way and that, rushing to pick everything up -- from his backpack, to his lunchbox, to the sweater hanging on the door. He dismisses your help when you try to reach for his backpack, stating he was big enough to do those things by himself now.

His steps are quick while yours are steady. You watch as he settles everything along with him before opening the door, hanging his lunchbox on one side, the school bag in the other, and the sweater on one hand, using his free one to open the door.

“Remember to check who it is first,” you warn, arriving next to him.

The hand he placed on the doorknob stops as he rather chooses to stand on his toes to look through the peephole. You keep watching behind him, not wanting to ruin his attempts at independence.

“Have fun, dear.”
Faust jumps in for a hug once he’s done opening the door, muttering a haste ‘okay’ when he pulls back and runs out of the room. You keep the door open, watching how he meets with his friend already waiting for him out in the central hallway. He greets the bunny child with a wave, the ecstatic smile on his face matching with hers. You couldn’t tell if he was happy about the news you had returned with yesterday, or if it was due to there being less than a month left for his second semester to end. The door remains open until you see the two parents -- one the bunny’s mother, and the other a bear -- ready to take the children off to school. Mouthing a thank you when they catch you staring, you wave at the group and close the door when they’re gone.

As soon as you do that, you can feel your heart racing with anticipation. Your hands begin to shed a cold sweat you soon wipe against your pants. You start to think about what you would do when lunchtime came around. Despite the response you gave to Faust, you planned to have Sans over at your hotel room if you met with him at school beforehand, or tell him later through means of messaging if you didn’t. What these had in common was that you planned to invite him by the time Faust fell asleep, and that you had to confront Sans about the recent change in your mindset regarding your relationship.

Your plans are forfeited when you hear the bells of the pastry shop chime, looking up from the cash register to see Sans in front of the counter, no other customer standing by besides him. He’s in his work uniform, though he carries a paper bag in his hand rather than any sort of work equipment.

“Long time no see,” he greets, handing you the bag. “You’re off in a few minutes, right?”

You look up at the wall clock placed behind the counter to see it’s only five minutes until your lunch break began. “Yeah,” you reply, taking the item from his hold. You’re too caught in the spontaneity of the moment to peer into its contents even as you crouch down to place it by the floor. “I just have to finish with the register first.”

He nods and moves away from the counter, gaze searching for an empty table. You see him look around for a while until he decides on one set at the far end of the establishment, the wink he sends your way when he catches you staring leading you to start over with counting the quarters. Annoyed, you huff softly and shake your head at that, mentally scolding yourself for letting your mind and eyes wander off towards him.

Finally through with recounting the quarters, you close the register and take the bag off the floor,
still choosing not to look into its contents. You only catch a glimpse from the surface, though dark blue wrapping paper is as far as your eyes can see. Ready to clock out for lunch now, you step out of the counter and head inside the employees’ lounge, where you mark just one minute past your established break time. Your attention drifts off towards the mirror set next to the couch, where you take off your hairnet and apron, doing a double take when you remember the time you had left your shift with flour stuck to your hair. It was silly knowing you hadn’t been in charge of baking today, but you still do it nonetheless.

“Sorry for the wait.” Your words grab Sans’s attention when you reach his table. You see a small pitcher of lemonade, two glasses, and a few doughnuts piled up on a paper plate. “Why didn’t you tell me your order back there?”

“‘Cuz it was already time for you to be clockin’ out.” He pushes the plate closer to you when you sit down, waiting for you to take one first. Estranged by the offer, you hesitate and overanalyze when picking up a doughnut from the batch, not exactly sure which one he liked best. “Wanna come over to my place tonight?”

Words misinterpreted, you lose coordination and almost end up eating the entire doughnut in one bite. You scratch your throat once, look away, and take some air before gulping down the food, sending a glare his way when you hear him laugh under his breath. “Actually,” you speak up, voice scratchy with the aftermath of the bite you took. “I was . . . thinking if you wanted to come to the hotel -- After Faust’s back from school.”

“I figure you mean after he’s sleepin’?”

“Well, uh . . . Yeah. But not in that way. I was hoping we could talk in private to catch up on stuff.”

“This’s about what happened with the counselor, right?” he asks, taking one of the two glasses with him. He fills it with lemonade and brings it to his teeth, stopping when he’s about to drink from it. “Faust told me about it.”

You sigh, passing a hand against your forehead. “It is. I was gonna tell you that when we got there, but I . . . I’m sorry. I was eager to tell him all about us, but that changed when I saw him break down.”

“So you don’t want this anymore?”
“No -- I . . . I do! But I don’t think it would be good to let him know about us yet.”

Sans’s face grows solemn as he takes a sip from his drink, the way his mouth contorted to allow him to eat and drink still a mystery to you, yet not something you could bring yourself to think too much over given the situation you were in. He takes another sip, chugging down the rest of it in one go. “The kid asked if we broke up. I’m not sayin’ you should throw our relationship card at him, but I need you to tell me about these things sooner. I was serious about what I wrote in that letter, (Y/N).”

Your tension softens into a smile as you reach out for his hand, clutching it in both of yours and squeezing it tight. He flinches slightly under the warmth of your touch, though he loosens up when you scoot closer and bring his hand against your chest, keeping it safe in yours. “I promise -- Just like you did for me. And I’m sorry for not telling you sooner about this.”

You let his hand go and stay quiet, watching as he gives your words some thought. With the way he tucks his hand away and how his irises cast down at the table, you figure it’s good to give him the option to break up if he wasn’t able to follow with your choice.

“So we’re still up for catching up tonight? I know a babysitter if you wanna go out without Faust knowin’ about us.”

“Are you . . . really sure about this, then? It’s okay if you wanna break up. I should’ve told you firsthand.”

“I’m sure -- We both owe each other a date, and plan to get mine out first.”
The cool breeze of a fast-approaching autumn shakes the palm trees and drives out a shiver down
your body. Brisk, salty air reaches your lungs when you breathe in, the scent serving as a soother
for your mind. Empty surroundings with the exception of the two stray dogs sleeping by the shore,
you’re given privacy to spend time with Sans without having to worry about being scrutinized by
others. Sitting down by the sand, you let him rest his head on your lap and begin tracing your
fingers across his face, slowly outlining his features by starting from top to bottom. You begin
from his forehead and continue going downwards, laughing when he sneezes after you brush with
his nose cavity.

“Didn’t know you could sneeze,” you comment, smiling down at him. “What else don’t I know
about you yet?”

“Try to reach for my irises,” he replies, taking hold of your wrist. Carefully, he brings your hand
towards his left eye socket and waits for you to do as suggested.

You bring your fingers close to his irises, flinching back after you see the white light falter when
you get closer. Sans encourages you to continue, grin widening at the sides when he sees you
frowning, doubt preventing you from doing as he said. “Okay, but . . . Tell me if it bothers you,
 alright?”

He closes his right socket and keeps the other one open, still waiting for you to finish with what
you planned to do. “Alright.”

Determined, you close the distance and come in contact with the light, shock passing through you
when you feel warmth under your fingers. The glow stays and gives the illusion of it piercing your
skin, the view similar to catching a lightning bug and trapping it by closing your fist. Having Sans
this close was inexplicably ethereal to you. He was letting you go as far as to explore his
differences -- what made him a monster and you a human -- through means of physical contact.
Your heart begins to race when you pull back and see his iris still there, unhurt by your touch.
Your eyes trail down to his teeth, a new wish crossing your thoughts.

“Can I kiss you?”

“Go ahead, pal.”
A shaky breath exits your mouth, anticipation making it hard for you to do what you wanted regardless of asking beforehand. Mulling over your next choice, you swallow your tension, breathe, and press your lips against his teeth, closing your eyes in accordance to your actions. Mind adrift, you flinch when feeling his hands slide behind your head, fingers passing through your hair. The moment lasts for what it feels like minutes, the only other sound present being of the waves crashing into the shore. You’re made to let go when you hear talking from a distance, voices and conversations muffled by the sounds of the ocean.

Eyes opening, you pull back whereas Sans untangles his fingers from your hair and sits up straight in the sand. The once empty beach is now habited by other people, most of them keeping away from the shore. Children are kept at bay by their parents, an elderly man stares, and a police officer discusses unintelligible topics with him. With the varied looks you’re given and the caution they all maintained, it was unnecessary for you to question what they were thinking. You stand up from the sand and wait for Sans to do the same.

The night makes it harder for you to see people’s faces, but you can tell the officer's getting closer. He only goes as far as a few steps, keeping more than twenty feet of distance between you. “I'm afraid you’re not allowed to be here,” he mentions, hand reaching for the defense equipment set beside his waist. “Please leave immediately if you want to avoid conflict.”

You squint through the darkness and notice the man’s neither pleased nor perturbed by your presence. In contrast to the fearful stares some of the parents gave and the confused looks of their children, he has a plain expression further made neutral by straight lips and knitted eyebrows, emotions indecipherable to your eyes. “What’s wrong, sir?”

“I don’t think I need to tell you,” he answers, staring you down. “You should know why you’re not supposed to be here.”

“I still think we deserve an explanation,” Sans steps in, gaze narrowing slightly. “I thought this place was open for the public.”

An unmentioned battle starts in the middle of Sans and the officer, equally grey expressions hinting at the tension they had with each other. The monster takes a step forward, posture firm as he stares up at the man without faltering.

“Until a certain hour, that is. Nobody’s allowed after nightfall.”

“Then why’s there people still out here? Last time I checked, it was still eight thirty. The sign over there says it’s until ten.”
“You talk back a lot for someone your size. Why not let your (girlfriend/boyfriend) do the talking?”

Fearing where the two were headed towards, you step in. You place a hand over Sans’s shoulder, holding him back when you see he tries to intervene with the officer again. “Sans’s right, sir. We went far out here ‘cuz we didn’t wanna bother people nearby -- We were alone until now, and we weren’t breaking any rules. It’s supposed to be your responsibility to explain why you’re doing this.”

The officer’s composed expression grows weak with your words. You see his brow twitch once while a hand clenches into a fist. “It’s my job. I don’t always like it, but I’m not about to do the same as you did. I don’t have the luxury to lose my job -- unlike you, (Y/N). I won’t repeat myself: leave now if you don’t want any conflict. We don't need people like you around here.”

You can't think of anything else to say this time around, words reaching out for you more than you ever intended them to. The sound of hushed conversations drives your attention to the group of people still standing by, a few who grin and wait for your next movement, and a few others that grow concern on their faces.

“Gladly,” Sans speaks up again, the blatant anger tracing his voice catching you by surprise. "We’ve got better places to be at.”

He turns to you, takes your hand, and stares at the officer once before rushing off with you out of the beach. His hold tightens as you both struggle to keep a fast walking pace whilst fighting with the inconsistency of the sand below your feet. This was one of the few times you had seen his emotions overtake his expression and actions. The knowledge that he had always kept a calm, laid back exterior was one of the primary reasons why you had trouble believing he vexed over -- and devoted himself to -- that much to the things he deemed important. Up until the time you started seeing him as a friend and the day he asked you if you really did see him as one, you mostly saw him as a fun, carefree tutor to be around with.

One thing stayed the same, however, and that was in what light you saw him. You still saw the monster as a person you could spend time with -- someone who you could trust when it came to things like dealing with not only Faust's school troubles, but his own matters as well. The strong, decisive note in his voice -- in spite of how angry he sounded at the moment -- noted his experience when it came to dealing with difficult subjects.

“Sans,” you call out, stopping him. You’re out of the beach now, though sand still covers the floor. What gives out at you having left the area is the parking lot you spot just a few steps away from
your current location. “Calm down for a minute.” Those first two words were the least you expected to ever say to him. While he had said them to you the days you fought with your fear of losing Faust, you had only seen him show his insecurities as of recently -- and all of them had been through means of face call. Tonight was the first time you had gotten to see him like this in person.

You freeze when he turns around, the white light you had experimented with earlier ago almost entirely gone from your view. You can feel his hand trembling now that you’re standing still, and you catch sight of his forehead shedding a cold sweat.

“We didn’t come all the way up here for this,” Sans comments, voice lower than normal. He squeezes your hand tighter and grits his teeth, eye sockets facing the blackened sky. “It was real stupid of me to think things would turn out any better. When I first met you, I thought maybe things wouldn’t be so tough -- that I could hang out with you and forget about stuff for a while. But then there’s Jessie gettin’ in the way, that thing I had around my ankle until yesterday, and these lame laws they keep makin’ up just ‘cuz I wanna go out with you. I swear the cop had to make that stuff up on the spot. We weren’t botherin’ nobody, but then a group of meddlers suddenly show up with him. Someone had to tick him off enough about us being out here for him to do something about it.”

With Sans’s irises gone and yet to return, you act instinctively, letting go of his hand and using yours to grab his face, obliging him to stare straight at you. “Breathe,” you soothe, tightening your hold on him. “We’re going to be alright -- We just need some time to cool down.”

You stay still when you hear him breathe out, watching as he closes his eye sockets and loosens up under your touch. He rests his face on your shoulder and places his hands behind your back, bringing you closer to him.

“Thanks, (Y/N). Sorry I couldn’t take ya out to a better place. This was supposed to be a date, but look how that ended.”

Amused by the dreariness of his tone, you cup his face closer, keeping a nose’s distance between you. “It’s okay,” you assure him. “We can continue at my place if you want.”

He nods and lets his shoulders drop. With the distant sounds of the sea and the wind passing by, you watch light returns to his eye sockets and how he slips his hands in his pockets. He stares down at the sand, looking up after a while. “Sounds good,” he agrees, staring up at you. “Would it be ironic to say I feel more human now? I dunno when’s the last time I let myself get worked up like that.”
Alone Together, Part Three

Sans greets the babysitter and hands her payment when you make it to the hotel. With Faust having fallen asleep, the bunny woman waits by the lobby, one of her children fully awake and holding onto her hand while the other sits by the waiting lounge, drowsiness showing through the way his eyes slowly close and later open again. “Is it fine with you if my kids hang out with Faust sometimes? They got along really well during the time you were gone.”

Although it’s not a rarity to hear that said about Faust, you feel just as much content for knowing that as you did the first time you saw him talking with monsters. You grant her that permission and tell her to call you if something ever came up, numbers having already been exchanged when you met up with her to leave Faust under her care.

“Come over to my shop sometime?” she offers, a smile on her face. “I used to be a shopkeeper at Snowdin, but now I have a lil’ business set up near the city mall. I heard you work at a pastry shop, so I’d love to talk with you about cooking and all that.”

“That would be nice,” you reply, returning her smile. “I’m not the best when it comes to baking, but I know a thing or two about other stuff.”

Excited, the shopkeeper’s nose begins to twitch as does her tail. Her ears perk up, and it takes you more than a second before you realize what she wants. She squeezes you into a hug, her plump figure soft with the purple coat of fur that covered her skin, the scent of baked goods emerging from her body. You return her gesture by letting yourself loosen up under the hug and squeezing her back. Oddly comforted by her approach, you keep your eyes closed until she lets go of you.

You watch her take leave with her two bunny children after that, waving her off when she’s about to exit. The lobby grows quieter when she closes the door behind her, nine thirty being responsible for the tranquility inside the hotel.

“Are you really okay with paying?” you ask, directing your words at Sans, who’s now laying back on one of the five chairs available of the waiting area.

“I already did, and I don’t plan on askin’ you back for it,” he replies, standing up firm on his seat. “She didn’t want us to pay her for this one, so it doesn’t matter either way.”

“Why would she say that?”
“She was a well-known gal in Snowdin -- made the best cinnamon bunnies around. Doesn’t know that many people in the cookin’ business though, so she’s always eager to make friends who are.”

“Bunnies?” you ask, a grin on your face.

“They were bunny-shaped. It was a real hit with kids.”

Your conversation ends as you choose to head back to your hotel room, not in the comfort of leaving Faust home alone more than necessary. While you felt and were aware of your paranoia, your mind could only come up with constant scenarios of what would happen to Faust were you to leave him on his own for too long.

You pass by a busy Mettaton on your way to the elevator, who gives you a flirtatious wink when he notices Sans beside you. “Sneaking in late, I see,” he jokes, placing a hand on his hip. “Have a nice night, sweetheart.”

You wave farewell and see him wave back just as the doors start closing in. You’re left to the company of Sans and a Temmie huddled up at the rightmost corner of the elevator. Noticing you, she takes a few steps forward and narrows her eyes at you and Sans, the latter who narrows back his eye sockets at her, accepting her unscheduled staring contest. You don’t notice it’s the same Temmie who you gave the Bendadryl to until she starts showing faint, red spots around her fur. Said coat spikes up as her body starts to shake fervently.

“Hooman!” she exclaims, staring up at Sans. “Who’s this?” She sniffs the monster, growing more and more alert with each sniff. “Are you... *dating*?”


Her defensive stance immediately withers with your response. Her cat ears drop while her dog one’s ease down, fur going back to its rightful place. She frowns and looks down at the floor, a defeated expression on her face. “Did hooman give you medicine, too?” she asks, directing her words at Sans.

“S’that a metaphorical question?”
“No -- Hooman gave Tem medicine whens sick. Tem has loved hooman since then!”

It’s only when you start to question why the elevator’s taking so darned long that the doors open. With the heated confrontation between the two though, you’re not given much of an option besides waiting for the doors to close on you again.

“Why do you love hooman if it’s not for medicine? Did hooman give you food? Home? Tem flakes? Colleg money?”

“That’s a real tough question there, buddy. Don’t think I can answer that one yet.”

The conflict ends after that, leaving you in a more than awkward silence as you wait for the elevator to make its rounds again. It opens up on various floors before yours, leaving you sandwiched with the Temmie and a muscular seahorse, who mentions you’re more than allowed to check him out, words followed by a wink. On the other hand, Sans is left at a corner, looking a little more than gloomy as he becomes surrounded by strangers of all kinds.

Tiptoeing into your hotel room, heavy, uncomfortable moods are lifted and exchanged for better ones. The aggravated look Sans had when confronting the Temmie is swapped back to his chilled demeanor while your confusion over what happened earlier is changed for a strong sense of concentration, the mission of hiding from Faust being set up in your mind. You hide in the darkness of the living room with Sans staying by your side, holding his hand as you lead him towards your bedroom. Your view on the mission is firm and focused -- quite unlike Sans, who kept on whispering harmless but no less provocative taunts about how you were going to be caught by Faust at any moment.

“Shut up,” you hush, nudging his shoulder lightly. Sans chuckles and fakes losing balance to bump against you, making you tumble and close to clashing with the couch. “I swear I’ll tie you up if you keep this going.”

“Spicy,” he comments, covering a laugh. "But sorry about that -- Didn’t mean to get you in a knot, pal.”
Too dark for you to see clearly, you can’t avoid the next furniture you cross paths with, bumping into the coffee table of the living room. Alert, Sans lurches forward and aims himself at you. You can feel him place both hands on your shoulders, preventing the fall and stopping completely with his string of teasing. You’re grateful when he does, though it’s an entirely different story when you feel his fingers accidentally slip and brush against your skin. Against yourself, you flinch back and push his hand away, heart racing and eyes wide open when you turn to him, only to have your fears spike and distort his image, making it feel as it were Jessie standing in front of you. You pull back almost instantly and wrap your arms around yourself.

Though you were aware that touch had been unintentional, you couldn’t control your body and mind when it came to forgetting about feeling small and helpless underneath Jessie’s body.

Calming down, words are placed aside while silence conquers the room. You apologize and take a seat on the couch, offering him to join you when you level down the trembling of your body and the pace of your pulse. He keeps his distance, but you soon put an end to that by urging him to get closer.

“Sans...” you murmur, placing your hands on your lap, forehead creasing when you try to muster the right words to say next. “Are you really, really sure about this? I feel like I’m being selfish with this about not letting Faust see us -- And now this happens. I... I won’t stop you if you want to leave.”

Were he to have eyebrows, you would’ve assumed he would be raising one at this moment. He shakes his head and closes his eye sockets, breathing out a sigh that makes his shoulders shake. “Don’t put me in that spot now, (Y/N) -- I already said before that I wanted this. Hell, I was gonna kiss you back if that cop didn’t interrupt us.”

“You liked it?”

“Damn right I did,” he replies, a snicker leaving his teeth. “You’re, uh, soft -- Or at least, your lips are. It felt good. And your hands also. You kinda snapped me outta that bad spot when you touched me like that. Real different from bone, fur, or scales.”

Stricken by his response, you smile and move your hand towards him, waiting for him to take it. He takes your hand, looking up at you as you stand up from the couch and make him do the same. “Would it be okay if we talked out on the balcony? It feels... stuffy in here.” You grow full, unwanted consciousness of where you’re sitting at, brain making memory of the time Jessie pushed and pinned you down on the couch. Though it’s not the same one or the same living room, you can still replay that scenario as if it happened barely a day ago. “I won’t hold you back if you’re tired, but I don’t think I can fall asleep anymore.”
Sorry for the missed update yesterday!

One of my family members is sick, so I've been making changes in my IRL schedule to dedicate more time to that matter. I don't have closure as to what will happen yet, but I will try to keep uploading buffer chapters without making any major changes to my current publishing schedule.

The earthy scent of flowers wafts through the air when you step out of the hotel room. Sans follows your footsteps and stops when you do, staying back when you decide to stare at the landscape laid out in front of you. More at home with your surroundings, you rest your hands on the cold, metallic rails of the balcony and urge Sans to do the same, the new set of flowers blooming by the distance serving you as a quick subject for conversation.

“Do you know much about the flowers where you used to be?” you ask, turning to him. “I’m curious about how things were like underground.”

“I guess aside from the Echo flowers, I’d say everythin’ else was pretty much a lil’ similar. We had our shining rocks and drastic climates, but most of the stuff under there can also be seen up here. Population-wise, now that’s a whole other thing.”

You rest your body against the railings, eyes enclosing on the monster next to you. He notices your interest and chuckles once when he sees you plan to stay quiet.

“Dunno if you’ve noticed, but I don’t really know how to get along with new people. Humans and monsters are different enough that I didn’t know what to do around you when I started feelin’ close to you. I didn’t know how much was too much -- what you liked and what you didn’t like. In the end though, it turned out you were just like everybody else I knew: a person just dealin’ with life. I guess I saw Frisk as one of us, ‘cuz when it was time for me to deal with stuff at the Surface, I didn’t know what to do when I came across the ones that wanted nothin’ to do with us -- and even less with the ones that wanted to help us, ironically enough.”

He stops speaking to stare at you, returning to his line of thought when he sees your interest hadn’t diminished with his word flurry.
“But it ain’t just about that, either,” Sans continues, looking towards the garden again. “When it was time for me to look after Frisk, I had to study up on an entirely different science -- I had no clue what colds, flu, or any of those diseases were, so when Frisk got sick, I kinda just panicked and tried callin’ someone for help.”

The next time he stares, it’s not into your eyes. You can see his irises focus on other features of your face: from the (s/t) shade of your skin to the way your mouth curled to form a smile.

“Then there’s physical appearance. Humans ain’t that different from each other, so it was odd finding out about the tension some had with each other for tinier differences.”

He stops looking when you smile at him, teasing him over his staring by letting your smile turn to a sly grin.

“As for you. . . You’re uh, surprisingly soft. Some monsters are fluffy, but then there’s your softness, no matter how fit you look from the surface. It still feels weird whenever you grab my hand or hug me -- a good kinda weird, ‘course. Maybe you have a stronger build ‘cuz of police training, but you’re not scaly like Undyne.”

The monster ends with his explanation, gaze now cast down at the flowers swaying with the new, sudden surge of wind. You rack your brain for anything that might go with his words, eyes inspecting the expression on his skull -- the subtle furrow of his eye sockets and the tense view of his smile.

“What would you like to know about us?” you ask, catching onto his untold words. “I can tell you if you wanna know more.”

Seeing his visage change for an easy smile and relaxed brow, you feel content with your choice of words and push them forward by moving just a tad closer to his side, brushing shoulders with him lightly.

“I dunno where I could begin,” he replies, shaking his head. “The dumpster at the Underground. . . Stuff from the Surface usually fell down there, and some monsters would often dig around to see what things were like up there. Alphys found out ‘bout some of her hobbies through that place.”

“Then what about you? What things are you interested in?”
“I’d have to think that through before givin’ you an answer.”

The balcony goes silent after his response, it possessing the same feel as the answer he had given to the Temmie regarding what he liked about you. With the silence, Gerson’s words rise amongst your thoughts again, though the instant ache in your chest forbids you to bring it up right there and then. You knew it was risky to keep setting that aside, but with what happened at the beach and at the elevator -- not counting the numb, bone-deep tiredness you felt, you didn't have the strength to make mention of that topic.

“I owe you an explanation ‘bout my job, right?” Sans's voice asks, shaking you out of your thoughts. “Just tell me when you’re ready, and I’ll talk.”

“How did you know?” you question back, eyebrows tilting up slightly. You see he’s closed off the space entirely, a hand carefully reaching for your arm when he’s aware you’re looking at him.

“You look worse than Burgerpants on a Monday night.”

It’s hard for you not to have a change of expression when he states that, a laugh stopping you from getting a word in on that comment.

You force yourself to breathe out, chest hurting with how much you held that back. “Alright. Can we talk about it tomorrow? I think I still need to process what happened at the elevator.”

“Tell me about it. But sure, (Y/N) -- Whenever you’re ready.”

With Sans resting next to you, the air conditioner set lower than normal, and the muffled sound of the television playing at the far end of your room, you feel sleepy and at peace. You take this moment to look through the gift Sans had given you, retrieving the dark blue gift wrapping you spotted while at work. Hearing paper crumble, Sans shifts slightly in bed and opens his eye sockets, sleepy irises fully waking up at the sight of you unwrapping the gift.
“A book on monsters?” you ask, reading the title. It has the words ‘The Underground 101: An Understanding on Monsterkind’ written in the least appealing font you knew of: comic sans. “Did you... write this book yourself?”

“What gives it out?” he asks, voice groggy with sleep. His chuckle is heartier than usual, and you feel your heart leap when he nudges in closer, pressing himself next to you.

“Didn’t know you were an author,” you comment, surprise tracing your voice. “Is this your first book?”

“Second one, actually,” he responds, bringing a hand on top of the book. “You’re the first one to read any of ‘em, though. I don’t think I plan on making ‘em public, so I mostly just use the copies to help tutor kids around the school.”

“That’s adorable,” you remark, a goofy laugh leaving your mouth. “You’re such a softie underneath all that bone.”

“Maybe I was bone to be that way all along,” he jokes, pulling his hand back. The pace of your heart rises when he sits up in bed, irises staring down at you now that you’re the only one laying down. “Don’t read that book ‘till I’m gone, though -- It’s... kinda embarrassing having you read it while I’m here.”

“What if I can’t fall asleep? The TV isn’t helping.”

“Then I’ll find another way.”

Warned by his words, you shift back against the headrest of the bed, stopping when you bump with the wood. “What do you mean?”

“I’ll wake up Faust so he keeps you company.”

“Don’t you dare!”

You stand up fully from the bed, ready to chase him out if it was necessary. While your mind
assures you he was only joking, your gut tells you to go stop him. You do the first thing that comes across your mind, that being to throw yourself at him, similar to how you used to do when chasing after a thief. He dodges you, however, a loud, unrestricted laugh leaving his teeth as he watches you fall face-first into the mattress, a loud ‘thump’ accompanying your fall.

Your second attempt is successful, though it’s less of a careful fall now that he’s not in bed. A louder thump follows when you jump down on him, his back hitting the carpeted floor of the bedroom while you fall on top of him. Your chest rises and falls as you try to catch your breath, hand holding him back while your legs brush with his.

“Alright,” he wheezes out, a chuckle bursting through his words. “Fair’s fair -- You win, (Y/N).”
Sans wakes up to an empty bed and a teary-eyed Faust tugging persistently at the sleeve of his shirt, both posture and gaze flooded with concern. He places a hand on the space left next to him, (Y/N)’s warmth far gone from the fabric of the bedsheets, even with the air conditioner now turned off. He follows the child out of the bedroom and tenses up at the sight of the human’s shoes gone from the welcome mat of the living room. The belongings they usually carried are gone simultaneously, and he doesn’t hear their phone neither ring or buzz when he calls their number.

“Where’s (Y/N)?” Sans asks, rubbing the sleep away from his eye sockets.

“(Mom/Dad) said they were gonna go check the mailbox, but it’s been almost two hours already. I-I tried calling them with the hotel’s telephone. . . But they didn’t pick up.”

“How many times you’ve called already?”

“F- Four,” Faust stutters, looking down at his shoes. Sans can see tears running down his cheeks, those of which he tries to wipe with the aid of his shirt.

“Calm down, kiddo,” Sans speaks up, placing a hand on top of Faust’s head. He ruffles his hair and makes him laugh by poking at the ticklish spot under his armpit, dreary expression growing less severe. “They’re, uh. . . probably just caught up with somethin’. I’m sure they’ll be back, so let’s get you ready for school, alright? We can head there together.” As if just realizing it was still a Friday, Sans looks at the time on his phone to see it’s only thirty five minutes until his work shift began and the same amount for Faust to start his classes.

“I can do that!” the boy exclaims, excitement replacing the worry in his voice. “You- You should
look for clothes in (mom/dad)’s room, though -- I . . . think they still have some clothes they were
gonna give you as a gift or something.”

“Really?” A chuckle leaves the skeleton’s teeth when he hears that, the thought that (Y/N) still had
him in mind that much for them to do something like that distracting him from their disappearance
-- however briefly. “Gotta. I’m gonna go check.”

Nodding, Faust zooms off to his room, footsteps light and clumsy with anxiety, yet determined to
get there all the same. Sans is left to the empty and silent surroundings of the living room, a heavy,
weighing feeling of uncertainty resting on the back of his mind when he starts making way back to
the bedroom. He starts rummaging through the contents of the drawers when he gets there, the
compact room helping him decide on which place to look for first. He opens up the first one,
revealing nothing but files and documents varying from Faust’s custody case to the newspapers
announcing the mayor’s decision. Unsurprised by the words written in the articles, he closes up the
first drawer and continues with the second one, hand stopping completely when he pulls it open.

“Crap.”

Sans manages to censor himself when making the observation, the sight of (Y/N)’s phone cracked
and turned to silent mode sending all the wrong vibes up his spine. Not quite comfortable with
going through their phone, he hesitates when he chooses to grab and unlock it, although he doesn’t
regret it when he sees eleven messages left unread, plus Faust’s four missed calls, five from their
neighbour, and three from their co-worker.

You think I’m done with you?
I’m barely just getting started.

The first sixteen messages are the oldest of the bunch, these already marked as read.

I’ve got friends.
Friends who’re not in prison for stupid bullshit like you’re blaming me of.

Hold on tight to your little freak circus of a family if you want them to be safe.

What the hell do you want from me now?
You moved out of the old house, right?

Didn't know you were that big of a coward, (Y/N).

I'm not here to talk about your life choices, though.

But I am gonna warn you.

About what?

About the safety of the freaks you're friends with.

I'll call to give you directions on where to go for that.

Why not tell me now?

I'm not that stupid anymore, (Y/N).

I know what you're trying to do with that.

You either pick up my call and hear me out, or I'll tell my friends you want your friends dead.

How can I know you're not bluffing?

See for yourself.

>>Attachment: 3 images<<

Sans has to hold back his anger and shock when the pictures load. The first one is of Sunny: the shy little Whimsun he had known to be (Y/N)'s coworker and subsequent friend. Her face is one of pure, uncensored fear as a masked figure holds a gun to her back. Her wings are tattered and so are her antennae, showing additional signs of struggle by the dirty work uniform she wore. The next one is of the bunny mother and the bear: the couple of the bunny child who Faust first made friends with. There's two masked figures this time around, one keeping the bear down by stepping on his back with the help of a hiking boot, while the other one has the mother in a strong
chokehold. The last picture is of Solana sitting on the floor, clothes tattered and hair messy as she glares at the camera. She shows to have put on a fight by the dark, swollen eye the masked figure sports, along with the equally torn and dirtied clothes the person has.

It starts with unread ones now, each bunch separated by a few minutes.

**Not answering me anymore, huh?**

**Already fell for my bait?**

**Heard you went with Sam to a hotel last night.**

**How long did it take you? Eight. . . Or ten months, was it?**

**You think you’re real different now that you’re not with me, don’t you?**

**When just two years ago, you couldn’t have enough of me.**

**How was it, by the way? Sam, I mean.**

**Was he any good in bed?**

**Still not answering me? Man, you must be running wild now.**

**You should’ve waited ‘till I told you what all this was about.**

’Cuz you’re the only one I want to see gone.

For the first time in a while, Sans sees blue. He sets the broken phone back in its place, another small, seamless crack passing through the screen when he puts too much pressure into it. Although the name was under ‘Migraine in human form’, it was made clear the person was none other than the one obstacle he had wanted gone since the day they had taken Faust from (Y/N)’s care. He had been so, so close to reaching that next step with the human yesterday, he had to stop himself from kissing them the time they quite literally threw themselves at him, not only for their strong reaction when having him accidentally touch their skin, but for the things that were left to be discussed between him and (Y/N). He knew what would happen if he got his hopes up like he had yesterday, yet he was far from expecting something like this.

“Are you ready yet, mister?”
Faust’s voice is the only thing to keep him level-headed. With his positive attitude and hopeful tone, it was almost impossible for the monster not to see him as a young Papyrus: the one he had been in charge of raising since he was only a year older than Faust. While he knew they were different people, he still couldn’t shake that thought away whenever it came back to him. Frisk had been the same case with time. After getting to know them better, he couldn’t bring himself to be as harsh and distant as he had been during his time as a sentry. (Y/N) was right about that: he was a softie underneath -- A softie that had been close to giving up multiple times hadn’t he received the support of others. He wanted to do the same for his (girlfriend/boyfriend) now, and show them all the wonders he could recover from the closed up path of what once used to be the Underground.

“Almost,” he replies, letting his exhaustion out through a faint flare from his nose cavity. “Go grab a snack before we leave.”

He waits for Faust to leave the room, pressing Solana’s number when he’s gone. The phone rings once, then twice, call being picked up before it rang thrice. A rich voice characteristic of the woman answers, making his tension fall.

“Hello?”

“Hey, uh,” he begins, rubbing the back of his neck. “It’s Sans. You doing okay, Sol?”

“Some thieves rammed into my home and called me a buncha stupid names, but I’m fine. Just a scratch or two from getting into that fight,” she replies, voice firm with anger. “What about (Y/N) though? I tried calling the (guy/girl) a lotta times before, but they didn’t pick up -- You’re the only one to call back, and it’s getting on my nerves! I told the police about what happened, but they wouldn’t listen to me! They just said I shouldn’t stick around (Y/N) if it’s for the best -- That they’ll investigate what’s happened.”

“Sounds like bull to me.”

“That’s what I was thinking. Those guys fled when they received a call, so the cops didn’t believe me one bit! They just said it was probably a regular group of thieves, but they’re not fooling me -- Those guys took a picture of me when I was held back, and they sent it to someone else, too. They tried to be secretive, but I heard them talking about (Y/N).”

Sans exchanges a few more words with the woman before hanging up, moving on to call Sunny and the two other monsters to check how they were doing.
Though he’s relieved when he has the confirmation that they were doing alright, it doesn’t help with his worry over (Y/N). The human had been blackmailed for the sole sake of a choice they made: for choosing to stand their ground over the treatment other monsters received. The dirty glares, insults, and slurs Sans received in his day-by-day were no match to how he felt currently. He felt angry, tired, and even a little bit nostalgic, all of these mostly product of thinking back on past events. His anger derives from the mistreatment monsters and their supporters had to face, while his tiredness comes from all the changes he had been submitted to in only a year. As for his nostalgia, he could confirm it was for remembering the times shared with (Y/N).

There was so much more he had wanted to do alongside the human, so many more things he had been looking forward to, and so much hope he had nestled in his ribcage, he almost couldn’t believe he was the same monster from a year ago -- or the one from the Underground. For once, Sans had gained hope, but he was starting to lose it again, each minute without an answer as to where (Y/N) had gone off to counting down his hope for a better future.

Undyne glares at the officer behind the counter, slamming her hands down on the desk to let her utter displeasure known. “What do you mean we can’t file a missing persons report?” she snaps, sharp teeth grit as her blue knuckles go white with exertion. “(Y/N)’s been missing for twelve hours now and we can’t find a single damn lead on where they could be. Do we need to wait more?”

“While I understand your concern for your friend, we cannot allow a monster to file a report in search for a human. We have no restrictions regarding how long you have to wait, but it can’t be done by a monster -- or any human affiliated with them, for that matter.”

“What if the monster’s their partner?” the fish lady persists, hand gesturing to the skeleton standing alongside her.

“It doesn’t change a thing,” the man replies, shaking his head. “They may be bending laws at will, but (Y/N)’s relationship with this ‘partner’ you mention is still a silly title with no actual weight or substance to it.”

Clenching his jaw, Sans lets out something between a scoff and laugh as he closes a hand into a fist, anger being let out through the force he places into tightening his hand that way. He closes off
the distance left to reach the officer's desk, placing a hand on the printed copies of the messages (Y/N) had received, as if to emphasize they were still there for the officer to look at.

"Those texts and pictures ain’t enough for ya, buddy?” Sans intercepts, tone gruff and cutting the chase. "’Cuz I can hand over more proof, if that’s what ya need.”

“You can gladly keep those to yourself, sir,” the man objects, a formal smile on his face. "We are fully aware of Jessie’s infamous background and have taken all the necessary precautions for dealing with them -- We can assure you they’re in good hands.” He takes a pause, taking the stack of copies in his hold as he looks through them. "Jessie's been on their best behaviour ever since they got sent back here again. While this does mark to be their personal phone number, their phone is missing from our possession, and we haven't had records of them escaping a third time, so it would be a stretch to mention they are in any sort of way associated with (Y/N) -- your. . . 'partner's' disappearance."

"Gonna need a whole lot more of those ‘good hands’ then, 'cuz I ain't seein’ any damn progress with keepin’ Jessie outta the picture -- (Y/N)'s gone through enough crap with 'em already to have another person fakin' to be their ex. If we can't file a damn MPR, then at least look for who's behind those messages."

"We will attempt to," he assures, smile widening at the sides. "But you may want to watch your language there, sir. You wouldn't want another crime marked on your records, would you?"

"Way to cover up the truth."

Fuming, the monster turns his back on the officer, huffs, and slumps down on one of the chairs of the office, casting his irises up at the fish lady staring with a wide eye at him.

He closes his eye sockets and tries to take in some air, though the pain in the center of his ribcage makes him unable to do so without shaking. It was hard for him to process how much more honest he was being with himself now. Were it an earlier time and a different scene, he would have feigned his calm instead of letting out his opposition the way he had just now.

"Ready when you are, Undyne."
Quick Thinking, Part One

"It feels like the more I work, the more I have to protect." – Aggretsuko, Season 2 | Episode 9

You find yourself between a rock and a hard place.

The pictures were no joke -- They truly did have four of your closest friends held captive by masked people, a fact you confirmed by calling both Solana and Sunny’s numbers, neither of the two who answered you, but rather two entirely unfamiliar voices taunting you over the little time you had left to make it to your hometown.

“Be at the cafe before eight o’clock. Each minute past that hour counts in the loss of one of your friends.”

With a shaky hand, you firm your grip on the phone and check the time: only thirty minutes until six in the morning. Were you to have your car, you would arrive early with enough time to spare and think about the risks of what you were about to do. That option grows null with the fact that you had to wait until six to mount the next bus.

“And don’t you dare think about telling Sam any of this. My buddies’l’ll track down where you’re at quickly enough with the witnesses we have. Each person you tell is another one you’re putting at risk.”

Your gaze drifts off towards Sans, eye sockets closed and hands splayed close to your side of the bed, the one thing to keep him from waking up being the pillow you placed beside him, covering up your absence with its lingering warmth and scent. He shifts once and then twice, stopping when you walk to his side and plant a kiss on his cheekbone. Holding back a frown, you form a smile at him, wanting to depart on a positive note. You move away from the bed afterwards and head to the bathroom, where you press the phone close to your ear again.

“Hello?” Jessie answers, staged innocence dripping off that single word. “Still there, honey? Don’t worry -- The guys just want to have a word with you. It’s nothing big! I told them all to let your friends go if you cooperated with them.”
With no other choice, you listen closely to Jessie’s instructions, saving up time by dressing up, combing your hair, and brushing your teeth while they kept on with their explanation -- adding in a sharp, pointed weapon you try to conceal as much as possible under the thick sole of your shoe, plus slipping the locket in your jeans’ back pocket for safekeeping. You choose to wear your uniform in spite of the situation, mind still hoping this wouldn’t turn out as badly as you thought.

“Good luck, (Y/N) -- Don't forget to be there before eight.”

The utter hypocrisy in Jessie’s voice is enough to drive out ire within you. Your hand squeezes the phone tightly, hold growing tighter until a crack makes you freeze and snap out of your anger. You look down at the device in your hand, screen cracked by your fingers pressing too harshly against it.

A tall, red-haired woman and two shorter though muscular men -- one blond and one brunet -- are waiting for you when you make it to the town's cafe. They act buddy-buddy when they spot you, keeping their profiles low by pretending you’re an old friend. The trio directs you to the table for four set farthest away from other people, false kindness falling from everyone’s tone, yet kept through the small smiles on their faces.

“What time is it, friend?” the woman asks, mocking tone heightened by the arm she places around your shoulders, pulling you close to her.

You keep quiet about having left your phone at the hotel, using the watch around your wrist as a replacement. “Seven forty-six,” you reply, showing her the time.

Nodding, the woman flashes a wolfish grin at you and moves on to face one of the two men. “Start calling those guys,” she instructs, grin falling from her face as she gives those orders. “We’ve got our target now.”

“Got it, chief,” the brunet replies, giving a firm nod of his towards her. Excusing himself, he pulls out a phone from his jeans’ pocket and moves away from the table, maintaining some feet of distance to have privacy for the call. You keep your ears alert, wanting to hear what the conversation would be about -- if he really was going to keep his part of the deal. “Hello?” he
speaks up again, the person on the other line having picked up. “Put your weapons down and start packing up. We’re gonna handle th-”

“Do you know why you’re here, sweetie?” Your attempt at listening in on his exchange is interrupted by the woman’s question. She’s smiling at you when you look back to her side, her body closing off the remaining distance she kept with you. “Why Jessie sent you here?”

“They hate me?”

“Oh the contrary,” she objects, shaking her head. “They still love you -- The old version of you. Jessie thinks they can make you go back to how you used to be, and we think so, too.”

“What’s wrong with current me?” you question, narrowing your eyebrows at her. “I like the life I have now -- the one with my son, my . . . boyfriend, and my friends. It would be better if Jessie understood I don’t want to be with them anymore.”

“But it’s not just about that, (Y/N). You’ve betrayed all of us by leaving your home for a city full of monsters -- joining the monsters side and-”

_Bang._

Angry, you act before you think, standing up from your seat and slamming your hand on the table. It’s soft enough not to bring the attention of the customers far away, but it’s just enough for the two men to scowl at you and for the woman to cover your slip up with a friendly facade.

“I’m not joining _any_ side,” you scoff, glaring at her. One glance at her expression makes you wipe that look off your face. “I- I’m only doing what I think’s right. The monsters deserve to be treated the same as us. They’re not that different from us -- Most of us can even be stronger than them, so I never understood what was the point of threatening or treating them like crap. The only ones we should’ve been mad about were the ones who did their harm, but not the ones just going about their damned lives!”

“Fetch me some drinks, won’t you, dear? I think (Y/N) here needs to cool off a little.” She directs her words at her company free from making the calls. The blond nods sharply and scurries off to the ordering counter, leaving you alone with her. “Listen, (Y/N),” she continues, focusing on you now. “I get what you’re saying here, but life ain’t that easy. You can’t expect kindness and justice to give back to you whenever you act nicely. When was the last time you felt at peace, anyway?
What have *those* people done for you?"

Her words make you think. You drift back to your first day at the city, already finding your first answer to her second question. “Plenty,” you reply, gaze firm and unshakable. “A school to study in, people to give me company, help for Faust when I couldn’t do that myself. . . Happiness -- *genuine* happiness. I still can’t see why they’re so different from us. They took me in with open arms, even though I wasn’t one of their kind.”

“You could’ve had more than that if you’d just kept doing your job and forgotten about the monsters.”

“It wouldn’t be the same -- I couldn’t. . . And I still can’t bear whenever they’re treated unfairly. Sans was sentenced to five years with a restraining order, just ’cuz he was doing his job as a tutor.”

The blond brings two drinks over the table, handing you one and the only other left to the woman keeping you company. Quiet falls over the table, both people waiting for you to accept their drink. The yellow lights hung to the ceiling make the glass cast a soft, lustrous shine. Ice cubes bob lazily in the liquid and a few droplets of water slide down to the surface of the table, the present sight a would-be tempting one weren’t you in a life-threatening situation.

“Drink up, sweetie,” the ginger cooes, pushing the drink closer to you. “I promise it’ll be good.”

You push the drink aside, defiance showing on your face. “I don’t drink,” you mention, white lie serving as your first attempt at rejecting her offer. “You can have it.”

“It’s just *one* drink,” she persists, pushing it back to you. “I’m sure it won’t hurt.”

“Thanks, but I’d rather not risk it.”

The brunet joins in on the gathering between you three, finally finished with the calls. He asks if there’s a problem, to which the woman responds to by shaking her head, while the blond hides a grin with the palm of his hand.

Patience falling from her expression, the woman’s smile falters and her posture tenses. She takes your drink in both her hands, looking down at its contents as she swirls it around a few times. She takes a sudden move, chugging down the drink and slamming the cup down on the table. You’re
not given much time to process what she does next, feeling her hands grab the back of your head as she pulls you towards her.

Suddenly, her lips are on yours, the liquid she had yet to swallow being passed out to you.

You choke and start coughing -- gasping for air, the attention it brings from one of the employees covering up the true motive behind your lack of oxygen.

“Oh dear! What’s wrong?” the worker asks, rushing to the scene.

“Th- They must be allergic to something in the drink!” the woman exclaims, feigning panic. We... We were doing just fine until now!”

“I’ll call an ambulance!” another employee intervenes, trembling voice almost matching with the woman’s, the only difference being the genuinity of his tone.

“Don’t worry, sir -- I’ll give them a ride!” one of the two men chime in, aiding the woman in her act. “It would be risky to wait so long.”

You can’t stay awake much longer after that, the harmful substance in the drink already weakening you to your core.
Little by little, you begin to open your eyes, dingy and unfamiliar surroundings forcing you to stay on guard. You lay on a mattress old and grungy with fungus stains, the rest of the room appearing normal were to you overlook the walls long faded of their colour and the questionable stains splattering the floor. The tiny dresser and worn night table hooked up with a working lamp makes it seem as if this were still a room frequented by someone, with the exception of the bed and the poor, if not nonexistent tidiness of the premises. Lack of windows or any ventilation of the sort, it’s hard for you not to feel nauseous when you’re forced to recycle old, stuffy air.

You stand up, wobbling twice when you set foot on the floor. It's unpleasantly cold when you touch it, bare feet making you feel every little, unwanted detail about the cleanliness of the room. The floor's coated with a sheet of dust thick enough to make your steps slippery and stray, yellow shards of glass warn you not to step on them. You stand in front of the dressers mirror, frowning when you see yourself sporting a black eye and a purple hue overtake the (s/t) shade of your neck. You had been stupid and rash this morning -- if it even was the same day -- choosing to confront Jessie's so-called friends head on. They had been waiting for you by a cafe, following the same instructions as those Jessie had given you of going there for the sake of keeping your close ones safe. Such a straightforward decision had let to you getting poisoned. You could tell that much by the soreness of your throat and the faint, purple colour that covered your neck. The black eye, though? You had no idea how it got there.

A loud, bursted laugh is the only thing you can manage doing when you realize what situation you got yourself in. Just a year ago, you used to train and work in the police force, for Heaven's sake -- You should have known better than to let yourself swallow that drink!

As an icy tear and another two leave your eyes, you laugh at yourself and scoff. "Jessie's right," you mutter, closing your eyes. "I was and still am a shit cop."

You don't restrain yourself when tears keep pouring down, these now warm with the rising temperature of your cheeks. The dressers the only support you have as you lean your body over it and bring your hands over your face. Your body hurts just as much as your forehead does, the bone-deep tiredness you felt since a few days ago almost unbearable to you now.

"Need another drink, (Y/N)? I wouldn’t mind giving it to you the same way she did."

Instinct over reason, you jolt away from the dresser, wipe your face free from tears, and look towards the voice, eyes coming across a tall, young man smiling down at you, an amused glint in his eyes. He doesn’t appear to be a year older than you despite his towering height, messy hair and casual clothing making him look like anything but a kidnapper. There’s a yellow parcel held under his right arm and a drink similar to the one the woman had forced you to swallow on his left hand.
Grinning, he winks at you, swirls the liquid around, and brings the cup closer to his lips, mocking you further by taking it down in three chugs.

"Can't believe it was that easy to capture you -- You're weaker than I thought."

Your eyes search for an immediate weapon, the sheer emptiness of the room making it hard for you to find one fast enough. You think about using the lamp as a sharp object to protect yourself with, though that would result in you breaking it and sending additional, tiny shards of glass around the room, endangering your bare feet. The only other option you have are your fists and feet.

“Stay away from me,” you warn, shifting into a fighting stance. “Wh- What did you do to me?”

“Nothing, nothing!” the man exclaims, his honeyed voice and gestures reminding you of Mettaton. “Why would I do anything to hurt you? You’re not my target.”

“Then who is?”

“Allow me to correct myself, (Y/N) -- You are the target, but I’m not the one who wants you here. I’m only following the doctor’s orders!”

He throws you the parcel, muttering a heads up for you to catch it. You do it just in time, the package landing on your open, outstretched arms. It’s not too heavy in weight, though it’s big enough for you to hold with both hands.

“Change into those clothes and meet me at the central room -- Just go straight and then take a left.” The man moves away from you and stops, turning back to you quickly. “Dare try anything and your brains’ll end splattered on the floor.” He points at the ceiling, where a camera is set, grin falling from his face. “We’ve got eyes all over the room. One wrong move and a bullet’ll be aimed right at you.”

Done speaking, he waves playfully and leaves the room, footsteps growing faint the more seconds you wait. You can’t find the will to change out of your clothes knowing there were cameras on you now, a shudder trailing up your spine when you think of how the watcher’s eyes could scan you. Beyond exhausted, you let your eyes close briefly and try to gain mental well-being. You force yourself to take the parcel and set it down on the dresser, hands patting it until you find a good place to open it from.
Rip.

Your entire self grows frigid when you make the first tear, eyes already spotting something too bizarre for your mind to comprehend. You keep tearing up the package bit by bit, thoughts going blank when you process the fact that you were supposed to wear this over your body.

The clothes shouldn’t even be called clothes.

The main piece is quite literally a large, transparent onion sack with stains of earth still stuck to it, accompanied with two paper-thin, plastic sandals that you were meant to wear as shoes. It’s impossible for you to wear it in a way that wouldn’t show your underwear. As if that weren’t enough, you’re given the option of a small-fitting, scratchy cloak to cover up part of your body, though it has profanities and insults written all over it, both front and back: from ‘two-faced cop’ and ‘adulterous traitor’ to ‘easy’, ‘sissy’, and more. You don’t know what’s worse of an option: strutting around in your bare underwear or letting the cloak take away the last bit of dignity you had left in you.

“Are you done yet, (Y/N)? We’re gonna be late to your commemoration!”

“Almost,” you shout, blatant lie urging you to gather what was necessary for you to begin dressing up. Breathing out, you close your eyes tight and begin taking off your work uniform, forcing yourself to look down at the floor to avoid making eye contact with the camera looming from above.

You want to call for help. . .

. . .But you’re unable to.

The only remote thing you had to protect yourself with had been taken away from you. The weapon you had hidden under your foot disappeared along with your shoes, leaving you with nothing else but your bare feet and hands to fight with. It’s right then that you remember you hid the locket in your work uniform’s back pocket. You hurry to find it, sore eyes stinging and vision blurring when you see it cracked, the picture vandalized by the word ‘freak’ carved with a knife.

At a loss for any other options, you try to stay determined. . .
...But you can't.

Falling on your knees, you cover your face with your hands and let out a groan muddled with frustration. Your chest heaves once and you find it difficult to keep your stance upright and unshaken.

Your tardiness drains the patience of the man waiting for you to get dressed, his rhythmic footsteps sounding closer with each passing minute as you feel his hand grab your arm, forcing you to stand up.

“Get a grip already,” he demands, words carrying the same amount of poison as the drink. “You’ll have enough time to wail when you’re locked up.”

Angry and tired, you can’t tolerate his words. You throw yourself at the man, yelling at him to ‘screw off’ as you land a punch right at his nose. The camera above zooms in on your opposition, shooting panic straight through your body when you see a subtle, red light start blinking close to the lenses. You close your eyes and wait for the shot, not knowing where it could possibly land on you.

Bang!
Laughter fills the room when you open your eyes, the long-awaited shot being aimed at your leg. Pain shoots through you when the adrenaline starts to settle down, eyes looking up at an older man grinning at you. He’s about twice as old as the other man, a smile defining the deep wrinkles on his face.

"Did you really think we'd kill you?" he asks, another laugh mocking you further. "Killing you would be an act of mercy -- You can die of blood loss later, but right now, we need you living. Everyone's waiting for you to show up in your cute little onion suit!"

He places his shoe against your back, the sole making you identify it as the hiking boot used to stop one of the people held hostage until your arrival. You try to get a good look at his face with the possibility of him being one of the masked people, though he prevents that by doing the same as he had done with the bear, pushing you down until your cheek presses against the floor.

“Tie ‘em up,” he demands, directing his words at the younger man still recovering from your punch at his nose. “It’s almost time.”

Refusing to stay still, you attempt to break free from his power over you, the pressure he puts resulting as too much for your weakened state. You aim a kick with your healthy leg despite those drawbacks, the pain that stings your wound slowing you down enough for him to dodge and for another bullet to be shot right at you -- this time at your upper arm. A muffled scream is your only relief from the pain surmounting your body, against giving both men the satisfaction of hearing your scream out loud.

They both partake in keeping you still this time around, the red-haired woman responsible for poisoning you making her appearance from a corner of the room as she takes on the job of tying you up. A shudder reaches your spine when she wraps her arms around your bare shoulders, snickers, and blows out hot air into your ear. Slowly, she pulls you against her chest as she then lets go and grabs both of your wrists with one hand, using the other to begin wrapping a strong, thick line of rope around them.

“First a kiss and now this, huh?” the younger man’s voice speaks up, teasing remark made stronger by a soft, belly-deep chuckle. “Looks like you guys are taking it fast. Think there’s room for me?”

You feel sick to the stomach when he comments that, the idea of doing anything intimate with either one of the two sending ripples of nausea and disgust in all forms.
“Let’s hope (Y/N) survives this,” she replies, returning his laugh. “It wouldn’t be fun if they’re dead.”

Too distracted by their exchange and weakened by blood loss, you don’t notice when the woman’s done tying you down. You’re pulled off the floor after that, the oldest of the three present laughing when he sees you stumble and fall back to the ground, the same boot pressing down on you again.

“Put this (lass/fella) to sleep -- We can’t lose ‘em yet.”

Those are the last words you can distinguish as he waits for the other two to take action, the final thing you can feel being a needle pierced close to the wound on your arm, boot keeping you from grasping a look at the substance being injected into your veins.

With bloodied bandages wrapped tightly around your injuries, health long-past depleted, and cameras observing you from all directions, your only choice is to comply to the younger man’s primal instructions of following him towards the central room, forced obedience rewarding you with a pair of painkillers and a lukewarm glass of water.

You’re sitting on a small, worn out couch, not too far from where you gave resistance. The older man is busy putting items inside a first aid kit while the woman leans back against a wall, eyes closed as her arms cross firm over her chest. The younger man waits for you to finish the glass, looking impatient as he then hands you over a pair of glucose tablets.

“Can’t have you fainting on me,” the man states, injured nose now covered with the same bandages as yours, a visual that reminded you of your first attempt at resisting his demands. “You’re gonna have to pay for my surgery bill if it doesn’t heal by itself.”

“Assuming I’ll be alive after this?” you ask, gaze furrowing when you look up at him.

“He doesn’t want you dead yet.”
“Who’s ‘he’?”

Grinning, he turns straight to you, grabbing your face with his hand. He cocks his head to the side and raises an eyebrow, a glare following after that. “Asking that many questions even after you punched my nose and all, huh? Can’t say I don’t like the way you’re thinking.”

You frown when he lets go of your face, perplexed by his words. “Why do you say that?”

He stays silent for a while, gaze subtly trailing off towards the woman resting her eyes and the man putting away the medical equipment. A hint of nervousness can be seen on his body language, feet shifting and posture stiffening.

“You wouldn’t believe how much I hate doing this -- having to deal with all the stuff thrown at me. This sorta dirty work isn’t something I looked forward to when I was a beginner, but I eventually grew used to it,” he replies, a laugh breaking out of his lips. “So that doesn’t mean I don't know where you’re coming from with this, y’know? We’re both humans in the end, (Y/N). . . different perspectives and all. I didn’t expect for one second you would obey me or any of us three, so I was ready for you to jump at us. I’m just doing my job, and you're doing yours -- Props to you for following up with what you believe in. You were given the opportunity to change your path in life, and it doesn’t look like you’re wasting it. Or at least, it didn’t.”

He doesn’t let you get a word in on his response when he’s done, almost immediately ordering you to stand up when you take the glucose tablets and chew them against your will, far from wanting to stay conscious for what you were about to face. Begrudgingly, you clench your jaw, breathe in, and follow him to the last corridor of the featureless building, finally arriving to what you assume is the central room he had told you about, an exit to nature presenting itself to your eyes. What stops you from admiring the bright morning sun and the birds flying past are the roars and cheers of people resonating from nearby.

“Time to face your judgement, (Y/N) (L/N).”

The odd words of the man fade away when he slides open the door, noise growing louder when he does so. Screams and unintelligible chants engulf your hearing, triggering a pounding headache that falls flat when the pain in your leg increases. You stare down at the few scraps you’re wearing, (one/two)-piece underwear being the only thing to keep your thin shred of decency intact. The man tugs harshly at you to follow him outside, nodding when you begin taking steps forward.
"Are you ready to see what happens when you're blinded by justice?" a voice asks, the strong, echoey note that's left behind with the words letting you know the person was using a microphone. "When you're stubborn enough not to care about losing your dignity? When you ditch your own kind's side and long-time spouse to join the other side?" The further the voice speaks, the more you're able to deduce them to be the mayor. "(Y/N) (L/N) thought it would be funny to deface and make me seem as a bad person, when I was only trying to help them. Surprisingly, (L/N) agreed to go through with their punishment, so let's hear it for them! Let your claps be heard as we welcome them to our stadium!"

"Get moving."

Speechless, you can only meet with the man's eyes as you stand frozen in place. You can't move regardless of the authority in his voice, mind completely clouded by the fact that you were meant to step out and face a crowd of people all while wearing an onion sack that exposed almost all of your body.

You want to call for help. . .

. . .But you can't.

Voice gone and leg far-too bruised for you to pull off another stunt, you're forced to take a step forward, head hurting more when the sound of clapping drowns out your hearing.

"Move!"

You try to stay determined. . .

Bittersweet memories over what you had and would still have were you to survive arrive in your mind, though the chants, whistles, and claps tune these out. You try again, reminders of how far you had gone in the past year flashing amongst all your panicked, dispersed thoughts. The clamour of an impatient audience increases, making the situation overtake your newfound pride over your achievements.

. . .But you can't.

As a camera zooms in on you, your mind can only think of waiting as you see the red light start
The last thing you expect to hear is a loud crash and the crumbling of cement, the hellish sound of metal screeching being sufficient for the gunshot's noise to muffle itself to an extent. You can feel the bullet graze your shoulder, slicing part of your skin as fresh, warm blood trickles down your arm. The next thing you can process is being pushed down by someone heavy, an orchestra of bullets sounding from all directions as one of them ricochets and grazes the same spot on your shoulder.

When your body grows limp, you're not sure if it's due to tiredness or blood loss -- or perhaps both. Blurry vision scans the area around you to see what's going on and who's covering you from the duel, yet you're only able to see dust and debris, a recognizable shape shining through it all.

Peering closer into it, you notice it's the same, four-pointed star you had seen at Mettaton's hotel. You try to gain the strength required for you to reach out for it, fingers grazing with the star. It shines brighter when you come in contact with it, warmth spreading throughout your hand.

It almost feels as if it's trying to heal you -- to reach out for you.

A bullet passing right past your cheek urges you to make a decision, arm and hand put in danger, these the only parts of your body unguarded by the person holding you down.

*Would you like to save your progress?*

You see the area surrounding the star glitch as two options show themselves before you, giving you the choice to either refuse or accept its offer.

**Choice #4**

What will you do next?

a.) Save.

b.) Don’t save.

c.) Attempt to grab the star.
d.) Pull your hand back.
You accept the star’s offer, the warmth it exuded slowly fading away as its shine begins to grow dim. It continues to do so until the star and its gradually fainting light vanish completely from your sight.

Now gone, you’re left with the person and their body holding you still, the dust and smoke caused by the destruction of your surroundings making it difficult for you to see who it is. You can only see as far as moving blurs of red, black, and blue, other colourful figures of varying shapes rushing this way and that as they dodge what you interpret to be bullets, kicks, and punches.

“Heads down!” a person shouts, voice sounding gruff and dry.

Blurry figures hunch down one after the other, a ‘boom’ making the walls shake as another person clad in pink and black emerges from the hole that’s made to the building, the bright morning sun shining over them. You’re lifted by the one holding you still once debris stops falling, a strong, light-headed feeling surging in you, panic and loss of blood becoming the main obstacles for you to keep your eyes open and see what was going on.

“Keep on walking!” a second voice exclaims, a roaring thunder to their voice. “We need to get out of here, now.”

You can feel the person’s arms tighten firmly around your body as you’re lifted off the ground, pain numbing your thoughts and leaving you no other choice but to let your mind wander and eventually shut down. The last thing you hear right as you pass out is the cacophony of people fighting, yelling, and running as they rush to leave the building. A lingering warmth in your fingertips from having touched the star is the last thing you feel as pain and exhaustion are replaced by you losing your consciousness.

Choice B
You reject the star’s offer, keeping your hand outstretched to continue feeling its warmth. Though it doesn’t seem threatening, you’re not sure what it could do if you were to accept its offer. You had heard very little about how the residual magic of your ancestors’ spell cast to keep monsters underground in turn enabled certain things to work differently than when on the Surface. It was rumoured the Underground provided second chances for those who were most determined, though you didn’t know what that implied when at the Surface. Up here, there hadn’t been one case even close to similar to Frisk’s, so choosing to save felt like a risky action to you.

*Bang.*

The gunshot noise snaps you out of your observation, the feeling of a bullet barely missing your arm encouraging you to stay back. You pull your hand away from the star, blurry vision seeing bright red contrast with the (s/t) shade of your skin as blood trickles all the way down.

Shouts and warnings for people to duck their heads fill the room as an explosion makes the building tremble. A hole is left on one of the walls when you look up again, the early morning sun shining on a blurry figure dressed in pink and black.

You take cover as so does the person standing with you, waiting until chunks of concrete and zinc stop falling and flying off the explosion. You’re lifted from the ground with no warning whatsoever, the sudden lurch making your muddled vision and faint consciousness falter further in their strength. Blood loss makes it almost impossible for you to stay awake for longer than a few more seconds, the cries for people to start evacuating the building being the last thing you hear as you allow yourself to pass out.

Choice C

Rather than rejecting or accepting the star’s offer, you choose to reach out for it, the warmth it projected a soft, comforting one. It grows stronger when your hand makes full contact with the star, palm resting against it. A faint, yellow aura begins to emerge from it, gradually growing stronger until it covers up just enough field for you to be covered in its light, warmth intensifying as energy returns to your body by a small degree -- just enough to keep your eyes open and hear a loud ‘boom’ from nearby, walls shaking as a hole is made into one of them. The blurry image of the person holding you down is covered by the same aura as you are, protecting the both of you from
chunks of debris that fly off with the explosion while others resort to ducking their heads.

When it’s over, the light vanishes, the person holding you back wrapping their arms tightly around you as they make you stand up, dizziness overcoming your body with the sudden pull.

“Go, go, go!” a voice demands, urging everyone to leave the building. “Let's keep moving!”

Too overcome by blood loss and pain, you can only hang on tight to the person’s back, closing your eyes shut as you start drifting off to sleep. Voices continue shouting as you’re held strong and rushed out of the building, a final gunshot coming from behind you. You can feel it graze your ear, though you don’t feel either pain rise or blood gush, a grand difference from the leg and arm injuries still begging for medical attention.

The last thing you hear is of people cheering ‘we lost them’, voices panting with the effort the run had taken them. Feeling safer, you breathe a shaky sigh and let your exhaustion take over completely.

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**Choice D**

You pull your hand back, not quite trusting what saving could do. While you had heard about the aftermaths your ancestors’ magic left on the Underground, you weren’t sure if it would have the same effects when being on the Surface. Based on what you studied after monsters were set free, second chances were given to those who were most determined, though -- as far as you knew -- that only applied to those who fell into the Underground. You choose not to save just yet, wanting to gather more knowledge on the subject before diving head-first into it. Instead, you watch as the star fades away, leaving a lingering warmth behind.

An explosion breaks your attention away from your thoughts, making you look towards the noise to see a hole carved in the wall, sun shining over a blurry figure clad in pink and black. You take cover by ducking as cement flies from all directions, the people surrounding the building having stopped in their fight to do the same.

Not a moment after the coast is clear, the person holding you down stands up and carries you with
them, grabbing onto you tightly as they begin to run and evacuate the room, allies escaping the enemy’s grasp and following after you and them.

Dizzied by pain and blood loss, you try to blink a few times in a vain attempt at keeping your strength, wanting to see where you would be taken to. You don’t last for much longer than a few seconds, though -- the last thing you see being the greenery of the outdoors and the sound of people cheering when they make it out of the building. You let your weariness overtake your body when you’re placed down, closing your eyes when the sun shines over you.
Weren't there a strong, aching pain surrounding your arm and leg, you would've brushed off recent events as nightmares, familiar premises making your body relax as you take in the room. The scent of cinnamon permeates in the air and the yellow bed sheets feel and smell fresh out of the dryer. There's a slice of pie and a glass of water set next to painkillers, bandages, and gauzes of all brands. Curious, you lift the sheets and stare down at the clothes you're wearing, the bright purple that meets your eye almost welcoming you back to life. The white logo in the center looks similar to the clothes you had seen on Toriel outside of work, and it's only when you shift your legs that you notice it's a dress -- or a tunic, given the overall, unisex appeal of the clothing. It didn't hug your body or show off anything beyond your hands and neck, the goat lady's preferred style letting itself known.

You try to stand up from the bed, gathering all the strength you possibly could. A constrained wince leaves your mouth when you turn your leg to a position opposite to the stitches that were made, warning you to be careful in your steps. Slow and steady, you make it to the door frame, where you start to hear voices talking amongst themselves -- not like the chants, whistles, and shouts, but warmer ones discussing indecipherable topics with each other.

"They're gonna send us straight back to the Underground after this," Undyne's voice groans, the sound of her fist hitting something solid following with her words. "This freaking sucks! I . . . I'm so damn mad I could just-"

"Undyne, c- calm down!" Alphys's voice chimes in, stopping her girlfriend for whatever inanimate object she was about to punch next.

"(Y/N)'s hurt! I was supposed to be their friend, but I let them get hurt."

"Nobody knew this would happen," an unfamiliar voice comments, empathy in their voice. "Don't blame yourself, Undyne! It's those jerks who should feel bad about what they did!"

"They try to do that again and I'll file a lawsuit against 'em," a low voice speaks, the sheer determination in his voice taking you some time to classify it as Sans's. "That shi- uh, crap they pulled on (Y/N) and aluva us can't and shouldn't be justified. I'm sick and tired of 'em actin' all high and mighty when they straight up kidnapped and forced (Y/N) to wear an onion sack stark naked. I'm glad the hospital over there didn't want nothin' to do with us, 'cuz I want nothin' to do with that town either."

"Woah," Undyne's voice speaks, bafflement in her tone.
"What?" Sans asks, tone coming off guarded the second time he speaks.

"You do care!" the fish woman exclaims, a loud cackle hearing itself all across the house. "You always say you don't, or that you're too lazy to -- or that you've given up. . . But now look at you!"

"Undyne, I swear now's not the time-"

"I'm proud of you, brother!"

You figure Papyrus has ambushed his brother by the commotion that rises in the room. You stay back, still wanting to hear more.

"Thanks, Paps. But can you please let go n-"

"Group hug!" the unfamiliar voice speaks up again, the excitement in their tone rising.

You don't realize you're smiling until you feel your cheeks sting. Warmth conquering your chest, you decide to step out of the room, more than eager to meet everyone at what you assumed was Toriel's living room.

The wounds slow you down as you start going down the stairs, bare feet stepping with a little more caution than necessary at the thought you could still be in danger. It was silly for you to think that, sure -- but you weren't taking any risks. What happened not-so long ago had been enough, though you were aware it was naive of you to expect peace after all that. You had to be alert, regardless of how smoothly things went. The night you had spent with Sans was enough proof you couldn't allow yourself to be too careful.

"(Y/N)!

Various voices call out your name, the first one to greet you being Undyne, who runs up to you for a hug. She loosens up her grip the second she remembers the state you were in, letting go after patting your back twice.
"Had a good sleep?" she asks, sharp teeth turned to a bright, approachable grin. "Toriel gave you those clothes 'cuz it was the fastest thing we could come up with -- Mettaton's coming over later to bring all your stuff here." A glint of concern flashes in her eye as she places a hand on your healthy shoulder, gaze furrowing at you. "Hurt anywhere? I'm not good with first aid, but Sans can help you with that while Toriel's back."

"I'm okay," you assure her, smiling. "I just. . . have a lot of questions."

"You can shoot 'em at us later," Sans answers, appearing next to Undyne. "But you’ve been asleep for a day now, so you gotta eat somethin' first."

“So it’s. . . It’s Sunday now?”

“M- Monday, actually,” Alphys contributes, standing next to a short monster appearing to be the same type as her: a lizard -- with the exception they had no arms and seemed younger in age. “It took almost. . . twenty-four hours t- to track down where they took you. Undyne and Sans went to file an MPR, b- but they. . . The police station wouldn’t listen.”

The conversation ends when the smell of pasta reaches your nose. You look away from Alphys to see Papyrus standing next to the entrance separating the living room from the kitchen, holding a steaming pot in his gloved hands. “Let us sit by the table, (Y/N)!” he exclaims, beaming. “I tried out the latest recipe you sent me!” You watch him walk all the way to the table while the unknown monster disappears into the kitchen, returning with paper plates balanced over their snout not long after. “Put those there, MK.” Papyrus directs his words at the younger monster now, instructing them to set the papers down and go look for the rest of the items.

Undyne hurries off to help MK in their assignment while Alphys’s eyes detour towards Papyrus setting the table. She performs the same expression as she did the time Sans asked if he could talk in private with you and leaves you be with him afterwards.

You don’t know what to say when you’re left alone with him, the many questions you had about what happened and how were you saved having to be pushed back for the moment being.

“I’m glad you’re alive.” As if having heard something surreal, your head turns to him, eyes searching for his expression. You see his white irises cast down at the floor, eye sockets half-lidded as he stuffs his hands in his pockets, shoulders tense as he takes in some air. “When Faust came to me Friday mornin’. . . I felt this bad feelin’ crawl over my shoulder bones, and it wouldn’t leave me alone ‘till Undyne and I took action by ourselves. Those people in the town you were born in wanted nothin’ to do with ya. They didn’t even bother investigatin’ over your
disappearance, and when we found you. . . The hospital refused to take you in. That’s when Tori decided to take you here and do it by herself. I dunno how she did it, but seeing you still here’s what really matters to me right now.”

You grow alert when he takes a hand out of his pants’ pocket and rummages in his jacket’s pocket instead.

“I got the locket fixed while you were sleepin’.”

He places another small, black box in your outstretched hand, phalanges lingering over your palm a little longer than necessary. You don’t pull back though, and smile at him instead.

“Thank you.”

His irises cast down at the floor again, only rising up when Papyrus calls for you to join the table. You look away from the shorter skeleton and see everyone seated at the table, plates of ravioli in front of each person along with paper cups placed beside them. MK and Undyne are chatting between themselves while Papyrus argues over the quality of store-bought ramen with Alphys.

“Are Frisk and Faust at school?” you ask, the thought crossing your mind.

“Nah -- They’re both with Tori lookin’ for dessert. School’s been cancelled for the next three days ‘cuz of the protests happenin’ between the city and the town,” Sans replies, snickering. “You wouldn’t believe how hyped everyone was when we had a local doc come over and say you were healin’ up just fine. She didn’t believe us for one second when we told her we’d been healin’ you on our own.”

You sit down across from him, Alphys seated next to you. The scent of ravioli -- broccoli and cheese, based on the aroma -- becoming too much for your hunger to bear. Your stomach growls, earning a snort from both Alphys and MK when Sans comments on how it sounds.

“Can’t bear the hunger anymore, huh?”

“Bearly. Feels like my guts are having a drunken fist fight.”
With him sitting across from you, Alphys next to you, plus the rest of the group surrounding the table, you start to feel better. You take the first bite of ravioli, the savoury taste making your mouth water and empty stomach yearn for more. The taller skeleton smiles at you enjoying the meal, his improvement in cooking only made better by your hunger. You compliment his new dish halfway through with your plate, causing his gaze and smile to brighten in numbers as he stands up from the table, rushing to your side.

Before you know it, you’re pulled out of your seat, feet dangling in the air as he brings you into a hug.

“We’re glad to have you here, (Y/N)!”

The door to the living room opens as you’re set back on firm ground. Papyrus beams at you one final time before he sits back on his chair, stopping altogether when he notices Toriel, Frisk, and Faust emerging into the home. Ecstatic, he runs off to aid them with the bags they’re carrying, the quantity all three carried with them making you fret over how much had they exactly planned to buy for the gathering.

Just as the door’s about to close, in comes the spider lady your boss was rivals with. She struts in with four boxes from her shop in each of her hands, leaving one free to wave at you and the other to close the door with.

“An itsy spider told me one of my rivals has fallen!” Muffet greets, shutting the door behind her. “. . .And it also told me of a big, mean, butt-faced jerk who kidnapped you for ransom! Tell me everything, dearie -- Rivals or not, I’m here to listen!”

“I’m also here, sweetheart!” Mettaton’s voice exclaims, pink boot bursting the door open. “Spill it, (Y/N) -- We’ve got an asshole to chase after.”

“Mettaton!” Toriel scolds, earning giggles from both Frisk and Faust.
The muffled sounds of the saxophone, piano, and violin all meld together to form a tune fitting to the light drizzle falling from the sky. A dinner made robust by the treats Muffet had brought from her bakery plus the additional appetizers Mettaton had taken from one of his caterers ends with everyone either too full or drowsy to move. The few that do leave are the ones that have other matters to tend to, the robot being the first to go, second being Alphys, having to leave her girlfriend behind to begin her investigation over what you had been submitted to and who were the people behind it.

You’re left with Toriel, Undyne, Papyrus, Frisk, and MK -- Monster Kid, as they introduced themselves -- at the living room, all gathered by the pair of loveseats to discuss what had happened in the past few days, hoping to get your memory running to deduce who had been the person to blackmail you. Toriel, Frisk, and MK sit next to you while Undyne and Papyrus take the smaller couch. Faust and Sans are away at the guest bedroom, busy searching for what was needed to treat one of the wounds that reopened with you standing up from the dining chair. Muffet, on the other hand, is the only one standing in front of you, one knee knelt on the floor. She’s occupied vexing over the state of your injury, two of her six hands carefully holding onto your leg as she narrows all five eyes in scrutiny.

“Who did this to you, (Y/N)?” she asks, annoyance pricking at her tone. “I may be stubborn with my own interests, but this is going too far! Whoever did this should be bitten by all of my spiders.”

You stay quiet for a while, taken aback by the concern she seemed to be showing over you. She had been your boss’s rival ever since she opened for business, unrelenting when it came to the topic of how many customers and money she was being robbed of. To see her that concentrated over the poor state of one of your injuries was a little more than surprising to you.

“The only person allowed to take down my rivals is me and myself only,” the spider lady speaks up again, as if growing aware of your confused state. “What am I supposed to do if someone else does it for me?”

A smile spreads on your face when you see her do the same. She lets go of your leg, standing up from her crouching position when you both spot Faust and Sans going down the stairs. A little too suddenly, the soft, jazzy tune of the film changes for a blaring gun fight, the sound shooting panic into your thoughts as you flinch, looking around with startled eyes until you make contact with the scene playing on television. Everyone else seems just as tense, though one person in particular seems the most caught aback. Undyne’s eye is wide as she clutches onto the sofa she’s sitting under, teeth grit as she forces herself to snap out of it.

“L- Let us change the channel, shall we?” Toriel chimes in, conscious of the mood that overtakes
the room. She does as suggested, old action film being changed for the evening news.

The tension stays, being broken only when Sans steps in the middle of it, the sight of him kneeling in front of you making you snap out of your panic. Faust joins in by standing behind him, curious gaze paying attention to the wound.

“Gonna have to take ya tomorrow for some stitches if it keeps openin’ up,” he states, hands reaching out for your lower leg. He inspects the open injury closely, from the fresh blood trailing down your skin to the swollen area surrounding the gunshot. “The doc I told you about agreed to it, but she says it has to be real secretive. There’s been lotsa journalists and news anchors tryna get the scoop on what happened back there, so they all flock together when they hear someone’s even remotely close to you.”

“I have a bad feeling about all this,” Undyne comments, sighing as a frown tugs her mouth downwards. “School’s out for a few days now that things’ve tensed up. Can’t go walking for more than two blocks without coming across a protest or people asking how we know you.”

“We should keep listening to the news!” Papyrus suggests, offering the fish lady some support by patting her back twice.

Sans nods at the latest commentary, usual expression carrying a trace of solemnity to it. “As bad as they make us feel, Paps’s right. I don’t like how tense things are gettin’.”

You hold back a shudder when Sans’s fingers brush with your leg a little too softly, a reaction he acknowledges with a snicker right as he douses your wound in alcohol. Wanting to be the bigger person, you hold back the urge to get back at him and instead hiss at the pain, glaring at him as a response for not giving you a heads up.

“What about the culprit behind this stuff?” MK asks, joining Papyrus in giving Undyne support by leaving your side and choosing to sit in between the two. “Didn’t you guys say it was—”

“The mayor, yeah,” Undyne intervenes, frown growing more severe as his name leaves her mouth. “But we don’t have any good proof of it. Or, well, we do -- But it’s gonna be hard for anyone to believe us.”

“What about asking (Y/N) about what they remember?” Toriel adds, a hopeful smile on her face. “Were you also aware it was the mayor, (Y/N)’?”
Your attention moves away from Sans when you’re asked that question, still wary he could catch you off guard by tickling you again. “Yeah, I... I heard him speaking on a microphone about how he was gonna humiliate me for humiliating him.”

You feel Sans’s hands tighten on your skin, looking down to see his ever present smile tense with what you could label as anger spiked with annoyance. “Guys gotta grow some, then. I dunno what happened between you guys, but kidnapping you and tryna show you off to everyone in that condition’s no way to go about him being pissy over somethin’. He should be the one wearin’ that onion sack.”

The monster freezes when you place a hand over his, the grin on your face unable to be wiped off at the still rare sight of a seemingly calm and laid-back person getting worked up over what had been done to you. He leans into your touch and closes his eye sockets, breathing deeply right as he opens them again, stiff and troubled expression returning to a relaxed state when you pull away.

“I wish I could’ve filmed that,” Frisk signs, a playful smile showing on their face. “I know it’s too soon, but... It would’ve been good for blackmail.”

"Frisk!” Toriel scolds, using the same tone as she did with Mettaton.

Faust and Frisk exchange looks from where they’re standing, the former letting a grin light up his face as he takes out a flip phone from his pocket, waving it at them victoriously. Instinctively, you think of standing to tend to the situation, yet stay back when you remember your condition.

“Better watch what you’re doing there, kid.”

To your surprise, Sans is the one to call Faust out on having filmed him and you, the way Faust’s body freezes obliging you to hold back a smile. He pauses on his work with your injury, taking a moment to warn the child over the likelihood of having the phone taken away were he to play the video.

The lighthearted banter’s cut short when you feel a sharp and too-sudden sting on your leg, glancing back down towards Sans to see him staring at the open wound, a more concerning red colouring the skin surrounding it. You don’t think twice when you pull your leg back, deciding to speak your mind.
“I... I’ll speak with my doctor about this. This shouldn’t be your responsibility.”

“But I want it to be,” he disagrees, shaking his head. “Your referee doctor straight up refused to help you, and I ain’t about to beg him for it. He didn’t bat an eye when you were bleedin’ out in the waiting room -- Hell, he didn’t even bother comin’ out of his office to see you.”

“I can drive (Y/N) to that other doc,” Undyne intervenes, easing out the tension between you. “Best to get those stitches done before she decides you’re not her patient anymore.”

“What about Alphys?” MK asks, those three words being sufficient for the same tension to fall over everyone again. “Didn’t she used to work with that kind of stuff? She did all kinds of experiments underground!”

“And that’s exactly why she’s not allowed to anymore.”

Undyne seems just about ready to protest against Sans’s response, though she frowns instead, crossing her arms stiff as she faces the floor. “He’s right. What Alphys did... It caused a lotta damage to a bunch of families, so she’s not allowed to work in the medical field anymore.” Troubled, the fish lady stands up from the couch and walks to your side, inspecting your leg and watching as the skeleton tries to keep it from tearing up more. “Want me to take you there now? I don’t start work ‘till a few more hours.”

“We can take you there, (Y/N).” Sans speaks up right as he finishes patching the wound, standing from his kneeling position afterwards. He gives your shoulder a careful pat, avoiding your wounds. His grip is firm, however, urging you to accept the woman’s offer. “We’re in this together now.”

Overwhelmed, you attempt to keep your cool by letting air reach your lungs, pain piercing your leg when you stand up from the couch. Being the closest person sitting next to you, Toriel does the same, offering you support to stay standing by holding onto your arm with both of hers.

You have too many questions for your mind to give much thought to anything else besides the pain and how had these group of monsters managed to take you back. The itching want of knowing who had been the one to carry you out and who had been responsible for blasting a hole through the building were still present, not to mention the reminder that the mayor had it out for you, and that danger was waiting for not only you, but for everyone close to you as well. You can’t keep a straight face when you remember the haunting pictures Jessie had sent you, their messages hitting all your bad spots and numbing the good ones.
“(Y/N), stay with us. Please refrain from closing your eyes.”

Toriel’s stronger tone brings you back to the reality of the situation. Everyone’s eyes are glued to you, most with concern and some with confusion, the silence making it worse for you.

“You’re right,” you speak up, finally stringing some words together again. “Let’s go -- I’m . . . I’m ready when you guys are.”

None of the faces present look convinced with your words, the gravity of the wound’s state responsible for forcing everyone into sending you off to treat it with a professional in that field.
Three-Sided Coin, Part Three

In comparison to the busy background of a hospital, you’re welcomed by a calm, empty neighbourhood with the exception of a few cats and dogs sniffing around the trash cans and a few onlookers peeking from their front porches. You advise the two monsters accompanying you to stay in the car and leave once you made sure you arrived at the right address. With the worsening state of your leg difficulting your decision, you try to gather strength, forcing yourself to stand up.

“I’ll go with ya, (Y/N),” Sans intervenes, speaking up when he sees you fail in that attempt. He has his back on Undyne now, irises staring at you sitting by the backseat, unable to hold onto anything besides the headrest of the seat next to you to keep yourself up. The wound had only gotten worse in the time it took Undyne to drive you here, remedial medicines growing useless with each new dose. “Undyne can stay watching in case somethin’ happens.”

You frown and chew on your lip, eyes peering outside to see two more people staring at the unmovign car, confused looks on their faces. With how little cars and people there were around, it was hard for Papyrus’s bright red convertible to go unnoticed -- even harder with Undyne’s same coloured hair, eye-patch and bright blue skin, the blatant difference between her and Sans the one factor to top it all off.

“Are you sure?” you ask, growing concerns preventing you from agreeing.

“It ain’t like these windows’re doing much to keep us undercover. We'd need tinted ones to keep those guys from starin' at us.”

Undyne moves away from the wheel when setting the vehicle on parking, turning her gaze at the back seat to face you. “Go with him, (Y/N). You’re in no state to be walking on your own ‘till you get those stitches done with.”

Reluctantly, you accept, allowing Sans to step out of the car and help you out of your seat. You struggle a few times before you can find the right position to shift your leg into, Sans’s arm hung around your shoulders for support.

A faint, blue hue surrounds your body -- mainly shoulders and leg -- when you get down and begin your trek towards the doctor’s home. Your attention quickly centers on Sans, who has his gaze cast down at the floor, preventing you from seeing his full face and stare at the rightmost side of his jaw and cheekbones instead.
“Are you the one doing this?”

You can hear him breathe in before he gives an answer, a soft tremble heard from his voice.
“Yeah.”

You arrive not too long after he gives you that one-word reply, whatever magic he was using on you making it easier for you to move your injured leg. It felt as if your body was floating, needing little to none of your effort for it to respond to the steps you wanted to take. Sans's visage is still facing the floor when he makes it to the door, only looking up when the blue vanishes completely from your skin, traces of his magic lasting in the form of warmth.

“Thank you,” you speak, smiling when you see his own expression soften up. “I’ll take it from here. It’s safer for you guys to leave while I’m done with this.”

“You sure?”

“I’m sure.”

Hesitance flickers in Sans’s eye sockets when you say that, irises faltering in their light as his shoulders grow tense. He leans in, placing a kiss on your lips and staying there for a few seconds. You don’t break away, the awkward yet comforting feeling of his teeth providing you with a sense of peace, fleeting moment extended for just a few more seconds when you kiss him back, yours more of a peck than an actual kiss.

“Take care, Sans.”

“Same to you, pal.”

You watch him turn around and walk away until you see him reach the parked car, waiting until he gets on to look away and knock on the doctor’s door, the strong scent of vanilla emerging from the half-open windows of her home. The doctor he and Undyne described to you pops out of the door after a full minute of waiting, eyes taking in her appearance: from the soft look of her tanned skin to her brown, wavy hair tied up into a bun, eyeglasses hung over the bridge of her nose. She opens the door wider, sweet scents growing more prominent when she helps you walk into her home.

“Make yourself at home, (Y/N)! I have everything set up already, so I was getting some cooking
out of the way while you came.”

With her friendly and welcoming nature, it’s hard for you not to compare her to Solana, the most striking differences besides physical appearance being her accent, this one sounding Hawaiian rather than Cuban.

It’s late in the night when you make it out of your treatment, wound kept together by a tight set of stitches and pain temporarily numbed by over-the-counter medicine and anesthesia. The doctor steps out seconds after you do, a few papers in one hand and a paper bag in the other. Her gaze is shifty as she looks around, relief letting her chest fall as she approaches you, handing the bag to you.

“Again, I apologize for how informal this has been. It’s almost near impossible for people to see you without wanting to put their nose in on what’s happening,” she states, tone firm despite the exhaustion tracing her voice. She retreats her hand back once the bag is in your hold, prescriptions still kept safe in her other hand. “You don’t plan on taking public transport anymore, right? It’s dangerous for you to be taking those risks.”

“No, ma’am,” you reply, smiling. “My car should be done getting fixed soon.”

“Who’s picking you up, then? I can’t see your friend’s car from here.”

You look towards where she’s staring at, noticing the red convertible Undyne borrowed from Papyrus was nowhere near the neighbourhood. Only endless rows of identical houses painted in pastel colours are as far as your eyes can see, the empty streets showing no signs of her familiar red hair or the dark blue of Sans’s jacket. You start to worry when you check your phone and see no messages from either one of them, the quiet of your surroundings worsening the ‘what if’s in your mind. The three of you had gone as far as to have your stitches made far away from the hospital to avoid unwanted attention, though that still didn’t erase the fact others could still see when a tall and built fish woman and a shorter skeleton drove you to the doctor’s home.

“Care to come back in to call them? I can wait.”
Anxious, you stare down at your phone, debating whether it would be good to give either one of them a call. You give a slow, reluctant nod as you step back into her home, the now fainter scent of vanilla reaching your nose again. She waits for you by the living room while you stay behind near the door, phoning Undyne until it reaches three rings and texting Sans next.

She offers you a seat when you leave the door and make it to her living room, a kinder smile replacing her professional look with patience and amiability. Her eyes stare at the locket dangling on your phone as she waits for you to sit down, gaze carrying the same spark of interest as she did the first time she saw you.

“S’that a gift from your partner?” she asks, small smile growing wider at the sides. She leans her head on the palm of her hand, her work uniform being the final, thin sheet of professionalism to stay on her when she lays back on the couch, chin kept up to face you. Her attempt at striking conversation with you while you wait for a text or call back is just enough to shake you out of your worries for the next few minutes. “How’s your relationship going with him?”

“Oh! Well... He bought it for me after I won Faust’s custody,” you speak up, a hint of excitement slipping from your tone. You scratch your throat once at that and hold back your smile, sheepishness taking over when you remember the last time you had been that excited over a relationship. Jessie had been your first, breaking up for only a year and a half, and getting back together after the both of you tried seeing other people, the relationship lasting three months for you -- a month for them. Sans was your third, the abrupt reminder that he hadn’t experienced anything remotely similar besides the bunny monster crushing on him causing for an awkward feeling to remain in your chest, worry sprouting for a split second, and withering back down when you remember the doctor was waiting for your answer. “We haven’t really had time to think about it, but... I like what we have now. It’s a lot different than when we were apart and talked through face call.”

“So I’m guessing you plan to take it serious from here? It’s gotta be risky dating if it’s what got your ex that pissed off in the first place.”

“I guess I do?” Your next response comes off as a question more than the former, doubt still rising regardless of your attempt at staying firm in your thoughts. “But I... I don’t know about him yet -- I mean, he did say he liked me back, and that he wants to be with me even after all this mess. But I guess it’s kinda awkward to think about since it looks like I’m his first.”

“You mean he’s never dated anyone before?”

“Yeah. He did almost have a thing with a bunny monster he’s friends with, but he rejected them in the end.”
The doctor hums at your words, standing up straight on the couch and propping one leg over the other, the sound of the cloth’s friction and the couch’s creaking the only sounds to fill the room. “So you’re worried he might not be your last -- Is that it? ‘Cuz I’m pretty sure anyone with common sense would’ve bailed off on a relationship like yours if they weren’t up to it, knowing all the trouble it would’ve brought. Hell, he got a restraining order just for being friends with you!”

“Okay, so maybe that’s a stupid thought,” you reason, a chuckle leaving your mouth. “I’m just more worried he’ll regret it later -- like this might not be for him, y’know? Or. . . Or that he’ll find someone else, and that I’d be forced to stay single for the rest of my life.”

“You’re exaggerating, (Y/N).”

“But who would wanna date someone who’s been divorced, has a kid, and a bunch of lawsuits to work with? I was almost made a joke by the mayor of my town, and almost every newspaper has my face in it!”

“So now you’re saying you’re dating him ‘cuz you’ve got no other choice?”

“Th- That’s not it either. I just. . . doubt this’ll last long -- what we have, at least. Maybe things’ll get better, but at what cost? After everyone’s near giving up and after our image’s completely destroyed?”

You can’t stop words from pouring out of your mouth. You’re pretty sure you’re tearing up and that your voice is close to breaking at this point, but you don’t have the strength to stop. What makes you feel the slightest bit better’s when the doctor stands up from the other couch, joining you in the one you’re sitting on.

Carefully, she wraps an arm around your shoulders, pulling you close to her in the form of a side hug. “Tell me, (Y/N). . . Do you want to be with him -- with them? I’m not saying you should hang out with only monsters, but if they’re there for you, why not accept it if that’s what you’re wishing for? The goat woman who healed you’s pretty much taking you into her home, the fish lady who drove you hear seems pretty worried about you, and your partner seems to care about you. If you want to go through it, then do it. But if you can’t -- if you don’t have the strength to -- then don’t. I’m pretty sure it’s not a crime to admit when you can’t handle something. And even that doesn’t mean you should try to be someone you’re not, or try to do things beyond your reach. If you feel weak, then say it, (Y/N). Bottling things up only hurts everyone in the end.”
A muffled though honest laugh leaves your mouth when she says that. You pull away from her and scoot to the side, allowing her more space to sit down.

“What’s up?”

“Nothing,” you dismiss, shaking your head softly right as another laugh bursts in between. “It’s just... You’re supposed to be a doctor, not a therapist. I’m sorry for acting like that in front of you.”

“Oh, honey,” she counters, shaking her head and returning your laugh. “You’re human -- It’s only natural for you to want to break down crying every once in a while. But try to deal with this on a regular basis, alright? It’s not healthy for you to keep all those thoughts to yourself. If Faust was suggested some counseling, you should do the same, (Y/N). And maybe your boyfriend, too.”

Her last sentence makes you think back on your day at the beach with Sans and on the day you had your first argument. Though he was still the same, laid-back skeleton you knew since the first day of Faust’s math tutoring, you were noticing minor changes in his conduct. He appeared more hopeful now, yet he also looked more on edge, expressing his distress more through words rather than keeping quiet about it. The way he had gotten all worked up with the officer throwing you both out of the beach, and how bleak and tired he looked when saying how hard it was trying to adjust to the restraining order -- along with how much he wanted to see you in person again -- were all quirks you found he had once kept to himself until recently.

“Would it be good to bring that up with him?”

“Of course! What better way is there to help each other grow? You might not be responsible for anyone’s happiness, but you can always try to give the person a hand or a push to get by.”

The conversation ends not too long after that, how overwhelming it had become not making you notice Sans had texted back while you talked with the doctor. In a haste product of your rising nerves, you swipe the phone off your lap and read his message.

hey.

sol and i’r gonna pick you up soon. undyne hadda go to work, but she says she’s gonna make it up to ya later.
Another message pops in right as you’re reading the second one, sending a smile to your face almost instantly.

we’re havin’ dinner at grillb’s right now. want me to get ya somethin’ to eat?
Third Person POV

Sans’s Perspective

Solana has a plan, and Sans knows it.

Why else would she invite a fourth person into the car right after finishing dinner at Grillby’s? Better yet, why would she even pull Grillby with her and leave his business in the hands of his two other workers just for him to sit next to her and leave Sans with (Y/N) at the backseat, going as far as turning on the radio for additional privacy?

While he knew he needed to talk with his (girlfriend/boyfriend) about what they went through and ask if they needed help to cope with it, he had been avoiding the topic in fear of failure. He decides to take a first shot though, remembering the earlier days when he used to work at the Judgement Hall and the speeches he gave to those who went there.

“(Y/N), uh. . . Do you-“

He’s cut off by them hooking their hands around his arm, pressing themselves closer to him. As if that wasn’t enough to make his soul jump, (Y/N) presses a kiss on his teeth and mutters a thank you close to his ear cavity.

“For what?” he asks, the warmth of their actions still lingering on his teeth.

“For lots of things,” they reply, a laugh leaving their lips.
He grows silent for a moment, trying and failing to stay resolved with his prior plans of having a serious talk with them. “(Y/N)?”

They nudge even closer to him -- close enough for him to feel the strong vibrations of their soul. “Yeah?”

“Do ya wanna talk about what happened over there?”

The smile on the human’s face falls out, hands clenching tight onto his arm as their fingers dig deep into the hardness of his bones. They don’t reply verbally, using their head to nod instead. “How did you guys know I was there?”

“I meant about how you feel, (Y/N),” Sans persists, sensing a change of subject. “Did those guys try anything with you?”

“N- No,” (Y/N) stutters, managing another smile as their hold grows even tighter. He can start feeling pain prick at him, though he doesn’t shake them off just yet. “I was. . . scared, though. There was a guy and a girl laughing and joking around about what they wanted to do with me, but in the end. . . All they did was shoot me and refuse to let me die ‘till I went out there in those clothes.”

Noticing the furrow of his brow, the human lets go of their snake-like grip on him, retrieving a chuckle Sans tries to suppress. “You’ve got a strong hold there, pal. No wonder you fought them off for so long.”

Liveliness returns to the human’s face when he comments that, embarrassment surging in their expression when they spot faint nail imprints and scratches on his arm. “Sorry for that. I. . . I didn’t think you’d bruise like that.”

“How’d ya think I bruised, then?”

“Maybe through the soul? . . . Kinda like how you can’t touch ghost monsters?”

“You’re sayin’ I’m like a ghost, then?”
“Not ‘like’, but similar to.”

“So ya think I’m spooky?”

“Again, not spooky. . . but cute,” they correct, laughing. ”It’s so weird wherever I compare you with Papyrus -- You almost look like the younger brother of the two.”

Feeling the mood’s grown lighter, Sans grows resolved again, taking his cell phone out of his pocket, unlocking it, and readying himself to show the number to (Y/N). With a quick, mental countdown, he gathers wit to speak up about their kidnapping again.

“Sunny gave me this number while you were recoverin’. I know you’ve got those stitches all done with, but this type of healin’s important, too.”

(Y/N) grabs his phone in their hands, narrowing their eyes at the screen. “A therapist?”

“He’s helped Sunny with her own stuff -- Said it’s the reason why she’s even had the courage to work behind a counter in the first place.”

He’s afraid he’s made the wrong move when he sees the human tear up, eyes glossy as they try to keep their smile on and tears from falling. They fold their hands over their lap and look down, a soft yet shaky breath making their chest heave once.

“You okay? Haven’t seen you like that since that whole custody thing with Faust.”

“I’m okay,” they assure him, smile lightening up along with their tone. “Those are happy tears. I’m. . . To be honest, I was worried about our relationship.”

“In what way?” Sans asks, meeting with their eyes as soon as they stop looking down at their lap.

“It’s your first time trying something like this, right? A serious relationship, I mean.”
Warning signs go off on his head when he hears 'serious' and 'relationship' together in that same sentence. Though he did like (Y/N), he couldn't begin to process just how serious his relationship with them was becoming. It was far from similar to the times he hung out with the bunny monster, agreeing into letting them kiss him that one time for the sake of ending it straight with them. He was fond of the bunny, but not in the same way as (Y/N).

“It is. But it feels right.”

“But what if that’s just ‘cuz you haven’t tried it with other people?”

“You’re underestimating how I feel about us, (Y/N). I’ve, uh, felt things for other people, so I know I like you. It ain’t the first time I’ve fallen for someone -- You just happen to be the first one I chose to go out with.”

(Y/N)’s looking at their lap again when he looks towards them, a more pained expression crossing their face. “I understand,” they speak up, sighing as their hands turn to fists, grabbing onto the fabric of the tunic. “And I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to underestimate you -- I was just insecure about myself. I- I’m not exactly a clean slate anymore, y’know? I’ve slept with other people, I- I’m divorced, and I have Faust to take care of. . . It just feels like I’d be imposing too much on you if I said I wanted to be in a serious relationship with you.”

"In what way does that define who you are, (Y/N)? It ain’t like that affects your personality or how you treat other people."

"Maybe it seems silly, bu- but to me. . . It's important -- even more now that I'm affecting the lives of other people and putting them in danger."

"That has nothin' to do with those people or what they're doing to your -- our friends. If that were the case, I would haffta consider myself a criminal just ‘cuz I got a restraining order in my records for being your friend.”

The radio station changes its music for the late night news, putting a halt in his conversation with (Y/N) when both they and himself decide to listen to what the reporter had to say. Solana turns the volume up a notch while Grillby shrinks back on his seat, the way the woman’s hands clench onto the wheel and how the colour of the monster’s fire dims giving Sans a heads up as to what he needed to expect.
“As of the following month, three new laws will be established for the sake of keeping harmony between the two races. The first one, written by the governor of our country, establishes that monsters may keep the land they have covered up until this far, with the condition that they do not step foot into human-owned houses, businesses, and apartments, as well as take on job offers in the same building as humans. Humans who have already decided to work and live in the same places as monsters will be forced to stay in the monsters’ territory if they so choose to take their side. (Miss/Mister) (Y/N) (L/N), Faust (L/N), and Solana Cortez are three examples of this choice. More on these laws will be presented by their creators this upcoming Friday.”

Solana shuts down the radio when it moves onto the weather, the uncomfortable mood that stays along making even Sans want for the silence to be broken.

It’s almost close to midnight when Sans finally reaches Toriel’s home. Solana’s busy talking with (Y/N) at the living room while Grillby stands beside him at the kitchen, watching as he pours four drinks -- three with alcohol and one without.

“It is the best option if they are taking medicine. Since nobody looks like they plan to sleep soon, why not include (Y/N) in, too? They and anybody else who would want to join us shouldn’t be excluded just because they can’t or won’t drink.”

Sans’s grin widens at his friend’s words, chuckling when the flame sends him an expressionless but all the same powerful glare after making him lose coordination by nudging him. “Ya sure know a lot, pal. Dunno how you’re dedicated to just one profession only.”

“I enjoy it.” He replies after recovering, a pinch of anger still present in his look. It melts away when he shakes his head softly, flames becoming brighter to match with his surge of contentment. "..." (“Up until now, this job’s given me plenty of new perspectives to look from.”)

The conversation ends in time for the drinks to be handed out. He can hear there’s an additional
person hanging out by Solana and (Y/N) when he steps out of the kitchen, Sans helping to carry one drink on each hand while Grillby holds onto the other two. When they step out, he can see Papyrus is standing next to the youngest human of the pair, keeping a fluffy, round Pomeranian in his hold as he instructs him not to hurt (Y/N).

“Be careful with them -- I know you like to bite, Toby!”

Toby shakes out of Papyrus’s hold and licks the human’s hand instead, the latter giggling when the dog thrusts his snout onto their palm, waiting for his head to be petted by them. Sans joins in on the fun when handing over the drinks by sitting close to (Y/N), watching as they scratch the dog behind his ear and smile when he yelps out a loud, happy bark at them. As if mimicking Toby’s behaviour, the skeleton places his arms around the human’s waist and brings them to sit on his lap, their weight balanced by the temporary magic he uses to keep them in place. He rests his chin on their shoulder, (h/l) hair tickling his face when they shift in order to take the dog in their hold.

“What’s gotten into you, Sans?” the human asks, a hint of teasing nature in their voice as they turn their head to face him once Toby’s safe in their lap.

“It helps with stress. You’re awfully comfy, (Y/N).”

Sans looks away from the human when feeling something cold on his shoulder now warm by the temperature the human emitted. He sees Grillby standing next to him, two drinks in each hand. The monster hands him the spiked one and the non-alcoholic one to (Y/N), stepping back when the drinks are out of his hold.

“So what’re we gonna do with these laws, huh?” Solana asks, speech already distorted by her drink. Sans can tell she’s not a drinker by how fast that single drink had invaded her system. Grillby, on the other hand, drinks his without much trouble, most of it already evaporated by the time it reaches his throat. A glass of cold milk is in Papyrus’s hands, complimentary of Grillby and his strong belief of not wanting to let anyone feel left behind. “That ain’t the way to solve problems -- Those lawmakers and lawyers should be investigatin’ the town’s mayor instead! Isn’t there at least a little footage of what he did? He should be the one gettin’ punished instead!”

Seeing her brown cheeks now tinted red, Grillby arrives next to her with a glass of iced water, the swiftness of his moves making Sans suppress a chuckle. Even to this day, it still amazed him how quickly the fire monster could adapt to a new or dire situation without so much as batting an eye.

“We should still think positively,” Papyrus exclaims, already halfway done with his own drink. “That just means we’ll have our own little territory to take care of! I bet we’ll still have plenty of
humans just like you two and Faust to keep us company. We do not need negative people like the mayor hurting kinder ones!"

Sans has to hold back his figurative tongue when he hears Papyrus talk, his want to intervene and say it wouldn’t be that easy leveled down by his attempt at letting him stay positive, further neutralized when he gazes back at (Y/N) to see they’ve fallen asleep in his arms, small dog included. The empty drink rests besides the empty spot on the couch, one hand holding onto the dog while the other rests limp on top of his interlocked hands pressed against their stomach.

New laws or not, the monster was finally creating something he could call his own: a family and close friendships he could rely on whenever things took a turn, be it for the better or the worse.
To Know You Better, Part One

Chapter Notes

After this Saturday, updates will now be leveled down to twice a week (Fridays and Mondays from here on)! We'll be pretty much caught up with buffer chapters after this, so I want to dedicate more time to creating another batch of 'em soon.

Take care, and thank you for reading until here. I hope you've enjoyed this story just as much as I have writing it. :-)

The new law has almost every parent around the school on edge, children around the same age as Faust showing their own concerns over the possible changes that would come during winter vacation. You shimmy through the crowd huddled in front of Toriel’s door, being extra careful with your injuries as you squeeze in, brush shoulders, and excuse yourself with the people you bump into.

“Take it easy, guys. I know tensions are high, but you can’t just ram into the principal’s office like that.” Undyne’s voice can be heard in the middle of all the worried murmurs and whispers of the audience, her scaly blue skin and red hair standing out amongst human parents. “Everything will stay the same, so there’s no need for you to wait here unless it’s to see your kids’ grades. We’ll still have the winter gathering and we’ll still keep teaching so long as there’s people still willing to study here.”

“Isn’t this all (L/N)’s fault? They should’ve kept a low profile after that whole scandal with them dating one of your tutors here!” a man exclaims, how angry and nearby his voice sounds making you fear he could attack you were he to spot you.

“It’s not just (L/N) who’s doing things like that!” another voice chimes in, blatant disapproval in her voice. “Any human who decided to sign their kids up into this school’s also an accomplice. We would have to stay completely separate from monsters if we didn’t want this to happen.”

“Then what’re we gonna do now? I can’t afford to lose my job just for lettin’ my kid stay in this school!” the same man speaks up again, distress replacing his anger. “How am I supposed to break the news to her?”

“And what are we supposed to do?” a bunny monster asks, blue fur spiking as his ears perk up. “My family depends on the job I have, but I can’t keep it if that new law’s for real!”
Undyne massages her temples as one voice keeps talking over another, chaos erupting in the form of words unable to be understood by how many different topics and voices there were. Concerned, you keep pushing yourself past the crowd, the brown bear meant to look after Faust’s friend shielding you with his body from incoming elbows and shoulders. His large figure is enough for him to stand firm and unshaken as people keep trying to push themselves in.

“Whatever the changes will be, this school will still maintain its policy of never charging for education. I’m afraid the rest would be in the hands of the governor and the higher-ups of this city, so I can’t say anything beyond that’s a secure statement.” She gives a pause in her words to straighten her posture, Sans and Gerson appearing next to her. “Those who want to see the final grades can step into the office, but the rest have to leave. Please cooperate if you want things to stay calm.”

There’s a few muttered complaints shared between parents before the group starts to break up, most leaving and only a few staying. You’re left with around ten humans and double the quantity of monsters, in including the bear you were now close acquaintances with. Those who left are currently spread out around the school, frowns and scowls on their faces as they discuss the future of what awaited them.

The feeling of a tap on your shoulder makes you shake off your observation, looking towards the person to see the same bear smiling at you.

“Here to look for Faust’s grades?” he asks, smile growing warmer when he sees he’s gotten your attention back.

“Yup,” you reply, nodding as you return his gesture with a smile of your own. “The school year felt a bit... longer this year.”

He chuckles at your comment, heartiness in his tone. “I can only imagine why, (miss/mister). That custody trail must’ve been no walk around the park.”

The few people in line are almost gone by the time you look towards the door again. Noticing that, the monster follows you into Toriel’s office, two of the three people in charge of guarding the building standing on each side of the door while Undyne is left to watch the crowd dispersed around the school’s halls by a farther distance away. Sans acknowledges you with a wave while Gerson forms a smile, watching as you enter with the bear into the office.

Upon entering, the distinctive scent of cinnamon hits your nose, eyes casting to the goat lady’s desk to see her talking with two parents: one a monster and the other a human. She has the pair
sign a separate paper each and hands them a disposable cup of tea right as they begin to take their
leave. The human stands up first, winged monster busy shuffling things around her purse.

You decide to sit next to your companion by the waiting area while Toriel’s done with the other
parents, though you don’t stay for longer than two minutes seated until the both of them leave the
room as she then beckons you and the bear to step up.

“Come along now.” Toriel calls, patience in her voice. A smile decorates her face as she waits for
you to approach her side, hands already holding onto some files and papers. “I have your
documents ready for you to sign.”

Something new catches your eye when you take a seat in front of her desk. You narrow your eyes
behind her to see a miniature pine tree set at a corner of her office, decorated in similar shades of
gold, red, and green. There’s a bunch of palm-sized gifts underneath it, each wrapped with a
different pattern.

“Lovely, is it not? We have adapted this tradition in school as most children seem to enjoy it.”

Toriel’s waiting for your reaction when you stare back at her, hands folded over her desk as a
kinder expression takes on her visage. You nod once at her, a grin forming on your face. “It really
is,” you reply, taking the paper laid out in front of you. “Do you guys have any plans for decorating
the winter gathering? I have some stuff in my old house if you need them.”

Her entire expression livens up with your words, shock crossing her face as she shifts in her seat.
“Would that truly be alright? I could not possibly ask that from you! Are you not going to use
them?”

“Well... Since I’ll be staying at your home for a while, I think it’s only fair.”

“There is no need for that, (Y/N). I would not offer you to stay if I did not wish you to.”

Her words make your heart ache. Jessie’s past actions had left a large imprint on you, enough for
you to doubt your own capabilities and self-worth. With all the turns your life had taken this year,
you were doubting your skills as both a person working for the law and a person strong enough to
be able to defend themselves. You had gone against the law and had been weak enough to end
kidnapped by what you assumed were the mayor’s accomplices. Hearing the goat lady say she
appreciated your presence was a well-needed comfort for making you feel more appreciative of
“Thank you, but the offer still stays,” you state, confidence returning to your voice. “I’ll bring the decorations soon, and you can tell me which ones you like more.”

A frantic Alphys runs over the papers she sets on the desk, words spilling from her mouth fast enough for you to lose track of what she means to say. Undyne arrives by her side and tells her to calm down, squeezing her shoulders as a way of reassuring her it was okay for her to take it easy. Papyrus is with Faust and Frisk, the three busy making arrangements on how were they going to set up the tree, Mettaton joining in when he sees the group are discussing ways on how to tie ribbons. Sunny is with Solana, the two lost in a conversation about what they had experienced when the masked people caught them. It’s almost impossible for you to keep track of what everyone’s doing, a fact proven by the way you jump when you have someone call out your name.

Catching your breath, you look towards the person to see Mettaton’s cousin floating idly in front of you, a plain CD cassette held in his pale, fingerless hand.

“This is for you. . .” he mutters, hesitating when it’s time for him to hand the item out to you. “D-Don’t get me wrong. I . . . This is a thank you for agreeing to help Mettaton with the catering event. I don’t know if you’ll like it, but. . . But he said you might.”

You offer him a smile before accepting his gift, offering him to sit next to you as you pause on looking through the pictures Alphys handed over to you. It was footage of the incident at your place of kidnapping, crumbled cement and bent bars of steel covering most of the photos taken. “Thank you. . . Blook, was it? Or do you prefer Napstablook instead?”

“Blook is fine,” the ghost replies, a tiny smile forming on his face. “You’re. . . (Y/N), right?”

You nod at Blook’s question, moving aside when you see he plans to sit next to you. To your surprise, he leans closer and points at one of the pictures, smile fading away when he speaks up. “Did anyone tell you what happened while you were unconscious? That blue blur on the corner. . . It was the mayor trying to run away. I was taking the pictures since I can hide a little better than the rest, but he caught me somehow.”
“How many of you guys went there?” you ask, brushing off the strangeness of his statement. If the mayor had seen a literal ghost sneaking pictures of the incident, you figured he would’ve needed extra help with that -- either that, or he had hawk-like vision for him to have seen a translucent body from that far away.

“Six, I think. . . Including me.” Blook trails off with his words, gaze furrowing as he tries to remember more about the case. “Undyne, Alphys, Toriel, my cousin. . . And Sans were all there. Papyrus took Frisk and Faust to school and kept it a secret from Faust until we were back.”

“So Frisk knew?”

“Yeah. . . They planned out most of what we were going to do for our mission -- Alphys was in charge of messing with the cameras, Mettaton blew a hole into the building, and the rest fought off the people holding you hostage.”

No matter how much he describes to you, it’s hard for you to grasp all six people working to reach one same goal, how different they all were from each other only making it harder for you to picture the scene. Frisk had to know them all well-enough for them to make that plan on the spot.

“Undyne held you down after we broke in. . . Toriel kept fighting others back, and Sans, he. . . He was the one confronting the mayor. It looked like he was ready to fight him, but he couldn’t. Mettaton broke into the building right before anything happened between them, though.”

You try to search for Sans among all the monsters and humans working together. While you had seen the skeleton stressed and angry a few times before, he still had a way of containing his emotions and replace them for indifference. The most you had seen him distressed had been the day at the beach when the lights of his eye sockets disappeared, and the first and second occasions where you gave him a call during his time with a restraining order. Remembering that made you want to have a word with him right now, the words you had heard Undyne say about how he had given up or that he didn’t care strengthening your resolve of offering him an ear to listen. What tops it all off is what Gerson had said right before you ended up in this mess.

Determined, you finish your discussion with Napstablook and stand up from your seat, onset to go look for Sans and confront him the same way he had with you just a few days ago.
You find him at the balcony, his back turned to you as he looks down at the houses below him. He doesn’t budge when you step into the premises, so you continue to be quiet in your approach, waiting until you’re close enough to slip your hands around his waist and pull him close to you. He stays silent, hands holding tightly onto the rails as his body shakes with a breath.

“Can you feel that?” he asks, voice scratchy when he first decides to speak up. “That weird feelin’ in your soul?”

“What do you mean?” you question back, tightening your hold on him. “Is something wrong?”

“No. I, uh... I’ve just been feelin’ this weird pull on my soul whenever you get close to me. It’s gotta have to do with connections and whatever, but I was wonderin’ if you felt it, too.”

A frown shows on your face when he comments that. While you didn’t want to disappoint him, you couldn’t bring yourself to lie either. You either hadn’t felt anything like that, or you didn’t know enough about that to recognize when it happened. “I... don’t think I’ve ever felt anything like that. I can feel my heart beat fast sometimes, but not the soul -- Not with you, or anyone I’ve dated before. And if I did, I don’t think I’d be able to recognize when it happened.”

Sans doesn’t break from your hold, instead loosening his hands off the rails to grab onto the ones you’ve placed around his waist. “Can you feel anything?”

“I... I’m not sure.”

He breaks away from you this time, turning to you to place a hand over your chest -- close to where your heart would be at. “How ‘bout now?”

You close your eyes and concentrate, trying to search for any feeling beyond that of physical. It’s a fruitless attempt, only resulting in embarrassment when his hand remains awkwardly in place. “...N- No. Is that bad?”

“Yeah -- You should at least feel when your soul rejects the person touching you. If ya don’t feel anythin’, then...” Sans sighs, forehead creasing as he tries to keep on speaking. “Can I see your soul for a second?”
“I’m not sure how that works, but sure,” you reply, a nervous laugh leaving your mouth. “How’re you gonna do that?”

“Just take a deep breath and forget about where we’re at. Focus on your mind and thoughts instead of anything physical. Most humans think the soul thing’s a myth ‘cuz some of ’em still go by old history books, but it’s real -- just that most don’t know they have it, or that those weird pulls they feel actually come from the soul.”

Worried, you try to remember when in your short life had you felt your soul be pulled or repulsed by previous partners. The closest you had been to anything similar was on your wedding day, yet you could still tell it came from your heart and mind. While Sans keeps his hand close, you keep thinking back on when had you felt something closer to that sensation. You think back until you reach the older days when you were just getting to know him.

Sure, you felt nervous and a little jumpy whenever you sensed a progress in your relationship, but was it really due to your soul?

“(Y/N),” Sans calls out, shaking you out of those thoughts. “Your soul’s- Look down at it.”

Doing as told, you feel a chill run down your spine when you stare at it. A greyish tint surrounds the heart-shaped soul, a faint shade of red letting you know it had once been crimson. Oddly enough, its pulse is steady, giving signs of a healthy soul despite its opaque colour.

“Looks like your soul trait hasn’t been decided yet,” he comments, lost in thought. “Does it hurt anywhere?”

“It feels fine,” you assure him, smiling. You place a hand over the one he has out in front of you. Your soul shakes at the same time you bump with his hand, driving out your curiosity. “So you’re the one kinda just keeping my soul floating right now? It... moved when your hand did.”

“Somethin’ like that, yeah. The technique’s mostly used at the Underground, though.” Just as awkwardly as before, he pushes your soul forward, pressing it against your chest until it fades away into your body. “It’s, uh... usually not as weird-lookin’ or soundin’ at the Underground. This was considered normal down there.”

With your soul now back in its rightful place, you take one step back while he does the same,
leaving some space between you. The book he had given you shows up in your memories, and you remind yourself you had to read it as soon as you had the opportunity to, the differences between you becoming stranger the more you deepened your relationship with the monster. “So... my soul’s not in danger or anything?”

“It’s fine -- It’s just tryna find its trait. The default’s always determination, since almost every human has that, but it shapes up depending on how you act and what you believe in. Determination’s red, so your soul still has its default trait.”

You bite back your sudden want of asking another question related to that topic, remembering the reason why you had been searching for him. Without a word, you follow him back to the edge of the balcony, holding onto the rails and staring down at the houses and buildings laid out. A similar colour scheme composed of beiges, browns and light yellows cover most of the houses, these looking the same in architecture and only differentiating themselves by the gardens and ornaments people placed by their front yards. Some already have Christmas decorations on, while some have flowers of varied types and colours sprouting in plastic pots.

“Sans, are you... feeling okay?”

“Whaddya mean?”

He makes eye contact with you when you stop looking at the houses. The white glow in his sockets is soft, a hint of surprise glinting on them.

“Just, if you’re feeling okay. These changes have been a lot recently, so I was wondering if you were maybe feeling overwhelmed or anything like that.”

You hear him laugh under his breath, posture slumping to a more relaxed state when he does so. He places a hand on top of yours, giving it a squeeze. “I gotta be honest with ya and say I do. All of this is kinda new to me -- I was used to monotony, predictability. . . I felt some sense of safety knowing that. Out here though, everything’s real different. You know how humans, so long as they had determination, could tamper with the Underground? It doesn’t work up here. Or at least, I haven’t heard of that happening. I guess I’m happy things’ll be stable from here on, but... The Surface doesn’t give second chances.”

Sans’s voice grows strained the further he keeps talking, forehead creasing as a drop of sweat trails down to his collarbones. He squeezes your hand tighter, an act that would hurt hadn’t you grown more tolerant to pain.
“For a moment there, I really thought I was gonna lose ya. When I woke up to an empty bed and saw Faust cryin’, I felt lost -- And I hadn't felt like that in a long time ago.”

Pressure marks from holding onto you too tightly show up when he moves his hand away from yours. You can see fluster flicker in his irises when he sees that, though you brush it off and encourage him to keep talking instead.

“Having you still here’s kind of a drive for me to keep tryin’ -- that it’s worth a try, at least. I like what we have, (Y/N), so I hope you understood me back there -- Hell, maybe it’s true that it’s my first time doing something like this, but I don’t regret it, and I think my soul agrees with that, too. Either that, or I’m gonna have to get it check to see why it speeds up whenever you’re near me.”

You let out a single, unrestrained laugh with his final comment, bumping shoulders with him as a smile stretches your lips. Smiling, you place a hand over his chest -- similar to how he had done with you -- and close the space left between you. He wasn’t lying about his soul: you could feel it drumming underneath your palm, a feeling that made you wonder over just how he could maintain a neutral expression even while his soul went a mile a minute.

“(Y/N)?” he asks, taking a step back.

“Yeah?” you reply, smile growing fonder.

He looks down at his shorts and reaches out for his front pocket, retrieving a tiny, black box like the previous two that carried the locket inside them. His hand trembles subtly when he stretches it out to you, his fingers brushing with yours as you reach out for it.

“You, uh, don’t have to say yes if ya don’t want to.”

It’s now your turn for your heart to race, hands shedding a cold sweat as you try to gather wit for seeing what was inside the now familiar, if not signature black box. Determined, you breathe in, then out, and gather courage to open the box, eyes becoming cloudy when you peer down at its contents.
A small, silver key lies on top of a white cushion, polished material glistening with the fast setting sun. It has what you assume is a home’s address engraved on the center, the immediate assumption that comes with that thought making your emotions a mess as you try to cope with the speculations that make way into your mind.

“Is this. . .” you mumble, words drifting off along with your thoughts.

“A copy key of my house,” Sans replies, a sheepish strain to his voice. “I thought about us living together now that you’ve moved out of your old place. I know Tori offered you a place to stay, but. . . The offer’s still up.”

Shocked, it takes a minute for your brain to form a comprehensible question, the sight of the key and its purpose freezing you right in place. “Wh- What about Papyrus, though? Will he be okay with this?”

Sans lets out a deep sigh when his brother’s name is mentioned, a speck of sadness reflecting on his irises. “I’m sure he wouldn’t mind, but he’s movin’ out soon. He’s gotten real good at cooking, so he’s plannin’ on working farther away from here. The place he used to work at and the recipes you sent him helped a lot with improving his skills.” He pauses on his words, gaze casting firm at the open box in your hand. “There’s. . . somethin’ underneath the pillow I want you to see also.”

Your nerves are practically on edge at this point, hand almost dropping the box when you fumble around with it. Carefully, you lift the cushion, a golden ring revealing itself right under it.

“Wh- Sans, I. . .”

You’re left speechless when you stare down at it. Your attention shifts between the key on your dominant hand and the box with the ring in the other, a foreign feeling rising within you. Unable to process things straight, you move all the items to one hand, clutching onto them as you then break into a wide, quivering smile and engulf the monster into a strong hug, face burying deep into the crook of his neck.

“I. . . I don’t know what to say,” you murmur, voice muffled by the thick fabric of his jacket. Your hands rest all the way down to his waist and stay still around his back. “Thank you, bu- but. . . This is too sudden.”
“I know that,” Sans remarks, snickering. “It is for me, too. But I want you to have it -- To keep it with ya ‘till we’re both ready for this. The key, though... Now I’m gonna need an answer to that. I was thinkin’ of moving to a smaller place ’cuz it feels too empty when Pap’s not at home, but I came up with this while thinkin’ about where I could move off to. Faust could stay at Pap’s old room, and you, uh, could stay in mine if ya wanted to.”

You squeeze him tighter -- until you feel the beat of his soul against your body.

An onslaught of tears run down your cheeks, unable to be controlled when your mind betrays your emotions by letting your hopes run wild. You promptly melt into a series of nervous laughter, eyes stinging as you try to blink the seemingly endless row of tears away.

“I’d love to, Sans,” you reply, happiness dwelling in your chest. You feel your breathing grow tighter and tighter, until you’re left to heave for air, a shudder reaching up your body. “I... I’d love to move in with you.”

You pull away after that, face burning with the back and forth of your emotions. It was hard for you to pin one straight without it dissolving into the next one, joy bursting on your expression right as melancholy manifests through tears and a strained smile. You shudder and burst with a chuckle once more as you try to take in everything at once, tear-stained eyes moving on to see the monster staring at you, amusement present the next time he laughs.

“You’ve no idea how much your eyes remind me of the coldest night’s snow,” you reply, a fraction of your mind raising its head for a moment to notice the beautiful blue in his eyes.

“I’d love to, Sans,” you reply, happiness dwelling in your chest. You feel your breathing grow tighter and tighter, until you’re left to heave for air, a shudder reaching up your body. “I... I’d love to move in with you.”

You pull away after that, face burning with the back and forth of your emotions. It was hard for you to pin one straight without it dissolving into the next one, joy bursting on your expression right as melancholy manifests through tears and a strained smile. You shudder and burst with a chuckle once more as you try to take in everything at once, tear-stained eyes moving on to see the monster staring at you, amusement present the next time he laughs.

“Here,” he speaks up, offering you a handkerchief. “Figured you’d need this.”

The mischief in Sans’s tone makes you wary of his true intentions, hand slowly reaching out for the cloth as you try to figure out what he could be hiding behind that emotion. You look at him to see his usual, relax expression plastered on his skull, irises being the only thing to give away his expectancy. Handkerchief in hand, you inspect it thoroughly, its dark blue colour tainting your fingers when you pass it to your other hand.

“Looks like I lost the chance to say you’re lookin’ a little blue, (Y/N).”

Far from wanting to give Sans the satisfaction of seeing you react to his shenanigans, you look away from the cloth and narrow your eyes at him, grin showing on your face as a plan pops into your mind. Without much of a warning, you chase after him, though he catches on just as promptly as you act, a scenario similar to the time you were at Mettaton’s hotel replaying itself on the balcony, the context and general intensity of your actions differentiating them.
The skeleton dodges each one of your attempts at capturing him, the charade lasting until he arrives at the metal railings of the balcony. Trapped between them and yourself, you gain the upper hand, laughing when you throw the handkerchief at him, tinting his cheekbones blue when it lands right in the middle of his face.

“You’re the one looking blue!” you exclaim, pride immediately halted when he blows the cloth off his face and aims it at yours, giving you no time to dodge his attack. Being of light material, it lands with grace, though it still manages to paint your face the same colour as his.

“Now we’re both blue,” he mentions, a resonant, hearty laugh following along with his statement.

Anticipation and anxiety have a conflict in your thoughts as you wish goodnight to both Faust and Frisk, the pair near falling asleep and sharing a bunk bed. You plan on staying at the goat lady’s home for another week or two, the thought of moving in with Sans right away one you couldn’t fully cope with yet. Not only would you have to explain to others how that decision was made, but you also couldn’t bring yourself to mention anything about the ring to other people -- Not to any of your friends, and even less to Faust or any of your relatives.

While you knew it was unhealthy for you to worry as much as you were right now, you can’t shake off Jessie from the picture. You had been a little more than over the moon the day they proposed to you, immediately falling into their arms and ending in bed not an hour after. You still couldn’t forget the day they called you easy -- that they had the guts to call you out on how fast you fell for their past self. Worry that you’re going about the same way with Sans disturbs your thoughts, though you find comfort in the thought that you felt happier alongside him.

“(Y/N), dear?” Toriel’s gentle voice comes from behind you, a warm, fluffy hand being placed on your back. “Are you alright?”

You turn to see her figure, face still visible even with the lights turned off, the night light set by the bunk bed providing with some source of illumination. A smile shows up on your face, feeling a bit more confident with your last line of thought. Jessie was a thing of the past now -- They had haunted you enough, and you weren’t planning on giving them the pleasure of invading your thoughts, even while they weren’t present. You were happier now: not just with Sans’s presence, but with Toriel’s and many other people, too. You had friends you could almost call a family, a
home to stay in, and Faust’s custody safe in your hands.

“I’m fine,” you reply, smile turning to a meek grin. “Something... really good happened today, so I’m kinda lost in thought.”

“And what might those good news be?” she presses on, playfulness in her tone.

Bracing yourself, you reach into your (jeans’s/skirt’s) pocket, retrieving the box Sans had given you. Toriel’s expression lightens up with curiosity, a kind smile making her entire face brighten with contentment.

“Congratulations, dear!” she exclaims her joy in a hushed tone so as to not wake Frisk and Faust, clasping her hands together as a giggle exits her mouth. “No wonder the worrisome look on your face -- I was on pins and needles when that day came for me!”

She practically ambushes you with a hug, hold tight enough to make you yelp when she squeezes you. Her fur tickles your nose as she brings you close to her, the soft scent of butterscotch emanating from her clothes. “Thank you,” you reply, smiling. “I honestly don’t know what to do next.”

The goat lady breaks up the hug as soon as those words leave your mouth, eyes bright with excitement as she holds both your hands and levels her gaze with yours. “I believe I can assist you with that, dear. Tell me all about your day! I am certain we can work this out tonight.”
Reaching High, Part One

Chapter Notes

Content Warning for this chapter and the next include:

Mild language, foul behaviour, and references to PTSD.


"It's not about 'tit for tat', it's about 'I love you, too'." – Karen E. Quiñones Miller

Hypocrite.

That was the one word you could use to describe yourself as you glance a look at the suit you’re wearing. The deep black dress (skirt/pants) are fitted according to your lower figure while the suit jacket covers most of your chest away under its fabric, a hint of a white polo shirt peeking under your collarbones. Your hair is kept back by styling gel and your shoes are pretty much squeezing too tightly for you to move without looking stiff and awkward. These were the only clothes you had available that resulted appropriate for meeting with the head of the city. You were certain she had to hate your guts just as much as the mayor did, so looking through your old wardrobe to find your small and worn job interview uniform from three years ago was a bit of a two-faced move in your eyes.

Why bother going through all this effort if you were against the laws people like her were making?

Hell, you had even considered spending a whopping three-hundred dollars just to avoid using old clothing and shoes for the meeting. That thought alone made you stop and think about how you were worrying so much simply to face what most would consider a rival and obstacle for your progress.

Luckily, you don’t look too ridiculous despite your tight shoes and the weary expression on your face -- The lower half of your outfit and your hair looked decent, at least.
“Finished already?”

You jump a little when you hear Sans’s voice close by, mind returning to the present as you turn around and catch him standing by the doorway. Against yourself, a grin stretches your lips, the stuffy look the monster carried just enough of a distraction from your worries. Quite like yourself, he wore a suit jacket just a little too large and formal to seem natural, dress pants baggy by the end and shoes a tad too shiny with polish. It was painfully clear neither him nor you were ready for something as formal as this.

“What’s got ya laughing, pal?”

Nerves transforming into hysteria, you melt into a series of chuckles, snorts, and giggles when he waddles over to your side, looking much more unnatural than you did. The sight was too much to bear at once. He had only ever worn casual clothing, the stark difference from today sticking out like a sore thumb.

Breathless, you clutch onto your stomach and fall back in bed, eyes tightly shut as you try to keep yourself from laughing again. “Y- You . . . You look like a penguin working for the mafia,” you state, snickering. “Who even gave you that suit, anyway? It’s way too big for you.”

Still laying on your back, you don’t notice he’s made it to your side, his figure hovering over yours when you decide to open your eyes and stare up at him. He peers down at you with a playful look in his eye sockets, taking on your challenge now that you’ve made fun of him. “And you look like you’ve been zapped by a shrink ray,” he states, laughing when you glare at him. “Figure a penguin’s the better lookin’ option of the two. The heck’s even s’possed to be that jacket you’re wearin’? It’s almost three times smaller than your size -- The buttons look like they’re gonna fly off anytime soon.”

“What’s up with **your** jacket?” you tease back, confidence in your tone. “You look more big-boned than usual.”

_Creak._

The grin on your face is wiped off when the bed sinks slightly, the creaking that follows making you stare down to see the monster had climbed into it, knees next either sides of your waist and hands placed over your shoulders, holding him up as he leans over you, a more serious, stoic look crossing his gaze. “Who ya callin’ big-boned, eh?”
Lips now a straight line, you try to find any hint that you’ve offended him, though his expression is close to unreadable, white irises faint as his jaw clenches slightly. You’re skeptical to label that as anger, fearing you had crossed a line or brought up a touchy subject.

“I was only jo-“

You stop yourself when you feel him shaking, jaw loosening as he holds back what you can only figure is laughter.

“Your face -- Goddammit, haven’t seen ya make that face since that time you took my hand right out of its socket.”

His usual smile grows wider as light returns to his irises, chuckles leaving his teeth as he presses his forehead against yours, holding onto you as he grows helpless with laughter.

“Freakin’ priceless,” he comments, voice muffled due to his face now pressed against your suit jacket. “Sure felt like the old days. You haven’t changed one bit, (Y/N) -- in a good way, I mean. Did ya really, seriously think I’d get pissed off for somethin’ like that?”

“Why wouldn’t you?” you defend, a little shaken by his actions. While you tried your best not to think about the past, it was hard for you not to stay alert when he leaned closer, the fact that you were in bed and that you were underneath him bringing back the clear, unwanted memory of the time you were harassed and almost strangled in Jessie’s hands. You don’t comment anything on that fear though, trying your best to cope with those feelings by yourself to hopefully contact the number Sans had given you in the long run. You clearly weren’t forgetting about the damage done by Jessie, and it was starting to get on your nerves. You wanted to feel normal and joke around like this without having that memory brought up every few seconds. “I made fun of how you look.”

“I think we both know we were just playin’ around,” Sans states, another chuckle leaving his teeth. “You worry too much, (Y/N).”

You feel better when he gets off of you, sitting next to you in bed as the both of you stare at the mirror nearby. It reflects the two of you looking way too ridiculous to assist a formal meeting, outfits now further disheveled as a consequence of you goofing around with him about how you looked. Silence overtakes the room as you observe your reflections, suppressing a grin when you notice Sans still trying to contain his own mirth when looking at both your and his own appearance.
“We’ve gotta do somethin’ about this,” he mentions, determination in his tone. “We can’t go anywhere otherwise.”

In need of a solution, you stare intently at both his and your outfit, contemplating what made them look stuffy and unnatural until an idea pops in your mind.

“Thought of somethin’, pal?” the monster asks, noticing the way your face lights up when you figure something out.

“Let’s switch jackets,” you state, looking towards him. “Mine’s too small, and yours is too big -- I’m sure it should look at least a little bit better than this.”

“Anythin’s better than this,” he remarks, grinning. “Let’s try it out.”

Silence is exchanged for the sound of you and him shuffling with your clothes, working to take the jackets off while simultaneously keeping the rest of your outfit intact. He gives you his while you give him yours, moving on to the next step afterwards.

The two of you are scrutinized by a picky Mettaton and an even pickier Papyrus when you make it out of the room, Toriel, Frisk, and Faust already dressed up for the big day ahead. The goat lady stands in a purple maxi dress while Frisk carries a dark denim skirt along with a red blouse. Faust is in some new clothes Toriel had picked out from Frisk’s closet, these composed of a light green polo shirt and some dark blue jeans. Everyone looked just about ready to head out, Papyrus being the only one to wear his new work uniform given he had a shift right after your meeting at the city capital.

“Are you sure you guys wanna come with us? She said it was fine so long as two witnesses of what the mayor did came to her office.”

“Of course we are, (Y/N),” Mettaton comments, eyes darting to meet yours quickly right as they go back down to making some final adjustments to your clothing, undoing some of the jacket’s buttons and redoing the folds of the sleeves. Sans is in the same situation as you, having his shirt’s collar fixed and jacket lint removed by his brother. “And besides, I could use a close-up scoop of
the meeting. Not only does it help with the ratings, but it could seriously help with getting more people to understand what you -- what we’re all fighting for here.”

All four of you are interrupted when you hear a knock at the door. Both Faust and Frisk stand up to go get it, leaving the goat lady to smile when she hears them say they’ll get it in place of her.

From the door come out all the other people who had worked on your rescue mission. Next to them three stand Solana, Sunny, and Muffet, plus the judge, bailiff, and policewoman from your hometown, all nine of them carrying strong, determined looks on their faces when they stare at you. Even the rookie bailiff, shy Blook, and frantic Alphys stand firm, Undyne being the first to speak up.

“You guys ready yet? We’ve gotta give those punks a piece of our mind!”
Reaching High, Part Two

It’s even harder for you to feel and act natural when you arrive at the city capital, not a single monster in sight besides those accompanying you. Only Mettaton and Undyne are the ones to remotely blend in with the crowd, yet their flashy colours prevent that from lasting long. All sixteen of you sit by the waiting room, topics varying from how were you going to introduce yourself to the woman and what evidence were you to use against the mayor.

Mettaton has a tiny camera hidden close to his right shoulder blade, onset on filming everything that went on despite the blatant warning he received from the guards not to. Alphys and Blook keep track of all the evidence gathered from the rescue mission while the town's judge and bailiff give a final revision to the argument written on paper. Undyne, on the other hand, helps her girlfriend and the ghost choose what evidence was best for presenting at the office, Sunny and Solana both pitching in by recalling the day the masked people had barged into their homes. Toriel helps you with refining your appearance one last time whereas Papyrus encourages his brother with some pep talk.

Despite everyone's level of preparedness, not one person feels secure about the thought of you facing the woman behind the door, the fact that she could decide your and the monster's future enough for submitting even the toughest person of the group under panic and uncertainty. The new law was beginning to have its effect on the general behaviour and tolerance of people, those who worked under the same roof as monsters erupting into fights every so often -- and vice versa.

You had been lucky to have Faust study at a school meant to keep that harmony intact, and even luckier to have gained a job at the local pastry shop following the same policy.

“Sans should know what to do,” Toriel compliments, encouragement present on both her voice and smile when she takes notice of how stiff the environment has become. “He does not say it often, but he was quite skilled with his profession at the Judgment Hall.” Her gentle gaze moves from the skeleton to you, her smile brightening as she pats your shoulder once, a support similar to when you told her of your plans of moving in with Sans. “And you, (Y/N). . . You should have the necessary drive for convincing her to listen to your claims. You made it this far thanks to that quality, dear. I believe the both of you complement each other well, so there is no need for you to doubt yourselves.”

“I- I agree with miss Toriel,” Sunny comments, her frail voice sounding more excited as a smile forms on her face. “You both did well in court, so I- I’m sure you can do this. We can pitch in if she needs more convincing!”

“Yeah!” Faust agrees, Frisk nodding beside him. Muffet sits next to them two, vigilant of the pair while the rest of the group dealt with the flurry of evidence and words meant to be rehearsed before
confronting the situation in hand. “If (mom/dad) won the right to date Sans... They can win this, too!”

“Of course they can,” the policewoman pitches in, a smile on her face. “It was only made difficult since the town's mayor is strong-headed, but I’m sure the mayor of this city isn’t like that.”

“Strong-headed’s an understatement,” Sans remarks, a hint of anger cutting through his chuckle. He sounds reasonably pissed, an observation that makes you smile when you see annoyance flicker at the mention of that name. “Tryna reason with that guy’s kinda like tryna have a conversation with a brick wall.”

“(Y/N) (L/N) and Comic Sans, please step in.”

A man’s tired voice sounds from the intercom lying above your heads, stopping everyone in their process of giving you encouragement. You stand up from the chair of the sterile waiting room, how rarely inhabited it felt and seemed making it appear more stuffy and constraining than it tried to be. The polished furniture and hard cushions made it feel as if you weren’t meant to be here -- as if this place wasn’t meant for you.

Sans stands up right after you do, the rest of your companions watching you off and waiting until you entered for them to carry on with their discussions.

You walk with him towards the looming entrance of the woman’s office, the distant murmurs melding with the background as you instead focus on what awaited you behind that door. You expected nothing less than someone similar to the town’s mayor as well as no better of an outcome. Frankly speaking, you were expecting the worst, though that wasn’t about to stop you from walking forward and into the office, earlier words of encouragement serving as a battery for your mind.

“Ready?” Sans asks, hand resting over the surface of the door. He has some documents in his free hand while you hold onto the rest.

“Ready,” you reply, nodding your head.

The doors open to reveal an office overwhelming with grandeur, each piece of furniture looking to cost a fortune. A silver chandelier hangs on the ceiling and two large, cushioned chairs stand in front of the mayor’s desk. In contrast to the elegance of the room, however, sits a plain-looking
woman, her straight, brown hair reaching her shoulders and soft, hazel eyes welcoming you in, smile humble as she waits for you to sit down. Her pale skin contrasts with the dark purple of her suit and the deep black of her office chair.

“Good morning,” she greets, widening her smile. “You are (L/N) and Sans, correct? It is a pleasure to meet you both. Please take a seat -- I’m aware we’ve plenty to discuss.”

You do as told, steps careful as you arrive in front of her desk and take a seat, Sans doing the same.

"Good morning, ma'am," you reply, tensing slightly when you feel Sans's hand slip over yours. "We're here to discuss the new laws, and what the town's mayor submitted all of us to."

Caught aback by the monster's actions, you glance a quick look to his side to see him looking straightforward, breaking his gaze away from the woman when he notices you staring at him.

Toriel wasn't joking -- He seemed like an entirely different person now, white irises focused sharply on the mayor as he hears you speak. He holds onto your hand tighter, reassuring you by intertwining your fingers with his.

"While this may seem like a wild claim, I suspect him to be behind the person who blackmailed me and the ones who kidnapped me. My companions and I gathered evidence when they went to rescue me at my hometown, so I was hoping we could discuss what we could do from here."

"I understand, (miss/sir)," she replies, nodding as her gaze breaks away from yours. "Were you also present in the mission, sir?"

Her words are now directed at Sans, his posture firm unlike yours, though you can tell he's taken by surprise when you feel his hold on your hand grow a bit tighter, his thumb rubbing against your skin. "Yes, ma'am. We found (Y/N) near unconscious -- bleeding out on the floor while some guys kept pushing at 'em to walk out into a crowd waiting to see them at some stadium. It was their town's mayor speaking, and he was saying somethin' 'bout how he planned to humiliate (Y/N) for what they did to him in the meetings. They were wearin’ next to nothing when that happened, and they were being yelled at to move."

"Could you provide a clear description of what (Y/N) was wearing, or do you have pictures of that available instead?"
"We do, actually," you reply, aiding Sans with his testimony. "Napstablook was in charge of taking pictures of what was going on."

Sans lets go of your hand to retrieve the folder resting next to his seat, placing it over the mayor's desk as she then reaches out for it.

"There's also the faces of the people pushin' (Y/N) to step out, and there's audio of the mayor talking 'bout what they were gonna do to 'em."

"So you do not have any pictures of the mayor's face?"

"Unfortunately, no. He caught Napstablook takin' the pictures 'fore he could snap a picture of him."

"Very well. Either way, I will look through your evidence and decide what's valid and what's not," the woman states, hands shifting through the pictures as her eyes quickly scan the images of the incident. "Do you have plans to file a lawsuit against him? While I see there is indeed no clear picture of him available, the audio you claim to have, the threats (Y/N) received on their phone, and their history with the mayor should be enough for the case to be taken to court. The injuries were life-threatening, after all. And the both of you had already won the right to be together, so there was no reason for either of you to be threatened about it any longer."

"Can. . . Can we really take this to court, ma'am?" you ask, taken aback by her words. She was being far more reasonable than you were expecting her to be, humility and kindness never faltering from her tone or expression.

"It is only just. Just as you did for your ex spouse, you should do for him. If he did indeed play a part in this crime, you have the right to stand your ground and take the mayor to court. The both of you can confront him even more now that the restraining order has been dealt with."

In the midst of the woman speaking her judgment, Sans's hand finds its way to yours again. You glance back towards him, the serious look he carried since the beginning now clad with warmth as he puts in a word of his own.

"When can we start makin' plans for that? The guy deserves what's coming for him."
The professional look the woman carried up until now falters slightly as a brighter smile blooms on her face, the sheer eagerness coming from Sans's voice sending a surge of determination to settle on your chest, and seemingly hers, as well.

“You sound sure of yourself, Sans.”

Her words catch you both by surprise, the way they leave her mouth making it sound more like a compliment rather than retaliation.

“Your devotion to this relationship looks to be right on par with (L/N)’s,” she continues, sending heat to your face. Your ears are close to burning, and you can’t bring yourself to glance at Sans’s reaction as quickly as you would like to. “I am glad you are both doing well together.”

“Thanks,” Sans speaks, a hint of bashfulness in his reply. “We’re workin’ things out. That restraining order was a pain in the neck, but I’d be damned if I said it didn’t make me consider this kinda stuff possible -- Never woulda thought we’d be out here together tryna set things straight like this.”

Hand intertwining with yours for a second time, you picture a positive outlook despite the nagging worry things could take a turn for the worst the same way they had the day after Sans’s restraining order was abolished. You imagine what it would be like starting over with the monster at his home, and even go as far as to envision yourself taking the ring out of the box and slipping it on your finger. Confidence returning, you squeeze his hand back a little tighter, a reassuring look present on your face when you proceed to speak about the procedures of filing another case.

If he was looking forward to it, you wanted to do the same.
“Just like that?” Mettaton asks, voicing his surprise as quiet as a whisper. “No drama, no tension, no. . . resistance? She couldn’t have possibly just agreed to your claims on the spot!”

You’re back at the waiting room again, in patient expectancy for the intercom to call out your names a second time -- this time as a cue for your dismissal and the set date for the next step in your plans.

Papyrus and Muffet have already gone off to work while both Frisk and Faust are away with Toriel in preparation for the winter gathering. You, on the other hand, sit between a curious Solana and an even curiouser Mettaton, everyone else just as equally surprised with how quick the results had been and how little resistance the woman made in regards to your claims.

“She just said I could file a lawsuit so long as we had enough evidence to take him to court. I think Blook was called out to give more detail about the pictures he took back there.”

“Will Alphys be called out, too?” Undyne asks, standing beside the robot. Her concern is just as sharp as her suit, eye narrowed as a deep frown falls on her face. “She’s already on thin ice with all those experiments she did back at the Underground, and now she’s in trouble for messing with those cameras -- Think she’ll be put under probation or something like that again?”

You chew on your lip as you consider her question. Not only was it Alphys who looked to be in a bad spot, but Mettaton, Toriel, and everyone else who helped rescue you, as well. Winning the lawsuit against the town’s mayor was not only for the purpose of standing up for yourself, but for salvaging the monsters’ -- your friends’ -- reputation in the long run.

“I. . . I’m not too sure about that right now,” you admit, returning her frown. “Sans still has that restraining order messing with his background, so that. . . could be a possibility.”

“That’s a load of crap,” Solana comments, arms stubbornly crossed together as the policewoman and Sunny join her side. Her eyes hold anger to them, voice closely matching with her expression. “He’s only got that thing on him thanks to Jessie’s creepy behaviour.”

“Yeah,” the Whimsun agrees, hands turned to fists. "Th- They crossed way too many lines with you!"
“I’m ashamed our department didn’t wait until that bastard broke out to actually take their sentence seriously,” the policewoman adds, passing a hand through her auburn curls as she lets out a sigh. Her dark complexion grows dim as she frowns, looking displeased as those words leave her mouth.

“You guys are bein’ way too soft with your insults,” Sans jokes, intervening in the conversation. He stands beside Alphys, who scoots closer to Undyne’s side, a worrisome look on her expression as she listens to your discussion. “But I’m just glad they ain’t around here anymore. If they got handsy with (Y/N). . . Hell knows what they coulda done to the kid, also. I really wouldn’t trust them with anything, and callin’ ‘em creep or bastard’s like callin’ Burgerpants a mildly grumpy person.”

“Wretch’s a better word, then?” Mettaton comments, reiterating his first word similar to how he called the town’s mayor an arse not too long ago. “They went as far as to break out of prison, after all.”

“If they make your reputation look good, then sure. That word fits fine.”

Another mood takes over when Sans comments that, the tension the two monsters seemed to carry in regards to the case manifesting in the worst way possible. The pair glare at each other, humour and banter collapsing from the conversation almost instantly.

“Watch it, Sans -- You’re playing with fire.”

It's safe to say you and those standing nearby don’t like where this is going, everyone freezing as tension strikes. Your mind screams at you to do something while your limbs itch to move.

“The cat hated workin’ with ya, and you know it. The only reason I trust (Y/N)’s not gonna end on the same note workin’ with you is ‘cuz they’ve got options.”

“Priceless coming from a sentry who refused to do his job just to sell hotdogs and watch some stupid, shiny rocks from the sky.”

“Are you two punks seriously getting pissy with each other now of all times?” Undyne intervenes, standing in the middle so as to block them from staring at each other. “You can talk about this later if you want, but let’s keep it low right now. It’s not every day we get a chance to stand up for ourselves like this.”
At the sudden tension that rises in the waiting room, you feel yourself at the need of standing up and joining Undyne in her intervention, a frown present on your face as you do just that. Carefully, you grab Sans’s shoulders and pull him away in hopes of bringing him off the source of his stress. Mettaton only pouts and grimaces afterwards, a leg effortlessly propped over the other as he glares sharply at the skeleton in spite of your actions to prevent that, refusing to back off anytime soon.

“Thank you, Mettaton, for your help, but... We should all calm down.”

“It’s not you who I’m fighting with, honey -- Don’t bother yourself with this.”

Sans tries to take a step forward, though you halt him by turning to his side, gaze furrowed as your lips shape into a tight, straight line. “And, I can’t believe I’m saying this, but you, too. If we want this to work, we... We have to take it easy. Maybe it looks too good to be true, and maybe she did sympathize quickly, but I... I think we should trust the city’s mayor, and submit our right to defend ourselves. I don’t want you guys to feel like the Surface isn’t for you, so let’s try and keep working together to make it feel like it is.”

“You don’t know what he’s talkin’ about, (Y/N),” Sans speaks up, reminding you of Gerson’s past words. “And he doesn’t know, either -- I didn’t wanna work as a sentry anymore for a reason.”

“Alright, so maybe I don’t know why you guys suddenly started fighting,” you state, anger slipping from your tone. “But I do hope you can tell me so I can try to understand you better. I love you, Sans, but I also know I’ve still got a lot to learn about you -- And you about me, and we about us, too.” You pause to breathe, thoughts going too fast and back and forth for your liking. “I’m happy you want this relationship just as much as I do, but we need to work through this when the time’s right... Just like you said about the ring and about us living together, we’ll keep moving forward at our own pace.”

With the confession slipping in the middle of your words, your chest tightens and you’re obliged to find a route for escape. Your eyes jump around the compact room in search for a place where you could go to, almost instantly spotting a place you could choose. You spot the judge and the bailiff gathered by a farther corner of the room, these two the only ones not to have witnessed the scenario between you four.

You see they’re busy revising the papers you needed for filing the case, scrutinizing every word and discussing each worry that popped up amongst themselves.

“Wait,” Undyne’s voice comments, gaining everyone’s attention with how loud she is. “You guys are engaged now?”
A beat of silence passes on after the fish lady’s question, neither him or you able to answer it when its meaning dawns upon you.

“No wonder you’re so worked up.” Mettaton comments, directing his words at Sans as a single, stifled giggle leaves his mouth. “Didn’t really know you had it in you, but congratulations -- Maybe we can talk wedding arrangements when we’re a little less pissed with each other.”

As those words leave the robot’s mouth, tension drops, Sans’s shoulders doing the same as he lets out a chuckle and rubs a hand over his nose cavity so as to soothe his worries away.

“Thanks, pal. We ain’t engaged or anything yet, but we’re working on it.”

He looks towards you this time around, his skull softening as a faint, red colour tints his cheekbones. It’s a similar sight to when Papyrus would blush whenever you gave him a new recipe or whenever he discussed things he was passionate about.

“And thanks for setting it straight, (Y/N). Sorry I called you out on that -- It was a stupid thing to do.”

“I’m sorry about that, too,” you reply, lips breaking into a smile. “I got angry even though neither of us have had the time to sit down and talk about that.”

“Wanna talk about it when we’re back home?”

“Yeah -- That would be nice.”

Weight drops from your shoulders when you see his irises brighten, everyone else looking just as relieved with your exchange. You let out a shaky breath, closing your eyes as you sit back down in wait for Blook to return.

You listen to Undyne and Alphys brace themselves in case the lizard was to be called out, while you hear Mettaton tap his boot impatiently, most likely worried for his cousin called out on his own to go present his evidence up front. Sunny, Solana, and the policewoman move on to talk with the judge and bailiff, a wave of disappointment crashing against you when you hear the former of
the two most likely wasn’t going to be managing your case again. You take a look at them five gathered by afar, though you can already feel drowsiness take over the longer you spent waiting for the ghost.

“What do you mean you’re not gonna take the case?” Solana asks, huffing her disbelief off her chest. “Everyone out there will probably be too stuck up to take it, anyway. (Y/N) almost died tryna find someone willing to heal them!”

“I- I was wondering the same, too,” Sunny comments, sounding just as gloomy as that discovery made you feel.

“Truthfully, I am... close to having my badge and license forfeited for allowing Faust to stay under (Y/N)’s care,” the judge replies, frowning as he brings a hand to his temples. His age shows more through that action, brown skin turning more wrinkly on his forehead and nose, not taking into account his beard looking whiter than Napstablook. “The court does not want me leaving him under (Y/N)’s custody now that they know that restraining order was eradicated by them. Not only that, but they wanted to take Faust away from his current school -- I refused and managed to disprove their accusations of Faust being in danger, but that came with consequences.”

You feel short of breath when the judge comments that, shutting your eyes closed as if pretending to sleep and reminding yourself to ask him later about the subject personally. Against being nosey, you tune out their conversation after that, mind coming up with all sorts of scenarios where you would have to fight for that custody again hadn’t the judge prevented it from happening.

As you wait, you sense someone nearby, opening your eyes as subtly as you're able to see Sans sitting next to you. Half-lidded eyes make contact with the white of his eye sockets, the sudden quiet that falls over the waiting room quick to lull you into a mild, sleepy trance. You don’t do or say anything, rather waiting until you see him reach out for the hand laying on the armrest, the other one freezing on your lap when he leans in and whispers something to you.

“. . .Love ya, too, (Y/N).”

Against the erratic jolt those words bring to your heart and mind, you pretend to continue sleeping, the way those words came out showing he had taken your pretend slumber as legitimate, and for a chance to say those words back to you.
Achievements

Third Person POV

Sans's Perspective

Alphys, Mettaton, and every other person involved in (Y/N)’s rescue are spared from being called out to face the city’s mayor for what would be the third time in one day. Sans can tell everyone is just as relieved as he is not to be held back longer than they had already, the two hours he had spent inside that office, plus the additional two waiting for Napstablook’s return being enough suspense and wait for a lifetime.

With the clock now marking half past two, his next mission is to pick up his brother at his new job while Toriel came back from shopping with Frisk and Faust. He splits up from the bailiff, judge, and policewoman the moment after they pass through the doors of the city hall, being left to walk with the rest to the bus stop, where Napstablook and Sunny take up Solana’s offer of driving them back home.

Only Mettaton and (Y/N) are left accompanying him, purposefully stalling the robot in order to deal with the outburst earlier ago. Quickly, Sans turns to him before he gets the chance to talk with the human, more than ready to part ways and deal with other matters pertaining to his relationship with the latter.

“Sorry about what I said back there,” Sans speaks up, scratching his nonexistent throat. He finds it difficult to speak having (Y/N) as an audience, though he feels grateful when he sees them look away and pretend they aren’t listening to the conversation. “You, uh, really helped us out back there -- offerin’ us a room for permanent rent and all. Didn’t mean to poke at old wounds.”

The robot holds back a smile, lips parting to speak up in replace. “I could say the same to you, Sans. I know you didn’t quit as a sentry just because you didn’t want to,” Mettaton replies, passing a hand through his hair as a subtle snicker shows on his face. “I’ve. . . heard Burgerpants say a thing or two about me, but I can’t blame him. I was and still am kind of a dick, so I’m trying to be less like one now.” He stretches out a hand towards Sans, a feat that would make the skeleton raise an eyebrow were he to have any. “How about this, then: I’ll try to be more understanding with my employees, so long as you agree to come to me for arrangements if that wedding so happens to pop up. Truce?”

Taken aback by his words, Sans can’t help chuckling when he sees Mettaton is serious about making an agreement. He holds back a grin and accepts, shaking hands with the robot as he sends a small shock of electricity to his body, a gag kept hidden at his wrist thanks to his long-sleeved suit jacket.
“Knew you had to ruin this somehow,” Mettaton comments letting go of his hand.

“Knew ya had to bring up the wedding again,” Sans retaliates, laughing when he sees him do the same, (Y/N) covering a smile of their own from farther away.

It’s a much more tense situation when the monster is left to confront the human about his past job.

Uncertain, Sans grabs the steering wheel tight, giving himself some motivation and time to try bring that topic up while he made it to Papyrus’s new workplace.

“(Y/N)?”

“Yeah?”

Receiving confirmation they were listening, he breathes in and steals a look at the human now free from wearing a formal suit and tie, the red light allowing him to make brief eye contact with them.

“You already know monsters used to attack humans who fell underground, right?”

It takes a little longer than he would like for them to respond to his question, his mind already forming regrets for having decided to bring up the topic in a car he borrowed from his brother and in the middle of nowhere of all places.

What would the monster do if things were to take a wrong turn during the conversation?

Both him and (Y/N) would be obliged to stay in the car fuming until they made it somewhere other
than the endless lanes of a busy city.

“‘I do,’” they reply, sending some relief to his mind. Sans releases his grip from the wheel, a few marks showing on its rough, leathery cover. “That’s . . . the main reason why the department wanted to act so strictly with every monster they came across with. I didn’t always agree with what they were doing, but I can’t deny that I felt the same way about monsters at one point -- I was . . . scared for the safety of my people.”

Sans holds the wheel tighter on par with their last statement. Hadn’t his brother encouraged him to go make friends with those at the Surface and for him to try to look at things from a more hopeful, positive perspective, he would most likely still have only a select few he could trust, a scenario immensely different from being surrounded with as many people as he had today.

“Can’t say it ain’t a normal thing to feel that way. I felt the same way about humans ‘fore I started gettin’ along with them better. It was and still is kinda tough tryna keep both sides in harmony -- People like those who hurt you don’t really help make it better, and neither those like the bunny who got all pissed at ya when we were hangin’ out at Grillby’s”

The monster pauses in his conversation, a knot forming when he tries to say his next words.

“My job as a sentry was ‘cuz of similar tensions,” he continues, already bracing himself for the worst. “Frankly speaking, if I saw a human wanderin’ around the Underground, I was supposed to capture, and then take ‘em to Asgore. Either that, or . . .”

The knot grows bigger, and he can tell -- or rather, feel -- the human is as uncomfortable as he is. Gritting his teeth, he feels sweat build on his forehead and his soul strain underneath his ribcage. He doesn’t dare look at the human in the next red light, unable to face them without completely giving up with what he wanted to speak with them.

“. . .I had to take care of ‘em myself.”

Sans can hear the human breathe sharply and sees them cover that noise with their hand not a second after. He then catches them looking to the window next to them in a vain attempt at hiding from his sight.

“‘Course I didn’t actually do that, ‘cuz, well. . . I promised Tori not to. And I didn’t like the idea in the first place, considerin’ how hypocritical it was to say kindness’s an honourable trait all
monsters are meant have -- Then acting all two-faced by refusing to spare humans when it came to it.”

The next red light takes too long to change, the fact that he could take that spare time only to look at (Y/N) avoiding his gaze making him less than enthusiastic about continuing with what he had to say -- all the things Gerson advised him to tell the human about before he got too deep in his relationship with them. A breakup could be due were he to tread wrongly with his words.

“That’s actually why she left her position as the Queen, even if I still kept working under Asgore. ‘Sides workin’ half-assedly as a sentry, though. . . I was also in charge of judging the human if they made it all the way to the Judgment Hall. Don’t ask how a washed-up guy like me won that position, but it kinda just happened. I left the human to make their own choices instead of capturing ‘em, and waited to see how far they made it in their journey.”

The next time he hears the human make a noise similar to that of a sorrowful hiccup, he has to take the nearest emergency lane and park by a worn patch of grass, close to an intersection where three roads met. It was way too busy of an area for him to choose to stop in, but he couldn’t bring himself to wait longer.

Setting the car on parking, he unbucks his seat belt and tries to approach the human still looking out the window, placing a hand against their back.

“You, uh, doing okay there, pal?”

Watery eyes, trembling lips, and a strained smile greet him when (Y/N) turns around. They shrink back on their seat, trying and failing not to let him see them the way he was right now.

“I’m okay,” they assure him, voice choppy as tears go down their cheeks. Sans can see their (s/t) complexion already puffy and tear-stained, a sign they had been crying prior to him stopping the car. “It’s just I. . . I kind of expected something like this, but it still caught me off guard. The background checks I did during my old job. . . They weren’t as. . . direct as you’re telling me now, but they were still there. I was aware this wouldn’t be easy, but it still kinda just gets to me, y’know?” The human wipes their tears away with the back of their hand, taking in a shaky breath. “But enough about that -- What did Asgore do when he found out you weren’t doing your job as a sentry?”

“He let me keep on doing that so long as I took up the other offer. I was meant to warn and judge the human before they went to face off Asgore, where they were then meant to confront him in battle to see who was stronger -- to see if the human had changed in their journey, and if they were
capable enough to face him.”

With caution, he reaches out for the human’s cheek, irises growing brighter with interest when he notices they don’t brush him off. Instead, they grab his hand in theirs, allowing him to cup their cheek as their gaze casts down at their lap. He feels his soul grow less painful in its strain when he feels their touch, allowing for his tension to level down more.

“I didn’t exactly feel myself in the right mindset to be judging others when I was pretty much lost on my own, but I had to do it. And eventually... It became a natural thing for me to do.”

“What do you mean when you say you were lost?”

Afraid they were going to press onto that subject, his hand moves away from their cheek and grabs the back of their head, fingers tangling with their (h/l) strands of hair. He toys with them for a while, until he finds the strength to speak up again.

“I grew hopeless. Didn’t really think much good would come out from being stuck in that place for Hell knows how long. Things were gettin’ tougher down there, and Asgore’s decision wasn’t exactly helping make progress happen, so there was a time when I felt I was going through the same cycle -- that it didn’t matter tryin’ if the world wasn’t gonna change, or if it was just gonna be stuck the way it was.”

“So, do you... Do you feel any different now?”

“A whole lot more,” the monster confesses, managing a softer look towards them. “We’re... actually movin’ forward -- Things are changing. Paps’s improved his cooking, Tori’s school grows bigger every day, Undyne and Alphys are dating now. ... And I got to witness the day you won the custody case against Jessie. I’m hella proud of everyone, and I’m happy things’re going the way they are, even with all this conflict with the mayor and Jessie not backing off when they were supposed to. That’s why I wanna see us win against the mayor next, and why I came up with the thought of proposing in the first place.”

His soul lightens when he feels the human’s close by, their hands finding their way to his waist as they bring him in for a tight hug. A different, stronger sensation courses through his body when they press a warm kiss against his neck, then another, and then a third, a roused breath escaping his teeth and forcing him to grab onto their back, returning their embrace.
“I’m proud of you, too, Sans.”

He strengthens his hold on the human and presses himself close enough to feel their heart beat against his ribcage, those few words being the ones he needed to hear the most.

“Thanks, (Y/N).”
Extra: Sexuality and Consent

Chapter Notes

Content Warnings Include:

Mild suggestive content and references/hinting to past harassment.

Discretion is advised for those younger than 13.

★

Also-also, the following extra continues after chapter 45. In this extra, you may choose whether to take the next step or take more time to cope with past events. Neither of the two options are 'incorrect', so feel free to choose the one you're most comfortable with -- Or skip it entirely, as this is only an extra, after all!

The string of kisses left by (Y/N) is enough to make him want more, the calid sensation of their lips still lingering on his bones. Sans does the same for the human, planting kisses of his own against their neck until he reaches under their collarbones, where he nips lightly onto their skin, not quite knowing how much was too much for someone soft enough to bruise like they had the day he saw them lying unconscious and bleeding, yet strong enough to resist that damage as he rushed to have them receive medical attention.

He receives approval through them letting out a breath and shifting closer to him, leaving no space between them and himself.

Everything falls silent when he has (Y/N) that close to him, mind shutting off the sounds of a busy road and the muffled, static noises of the radio playing the evening news and discussing the weather and traffic. He allows himself a little more freedom by bringing his teeth to their lips, where he pecks once and then twice -- this one lasting longer in duration.

The rising heat of the human’s body combines with his colder temperature, keeping a neutral degree.

It’s hard for him not to feel overwhelmed with how much his soul is reacting, yet he manages through it, his breathing becoming infrequent and shallow when he feels the human kiss back.
*Are you okay to move on, (Y/N)? Or do you need more time to cope?

*Move on

*Cope and talk it out

★

Move on

Sans slides a hand under the human’s shirt, slipping it off with both while they take off his suit jacket. Friction arises when he’s pressed close against their body, further made intense when the human takes initiative and presses down on him. He lets out a guttural groan when he feels their soul close by, to which they respond to by taking off his shirt -- the only other piece to keep his upper decency intact. Both him and (Y/N)'s left without a top, the human now sporting a (bra/bare chest).

A euphoric noise of their own escapes the human's mouth when he reaches out for the back of their head and pulls them closer, bringing their lips to his teeth for a third time. He soon feels their tongue lick and tease his jaw, searching for his mouth. Lured, the monster parts his teeth open and lets the human explore beyond, soul thumping as he feels one hand graze with the white glow of his soul while the other keeps him pressed down under their body.

With a few more eager kisses, the car's windows turn foggy and the air conditioner grows null, the only other sounds to fill the area being of his shaggy breathing and (Y/N)'s further ragged by their makeout session.

He can't think clearly when he has to part from the human, soul still yearning for more.

"Shouldn't we go look for Papyrus? We can. . . finish this off later if you want to."
Though he wouldn’t have minded going a bit further, the monster sighs and nods, muttering a ‘you’re right’ as his irises search for his shirt and suit, these discarded to the back seat. He picks up (Y/N)’s shirt along the way, a hint of embarrassment showing on his cheekbones when it fully dawns on him just what he was going to do with them right here and now -- on a busy intersection, with only mildly tinted windows serving as a curtain for privacy.

A couple of years ago, when he was just coming out to the Surface, he wouldn’t have thought of doing something like this. Not only that, but his old self wouldn’t have bothered taking up the responsibility that being in a relationship beyond that of friends and family ensued. He had enough trouble trying to find motivation just to make new friends or keep in touch with his family, so looking at the human’s shirt and disheveled state was enough for him to stay firmly still, staring blankly at the clothing he had slipped off of (Y/N).

He had proposed and offered them to move in with him.

How could (Y/N) be a friend, lover, and family all at once?

His thoughts are brusquely shaken away when he’s embraced from behind, the human’s (h/l), (h/c) strands of hair falling over his neck as they laugh, placing a kiss on his cheekbone.

“Whatcha thinking about?” they ask, grinning brightly at him, an expression would-be contagious weren’t he still trying to decipher how they could be all three things at once. “You look spaced out.”

“After that, who wouldn’t? I dunno what just happened, but I ain’t complainin’.”

“Sorry if I got too heavy on you. I forgot you were new with all this.”

There’s a teasing trace to the human’s remark, one he can’t allow himself to let pass. “Tryna imply somethin’ with that, pal?”

(Y/N)’s grin shifts into a full-toothed smile when he says that, a snort leaving their nose as he hugs the monster tighter. “Not really. I just think it’s cute how you zoned out for a moment there. You really weren’t the most expressive guy when I first met you, so seeing you get like that’s a pretty new, kinda cool sight to see.”
“Whaddya mean by that?”

“The only side of you I got to see back then was your chill sort of one -- and the one where you would just be tutoring Faust, all formal and stuff. I never really saw you get sad or worried aside from when you talked about your brother or how the school was going.”

“Ain’t that a normal thing? I didn’t really see ya as anythin’ other than a weird, newbie parent too worked up about everything they had going on.”

“You jerk!” (Y/N) exclaims, laughing when they make the monster topple over by nudging him and subsequently losing their hold on him. “I was . . . I was trying to be serious and you ruined i- Hey!”

Sans laughs when he sees their shirt fall right on their face with a ‘whap!’, an annoyed look revealing itself when they take the clothing off their line of sight.

Whap!

He doubles over when he has his own shirt slapped against his face, letting his back fall against the backseat as he bursts into a fit of chuckles. The image of the human smiling back at him is the next thing he sees when he takes the shirt off his face, observing in silence as they slip theirs back on.

While the skeleton would rather stay where he was and drift off to sleep, he stands up and starts to get ready himself, choosing not to wear the suit jacket anymore now that the meeting was out of the way. He peers at his reflection in the window to fix his collar and pat the wrinkles down, finalizing by retrieving the tie from the floor and throwing it along with the jacket on a corner of the car.

Ready to go pick up his brother, he climbs back towards the front seat only to see (Y/N) already holding the wheel, shirt back on and face wiped off clean.

“Nap it off if you want -- I can drive from here on.”

Sans takes the front passenger seat, returning (Y/N)’s smile right before they take off on the road.
He doesn’t fall asleep, however, how close he was to having his soul call out for theirs having enough of an effect for him to stay wide awake, watching as cars and trucks zoom past him, and as green and grey backgrounds blur with the speed of the vehicle.

As Papyrus’s workplace starts to show up, he feels hope rise on his chest.

While he was still dealing with the fact that his brother was moving on to work at places farther off in the city, he felt some comfort in the thought of having (Y/N) and Faust move in next.

★

Cope and talk it out

It’s not until he slides his hand under their shirt that things take a turn, (Y/N) stopping him completely by firmly grabbing his wrist. The human’s gaze is lost as they try to regain composure, though he can still see fear flicker in their eyes.

“Sorry,” they speak up, that single word coming out too fast for the apology to feel necessary. He sees (Y/N) clutch their chest, close to the center -- where their soul would be at. All the sounds the monster had forgotten about flood his ear cavities as he centers his gaze on the human looking a little more than shaken from his perspective. A faint mark from where he had bitten shows due to their disheveled collar shirt, which they try to cover up. “I- I know I should have experience with this by now, but I. . .I’m not ready yet.”

Sans watches as (Y/N) fixes their shirt and hides the mark by fluffing the collar, hands trembling and buttoning their top all the way to avoid having it show by accident. They take in some air after that, eyes closing as a frown falls on their face.

“This isn't supposed to be new to me, so I don’t know why I’m hesitating now, but I. . .I’m sorry. I still can’t forget what happened last time.”

Uncertain as to whether physical contact was still a viable option, he scoots back to his seat and scratches the back of his head, mind perplexed as he searches for the right words to take out. He
huffs once and contemplates the situation, mind finding a solution when he remembers the number Sunny had given him.

"Have ya tried talkin’ it out with someone? I, uh, don’t know what assault feels like, but I can listen if something’s botherin’ ya."

“It’s okay,” they shrug off, hugging themselves as they close their eyes shut.

He waits for them to speak up again, the way those words rolled off their mouth hinting at their need to talk about their worries out loud.

“This is gonna sound stupid, but . . . That time Jessie forced themselves on me, it- It wasn’t the first time," the human continues, bracing themselves by breathing in, then out. "Things first started to feel off between us the day before I started college. I was . . . making breakfast, getting ready for orientation when they grabbed me at the kitchen and started making out with me, refusing to back off even though I told them to stop -- that I would be late, and that we could do it when I felt less nervous about leaving high school, and starting out in a new place."

(Y/N) stops with their breathless, shaky rambling as a snuffle leaves their nose, a hint at them being close to faltering in their words.

"They said it was a natural thing for me to do it whenever they wanted to ‘cuz we were a couple. I didn’t really like it, but they were, so I just went with it at first. We weren’t engaged or anything by that time, but I . . . I moved in with them instead of staying on campus, and that’s when they- They started getting worse -- getting too touchy with me, and making me try things I didn’t really like."

"You never talked about it with anyone?"

“No, I was. . . afraid to."

Sans hesitates when he reaches out for them, though he settles when the human grabs his hand softly.

“And remember that time I told you they were a good (husband/wife)? They were at one point, but I never realized how bad our relationship had turned until a full year went without us being together -- a full year after our divorce. I was blinded by their past and all their good points, where
we would be together without any trouble, or without them trying to have their way with me every other day. I completely forgot the real reason why they adopted Faust with me, or why they didn't want me helping monsters adjust to life on the Surface.

The human lets go of his hand to take both of theirs and pass them across their face, huffing as their shoulders loosen, hands release, and a stronger smile rises on their lips.

Sans watches as they regain stability, that sole confession appearing to be just enough for them to feel less weak. He waits again, not wanting to interrupt now that they had gone as far as to tell him all that.

“I feel way better these days, though. Just that I felt like I was back at that place again when Jessie broke out and ended in my room. I really don’t want it to be like this, but the memories just pop back in whenever we do stuff like this. I want this with you, but I’ve. I’ve gotta deal with these thoughts first.”

Sans hears them breathe deeply when they end with their words, their body still stiff around their arms and legs as they calm themselves down. An idea popping in his mind, the monster turns off the air conditioner and lowers both his and their side of the windows, allowing for wind to enter the car as he takes it out of parking and readies himself to drive off.

He glances at the time on the radio when he takes a red light, calculating how much time he had left to take them somewhere else before picking up Papyrus from work.

“Ice cream or doughnuts sound better to you? I ain’t gonna pick up Paps yet, so you choose.”

He sees the human break into a small, brighter smile out of the corner of his eye socket. Their gaze casts out towards the open window as they breathe in and out, taking in the air hitting their face and sending (h/l) locks of hair flying in all directions.

“(Ice cream/Doughnuts),” they reply, warmth replacing the fear in their voice, if only momentarily.

The next time there’s a red light, Sans meets with their gaze, returning their smile.

It was hard for him to understand everything as well as he would want to, though (Y/N)’s gaze gives him some assurance as to having dealt with it well enough not to push or make it worse. He
sees their lips part as if they were going to talk, yet he’s interrupted from looking by the light changing to green.

“I’m gonna give that number a call and see how it goes -- It wouldn’t be bad dealing with this stuff now that Jessie’s not out here anymore.”

“Never too late to get somethin’ like that off your chest.”
You cross another day off your calendar, the day you would be moving out of Toriel's home getting closer. The winter gathering was also nearby, meant to happen just two days before you were to move in with Sans, and a whole week before the day of filing the lawsuit arrived. Even with twelve, full days of preparation ahead, you couldn't avoid feeling nervous over the thought of seeing the mayor again. You were even afraid of working at the pastry shop and staying around longer than necessary, fearful he had tracked down enough information to bring you back to his level again.

Pictures, recordings, and documents related to the case are splayed out on the desk in front of you, eyes trying to take in all the pictures at once, failing to focus on the smaller details laid about. Sighing, you brace yourself for another hour of research. You take one of the pictures off the table and bring it a bit closer to your face, narrowing your eyes as you inspect the image partially blurred out by movement. The blue blur Napstablook told you about was near indecipherable to you -- You had almost no clue of its background. Hadn't the ghost given you that heads up, you wouldn't have taken that smudge of colour as the mayor running away from the scene.

You're interrupted from your observation by the sound of porcelain touching a wooden surface, glancing up from the picture to see Toriel setting a tea set down by the night table of your room, taking out a cup and the ingredients you most took a liking to. She smiles when she catches you staring, mouth parting as she goes to speak up. "You should take a rest, dear. I am aware the case is important, but your health is, too -- You have not stopped in your research since three hours ago."

"Thank you," you speak up, returning her smile when she arrives to your side and hands you the cup. "I guess I'm just... a little nervous things won't turn out well, so I've been trying to prepare as much as I can for when the day comes."

"I take it you are also worried about other matters, are you not?" Toriel asks, a hint of playfulness in her tone. "Have you told Faust about that yet?"
You take a slow sip of tea and pretend not to immediately catch onto what she was teasing you about, holding back your smile when you reply. “I haven’t. But I think he’s onto me. He might’ve been overhearing us talk that day I showed you the ring.”

Toriel giggles at your response, sitting beside you as she takes a serving of tea for herself, joining you in your break. “Why not confront him today, if so? If he seems unbothered by it, you should not worry about it so much. He got mad at you for hiding your relationship rather than for you being in one.”

“But that’s the thing, Toriel,” you persist, smile faltering when you remember the days you called Sans behind Faust’s back -- and of the day you requested the monster kept his relationship with you a secret from him. “That. . . That’s not normal! Even I wouldn’t want my parents to date someone else after witnessing something like what Jessie did to us. He’s just way too cheerful sometimes, and I fear he’s gonna get hurt by that.”

“How is that a bad thing, (Y/N)? Positivity and kindness are not weakness, but rather strong points. You are confusing that with naivety -- something Faust is not. He knew danger when he saw it. Otherwise, he would have not run away from Jessie’s care and come back to you. It will only hurt him more if you keep these things a secret from him.”

The cup is empty by the time she’s finished speaking, stress making you drink it too fast for you to even take in its flavour. She fills your cup again, allowing you some time to recover and rethink your next words.

“But that’s the thing, Toriel,” you persist, smile faltering when you remember the days you called Sans behind Faust’s back -- and of the day you requested the monster kept his relationship with you a secret from him. “That. . . That’s not normal! Even I wouldn’t want my parents to date someone else after witnessing something like what Jessie did to us. He’s just way too cheerful sometimes, and I fear he’s gonna get hurt by that.”

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“You underestimate his potential,” Toriel comments, stifling a giggle. “Sans can take up more responsibilities than you can name so long as he finds the motivation for it. While he tends to put little effort with himself, he puts great care when it comes to his brother and anything unrelated to
him. He had an aspiring career as a scientist, though. . . certain things stood in his way before he could get farther in it. Perhaps he might show you his blueprints when you move in. I bet you he-“

“The heck’re ya doing there, kid?”

“Shhh -- I’m trying to hear something!”

Your conversation is halted when you hear whispers behind the door of your room, one you’re quickly able to identify as Faust’s while the other’s too hushed and masked for you to decipher it quickly enough. It’s not long after those whispers grow louder that the door creaks open, in arriving Faust with Sans standing behind him, the two showing to have been caught in their act by the way they stand still in front of the open door.

“Aw, c’mon, kid -- Whyddya open it like that? We coulda done a knock-knock joke or somethin’,” Sans teases, directing his words at Faust, who pokes his tongue at him.

“It- It’s not my fault! You distracted me when I was trying to hide from (Y/N)! Faust objects, sounding just as annoyed as he looks, a defeated expression showing on his face as he sends a disappointed glance at Sans. “When are you guys gonna get married anyway? I . . . I didn’t know you were keeping it a secret, too! (Mom/Dad)’s the only one who does that.”

“We already talked about that,” Sans remarks, stepping in next. “We can’t yet -- Not like it ain’t impossible, but we need more time. You guys’re just gonna stay at my place ‘cuz Paps is movin’ out soon.”

“But miss Toriel has two guest rooms -- You guys just wanna be together, but you won’t admit it!”

“Do not forget he both proposed and asked them to move in at the same time.”

“You’re not helpin’, Tori.”

As Toriel, Sans, and Faust involve themselves in their banter, you fake being displeased to hide the smile on your face, happy despite the fact Faust was calling you out on your uncertainties. You soon confront the younger one of the three, however, remembering he had been overhearing your conversation with Toriel again.
“You really need to stop doing this, Faust,” you scold, furrowing your gaze at him as you place your hands on your hips. “You can’t keep sneaking up on topics like these, and I can’t speak about them to you for a reason.”

Faust frowns at your words, huffing dramatically. “But I already know you guys are dating! You’re just being a chicken again.”

“Am not -- I have my reasons.”

“Then why won’t you tell them to me?”

Caught unprepared, you take a little longer than you would like in answering his question. “I... I just can’t. It’s not that easy, Faust.”

“Is this about what the judge said about my custody and stuff?”

“How do you know about that?”

Hesitating, Faust pouts and crosses his arms, looking down at his shoes. A few locks of hair cover his face away from your sight, a hint of teary eyes showing through. “The social worker came to visit when you were unconscious. She said some stuff about how I was lucky the judge intervened, and then she just gave some papers over to Sans. I didn’t read them all, but it said something about how I was gonna be taken away if the judge didn’t do anything, and that Sans could’ve ended up in jail even though the restraining order had been taken away.”

Your gaze shoots up towards Sans, who visibly freezes when you look at him. A subtle trace of sweat shows on his forehead, and you can see his jaw clench as he averts his gaze from yours. “Sans... Is that true?”

He refuses to look at you, though you can see his face move as he forms a response. “Yeah. Didn’t wanna say anythin’ yet though, ‘cuz I know we’ve got enough stuff to deal with as it is. Thing is, I’m kinda on probation again -- I know the others are, too... But I ain’t supposed to step foot outta this city ‘till all that stuff with the mayor’s over with.”
Speechless, you have more questions than answers by the time he confesses all that, thoughts scrambling as you struggle to focus on one thought at a time. A headache starts to show on your forehead, chest tight as you try to breathe out once. The alarm on your phone rings at the same time you try to find order in your thoughts, taking it off the desk to come across a reminder you had to take the first step into filing the lawsuit today.

‘Submit evidence’, read the reminder, already one minute past three o’clock.

With how much there seemed to have piled up at once, the most recent private moment you spent with Sans at the car felt like nothing more than a dream -- a growing want of peace too farfetched to become a reality.

How long until things finally settled down?

Better asked, would they ever?

You can only stay determined, the calendar with three of the most important dates marked down in red, green, and blue markers being one of your main motivations for standing firm and getting the job done.
"Are you ready yet, punk?!"

You practically jump when Undyne bursts into your room, the door and its hinges salvaging themselves from her energy thanks to you having left it open after getting dressed up. The pictures, audio, and documents you had been preparing since waking up end on the floor -- some scattered and some intact, though the fish lady is just as quick to help you pick them out. It's difficult for you not to feel on edge with four o'clock marking on your phone, and the next alarm signaling the meeting at six taking place at the town hall.

The newfound information about Sans being unable to leave the city doesn't help with the situation, though having someone present aids in preventing you from worrying too much about it.

"I'd ask if you're doing alright, but that look on your face tells me you're not," Undyne comments, handing you the papers. "The mayor shouldn't be there, if that's what you're worried about. He should be at the police department getting interrogated, so his face shouldn't show up 'till that day in court gets here." She strikes a confident pose, placing her hands on her hips and breaking into a grin. "And if something were to happen. . . You've got me by your side!"

You smile at her unwavering demeanor, an expression soon replaced by a frown when you remember it was still a weekday. "Is it really okay for you to take a vacation day for this?" you ask, unsure about her going through the trouble of accompanying you. "I can just contact the policewoman there if anything happens."

"That still leaves you in danger of being on your own 'till you make it to her side. That town's not a friendly place anymore -- even less if it's with you, and worse if it’s with all of us. It's best if we just stick together and prevent anything like that from happening again."

"But-"

"I'm going with you, (Y/N)," she persists, staring you down. "One vacation day less isn't gonna be the end of my career. We get there and show the evidence, and then we can forget about stuff for a while by going out someplace together."

"Like where?" you ask, happier at the prospect of hanging out with Undyne.
More persuaded by your response, the fish lady perks up, excitement visible in both her posture and gaze. "The mall, the movies, the park. . . You pick! We should take some time to catch up on things, 'cuz you're hiding big things from me, (Y/N), and I'm not gonna tolerate that! Seriously, it's taken me years to get together with Alphys, but then you get to know Sans for like a year, and all of a sudden you're moving in together? I don't think anyone saw that coming with how slow you guys were taking it at first!"

"I honestly don't know how that happened either," you confess, smile growing wider when you think back on Faust's first day of tutoring. It was difficult for you to process the silly yet reserved skeleton from that day was the same as the one you had spent that moment with at the car. You had reached as far as to have him tell you his kind once sought after yours were they to fall underground. The myths regarding what past human ancestors had done to their kind were being either debunked or confirmed as truths now -- leading for old fairy tales to be labeled as history books, and for theories and postulates to be classified as either truths, lies, or half-truths. "It's hard to believe that a few years ago, I thought you guys were myths. The whole fantasy genre from movies and all that stuff has a. . . different feel to it now that I know monsters exist -- and even more now that I'm apparently engaged to one."

"We thought you guys were myths for a period in time -- that you just went extinct sometime after the war was over with," Undyne comments, sitting on the edge of your bed. You do the same, pulled in by the new surge in topic. "That spell they cast down there started to wear off with time, and that kinda just led to humans finding their way in. Toriel and Asgore took in a human child at first, and things went well for a good while, but then. . . certain things happened, and their family fell apart."

At the mention of the first fallen human and the repercussions of their passing, a gloomier mood settles over the room. The sudden energy that had risen with the topic crumbles as you try to find the right words to carry on with it.

"Are they. . . doing better, though? I know Toriel has Frisk's custody now and all, but what about Asgore? I haven't heard much from him."

For a moment, Undyne's confidence falters with the surge of that question, smile fading and posture stiffening as her eye stares down at her lap. "He's still under the department's vigilance for what happened down there. He's. . . way happier now compared to a while back, but he can't really see Frisk or pretty much any of us as much as he would like." She looks up, gaze meeting with yours. Her grim appearance disappears as a friendlier, more vivid expression reaches her eye and mouth. "Think you'd like to meet him sometime, though? I got in touch with him after what happened with the mayor and the restraining order, so now he's curious about you."

You tense at her invitation, not quite picturing how a meeting with Asgore would go. You had heard about him through the distorted views and comments of others, though that was as far as it
went. Many still saw him and those related to the Royal Guard as monsters meant to be avoided the most out of all. Even those that didn't cause harm or went after Frisk were isolated at the mention of their past job, one of the apparent reasons why Sans was being put under vigilance again.

"Of course," you reply, nodding as a subtle smile forms on your face. "When will he visit next time?"

"He'll get some time off at around Christmas," Undyne answers, a warm look crossing her eye as a smile forms on her lips. "Maybe we should make a separate get-together from the one at school! Wouldn't be bad having everyone gathered up like that time Papyrus made dinner for you."

"It was fun." You pause in your words to chuckle, Muffet crossing your thoughts. "Even that spider lady my boss is rivals with showed up."

Undyne returns your laugh, sharp teeth on display as a brighter, wholehearted grin takes her over. "Muffet may be stubborn, but that doesn't mean she's not caring, y'know? Her old, pet spider cupcake's all finicky and stuck up 'cuz of how much she pampers him."

"Pet. . . spider cupcake?"

Undyne makes a face, a combination between a grimace and a smile. She looks at you dead in the eye, disbelief visible on her gaze.

". . . Are you seriously questioning this when you're marrying the Grim Reaper?"

"Please elaborate," you request, a laugh escaping your mouth. "Why are you calling Sans that?"

"Don't you guys have a videogame or something where you can marry the Grim Reaper?" she questions, raising an eyebrow as a more playful grin creeps on her face. "I think he’s pretty much the only character available that looks similar to skeleton monsters. Maybe I can choose blue skin, red hair, and fangs to create myself, but they don't really have other options for monsters yet."

". . . You mean The Sims?"
"Yeah." She chuckles at your guess, grin widening at the sides. "Maybe you should do that to start getting ready for real life."

With the moods being lifted, you finish your discussion with the fish lady and stand up from the bed, gesturing for her to join you as you gather your piled belongings and make way out of your room. She helps you carry some of your files and follows you out, striking up another quick conversation with you about the oddities of each race: how humans carried similar physiques only mostly ranging in size and how monsters were all of different kinds; how humans had more advanced technology meant to imitate things that were out of their reach and how monsters had magic; how your ancestors once used to be adept at magical spells and how theirs learned about human traditions through old movies and games found by the dumpster underground.

You lose track of time with her by your side, grateful for the company and the distraction from overthinking.


Those are the first three words you use to describe the town hall.

The thin clothes you’re wearing are far from practical for a temperature cold enough to make the windows foggy, some of the drawn-out curtains reminding you of the mayor’s office and how fake -- outright staged -- everything had felt the more you looked around. There’s far too many people nearby, a few being unsuspecting residents of the town while most are clearly here to cast their judgment on you. Undyne stands behind you, alert for any possible danger as she waits in silence for you to enter the premises.

Almost everyone’s attention snaps to you when you step into the hall, reporters rushing to interview you as some of the passerby flock close while others stay away from the root of drama.

“What caused this conflict between you and the mayor?”

“What are the rumors about the lawsuit true?”
“Why are you submitting it?”

“What made you want to date a monster?”

“What about him made you fall for him?”

“Is it true your ex spouse-“

Everyone’s brushed off from your side when Undyne steps in the midst of all the people huddled near you, her height surpassing most of the people present as she sends a stern look at them all. Her gaze is intense, a scowl threatening to show on her visage weren’t she trying to stay calm. She hangs an arm around your shoulders and pulls you close, almost instantly driving out a reaction from one of the less informed reporters of the bunch.

“Are you the monster (Y/N)’s dating?”

Undyne’s eye grows wide at the rise of that question, gaze furrowing when she looks down at a pale-skinned man dressed in red.

“Hell no,” she replies, voice loud and firm. “I’m already taken. The guy that’s supposed to be here couldn’t make it ‘cuz of the crappy laws you guys have here.”

“So (Y/N)’s all alone now?”

“How does it feel not having his support for such a difficult procedure?

“Do you think he’s even thankful for what you’re doing for his kind?”

“I bet none of you monsters are grateful for what-“

“That’s enough,” you intervene, the scowl Undyne had been suppressing now bright and clear on
your face. “I think it’s time we-“

“Good to see you, (L/N). You seem to like getting into trouble quite often.”

At the sound of that voice and the mocking call of your last name, stress reaches new levels and breathing becomes a challenging task for you to perform. Paralyzed, you can only see his face when he turns to you, body refusing to budge when he nudges Undyne out of your way, a toothy grin showing when he casts his gaze to you.

“Didn’t I warn you about this? You sure are a stubborn one, aren’t you?”

“Back off, punk.”

Collective gasps and criticism fill the room when Undyne pulls the mayor away from you. She takes him by the wrist, grip tight as she grits her pointy teeth and glares at him. Quiet falls heavy over the hall as everyone observes the scene through frozen states, some shaking off their surprise with amused looks and devious smiles while others tend to the matter by frowning and hesitating to make an intervention.

“Stay away from them -- They've already tolerated you enough.”
Chapter Notes

As a (slightly late-ish) way to celebrate Undertale's 4th anniversary, here's an extra based on a lil' side story I'm working on!

The following timeline takes place a few years before Save Point’s plot -- It's sort of a ‘what if’ for how things could’ve turned out had you met Sans earlier by being assigned to his background check.

This is only a snippet from a short, 5 chapter long, alternate version of Save Point named Save File, which should hopefully be out on December!

*Third Person POV*

*Sans’s Perspective*

Sans watches as the human jots down his statement word for word, notebook already close to reaching its end.

He notices something odd as they finish and set the pen aside: the ring on their finger wasn’t there anymore. Given what he had learned about them through the past two months, something had to go wrong in (Y/N)’s marriage for them not to be wearing it anymore -- either that, or they had simply forgotten to wear it today.

“Excuse me, sir.”

He sets those thoughts away when he hears (Y/N) calling for him. It’s apparent he hadn’t heard them the first time for their raised volume and the awkward strain in their voice.

That was another thing he learned about the human: they were a young and an amateur police officer barely in their third month working for their town. While they were firm and rigorous with their work, there were still some points where their mask of professionality fell off.

He meets with their eyes and voices a quick apology for not hearing them the first time, hiding his smile when he sees the concerned look smacked on their face. Worrywart: that was yet another thing he knew about (Y/N) in his short time getting to know them.
Strange, however, was one adjective he could use to describe himself with.

Why was he as interested as he was for the human, anyway?

Sure, at first, it was for the sole sake of having them assigned for his background check and judgment, two procedures that would determine whether he was to roam the Surface freely or held back by shackles and extended community service. But why was he still interested in them now that he’d known them for two months -- now that he was about to be set free?

They were married! He couldn’t possibly be thinking about them in that way.

And why was he even thinking that way in the first place?

“Sir. . .”

Sans flinches as so does the human when they break him off his trance by means of placing their hand on top of his, another sign they were still an amateur when it came to setting a firm line between authority and informality. He repeats the same sorry and looks up at them to see wide eyes and slightly parted lips, shock more than visible on their expression.

“Are you alright, sir? Frankly, you seem. . . out of it today. Your freedom is more than certain already, so please don’t worry about it. I-”

Wrong move.

Those two words keep repeating themselves on his head when he bursts out a chuckle, an act that only makes the human appear more concerned for him. Awkwardly, he harrumphs and faces them again, grin widening when he speaks up. "I'm fine, bud -- Just gettin' a lil' too distracted over some stuff, but it's got nothin' to do with my freedom."

Stop.
That single word is the next to repeat itself as he readies himself to say his next words.

"Whaddya say we hang out sometime after this is over with?"

Shit.

That word goes through his head once at the sight of the human's (s/t) complexion dulling down. Their visage is tense as their eyebrows rise and lips shift into a line.

Why was making new friends so hard for him?

Wasn't he the supposed comedian who made friends through silly jokes and bad puns?

Why was it so difficult getting along with (Y/N) -- so outright worrisome to confront them about going beyond professional meetings to finally get to know them better?

Was he seriously hitting on a married (man/woman)? He knew better than that!

. . .And where did that thought come from anyway? His offer to hang out was meant for the sole sake of gaining a friend -- not a date! (Y/N) was already off limits.

"Sure," (Y/N) mutters, shooting relief right at him. "When could that be?"

"Anytime after five -- Whenever's okay with ya," he replies, breathing out afterwards.

Sans doesn't know what to think next when a smile lights up their face. He watches them take out another notebook and pass through a few pages, smile growing warmer when they stop on one of them in particular.

"That's fine with me," they mention, voice free from its strain. "I have to drop Faust off with my spouse first, though -- But I can hang out any weekday."
Of course they were still married.

What made him think a missing ring meant immediate divorce?

He brushes off those thoughts before they start scattering around, not wanting to zone out for what had to be the third time today.

"Friday at six, then?" he asks, keeping a casual tone.

"Friday at six," (Y/N) replies, nodding as they scribble the date on their notebook. They set it down on their desk after that, a note of finality present in that action. "It was a pleasure getting to know you, sir. You should receive a letter determining your freedom in the next three to four days."

The human extends a hand towards him, a more formal look present the next time they look at him. The monster hesitates when reaching out, breathing in as he braces himself for what he was about to do to them.

"I hope you have a wonderful ti-"

Brap.

At the sound of the whoopie cushion going off, embarrassment is inevitably shown on (Y/N)'s face at first, though it quickly changes to a confused look, and finally to a smile when they realize they had been pranked on. They let go of his hand and stifle a laugh, worries falling off their shoulders as they face him again.

"As I was saying..." they continue, smile still present on their face. "I hope you have a wonderful time here at the Surface, Sans. As your orientator, you can count on me if any sort of injustice were to take place regarding your race. Sadly, while it's... not possible to work in certain fields and hybrid universities haven't been established yet, you should still be accepted in most jobs, and a college for monsters will have its rise at the city soon."

"What makes ya think I wanna go to college?"
Though Sans had hoped to be teasing with his remark, he can still see concern in their eyes when he says it, making him rush to fix what he meant to say. The human beats him to it, however, a grin replacing their shock.

"You dummy," the human teases back, unable to stifle their next laugh. "Weren't you the one who said you used to self-study at that level the first time we met?"

"You know me too well."

"It's my job to!"

A light-hearted mood takes over as both they and himself grin at each other's nonsense.

He says his farewells at the human when he steps out of their office, waving back at them right as he closes the door shut and ends his meeting with them.

What in the fresh hell had he gotten himself into back there?

Was this what his brother meant about making new friends, or was he taking it the wrong way?
“Let’s calm down now, shall we?” the mayor taunts, hiding his smile. “There's no reason for us to fight.”

Still fuming, Undyne narrows her eye at the man and lets go of his wrist, stepping back yet keeping herself close to your side. “What do you want from us?”

The mayor grabs his suit jacket and fluffs his collar, taking his time to pay any actual mind to her question. Visibly irritated, Undyne stiffens and squeezes a hand into a fist, fingers looking desperate to grab something other than his wrist again. You stay by her and offer her a smile, one she returns the second she sees you looking at her.

Finally, he stops fixing his clothes and decides to answer her question, a nonchalant trace to his words. “Nothing in particular, miss. I believe I have the right to ask (miss/mister) (L/N) here why they plan to take me to court, don’t I? I gave them what they wanted, so I can’t see why they’re against me now.” He stops looking at Undyne to smile at you, a glint of amusement showing when he meets your eye. “What more do you want from me, (L/N)? I gave you the right to be with Sans, yet you don’t seem to be content with it.” It’s now your turn to grow irritated, his way of belittling you masked by his formality. “While I do care about the harmony between the two sides, you cannot expect me to solve all your problems. Humans and monsters don’t mix as well as you think, so having you be engaged to one is a miracle in itself. You cannot expect anymore than that -- Time will take its course, just like it has for everyone else.”

Through with his mocking commentary, you take a step closer to him and meet eye-to-eye, his gaze absent of what was required for him to listen to what you had to say. You give it a shot either way, not wanting to waste your opportunity of confronting him now that you were being given the chance to.

“Nothing will change if nothing’s done about it,” you disagree, keeping your breathing steady and stance upright as a way to calm down. “Time’s not the only factor -- You actually need to put in some effort for those changes to happen.”

“You’re being impatient,” the mayor retorts, hidden smile finally showing through. You can feel everyone’s eyes on you as he pauses, camera shutters sounding behind you every so often. “But what can I expect from someone who quit the department barely half a year in? From someone who lasted only a single year married? Someone who’s only known a monster for a year, and is suddenly now head over heels for him?”
A dangerous edge cuts through his formal tone, warning you over the scarce tolerance left inside him. Even the townsfolk notice the change, some already waiting for an outburst while others shrink themselves back into their seats, a few shifting between both actions.

“You are anything but determined, (L/N),” the man continues, formality now at a loss from his gaze and voice. “You have never been perseverant. Patience is a trait that doesn’t describe you. You have no integrity, and almost no sense of judgment whatsoever. The kindness you’ve shown with the monsters you never showed with Jessie or anyone of your own kind. Even Faust’s had to deal with your problems and self-conceited whining -- your little consideration for his other parent. And there’s much to say about your bravery if you couldn’t so much as gather the strength to tell your ex the things you didn’t like about them.”

Numbed by his words, you can finally feel your soul ache. Its pulse is painfully slow, yet you can’t muster up the strength to change that. You can only watch as the mayor towers over you, ire almost seeming to spill off his words.

“You have no redeeming qualities -- I believe you of all people should know when to give up.”

You’re unable to fight back, mind at a complete, utter loss for anything logical or comprehensible enough for you to use against the mayor. Cameras have gone quiet, though it’s noticeable by the people still having them out and aiming that they’ve changed their source of footage for film and recordings.

“You should avoid embarrassing yourself more than you have already. Taking this matter to court will only make it worse for you and your circus.”

He remains unmoving as he waits for you to respond -- to give into his words. You can’t manage so much as that, though, vision and mind clouded as you try to blink through the surreality of your surroundings: the silent cameras taking records of your failure and of the mayor’s victory. Voices are blended and hushed as you let yourself be overcome by silence, mind in need of a route for desolation and escape.

“Sounds to me like you’re just trying to avoid confrontation.”

Shaken out of your trance, you look around for the source of that voice.

Your eyes jolt from one corner of the room to another, until you spot a lanky and fair-skinned
man by the door leading to your meeting, plus the policewoman woman with bright, auburn hair and
darker skin at the side opposite to him, two familiar faces you were more than relieved to come
across with. A smile spreads on your face when you see the man at a corner of the room and the
woman by the other, the former who sends you a subtle wink only to then mask himself in with the
crowd. The policewoman simply nods firmly, though a smile slips on her face right before she
breaks her eyes from staring at yours.

Their intervention sparks conversation between the townsfolk and journalists gathered around
the hall, some scowling and some frowning as havoc erupts in the room.

“It . . kinda does, honestly.”

“Yeah! Why can’t they try if they have the evidence for it?”

“Sounds to me like he’s just tired of their bull, though.”

“But didn’t they only met with him twice? Sounds to me like he’s the one with no patience.”

“More like (Y/N)’s an obnoxious jerk. Don’t they know when to back off?”

Mixed feelings and commentary drown out the attention from the mayor and yourself. You take
this moment to relax and find closure on what you planned to say -- what argument were you to use
for your defense. While it's hard to come up with a plan in the short time the ruckus gives for you
to settle things out, you grab onto the first statement your mind comes up with, more than eager to
stand up against him.

"I don't think you're the one who's able to say whether I really should or shouldn't go through with
the lawsuit. That would be decided when the judge and my assigned defense evaluate what I have
with me,” you state, a smile growing on your face, confidence shining through your cloud of
doubts. “I won't back off just because you think I'm a quitter.”

Nobody comments this time, expectant looks and ‘o’-shaped mouths sufficient to quell expression
of curiosity and need for intel. You wait for the mayor’s reaction, the look he directs at you
showing the blow he endured from your retaliation. He takes a step closer, his plus the one you had
taken earlier ago enough to keep little space between you.
"Fine then," he states, snickering. "Do as you wish -- But before you carry on with this silly charade you've got going on, I want you to know you've lost all my respect, (Y/N). I had faith in you, but it seems you're too stubborn to know when to appreciate what you're given."

Far beyond what you thought possible, you see the mayor's face turn more sour than before. He takes a step back and retreats, no farewells given as he walks off with brusque, stiff steps, ignoring the questions reporters dish out at him and continuing ahead without looking back. He's the same, blue blur Napstablook had taken by the time he reaches the exit, hand hesitating over the door as he digs his nails into the wooden surface, a subtle squeeze at it allowing him to let out his anger. Roughness shows when he grabs the doorknob tight and and yanks the door open, closing it slowly enough to make it creak.

You don't know how to feel and even less what to expect when the room is taken over by silence again, not even the less prudent reporters of the bunch daring to ask another question. Those who do have prudence start picking up their cameras, microphones, and other belongings, excusing themselves as they pass through the doors and move out of the town hall. Only few people stay to watch as your name is called out from the intercom, requesting you to step in and for the next judge to decide whether the lawsuit was a viable action to take, or if your evidence was deemed as useful as having a dead cell phone and winning lottery ticket while on a stranded island.

Everyone watches when you straighten yourself and march forward.

Few watch when you stand in front of the door.

Only the bailiff, the policewoman, and Undyne watch as you step into the office cold with air conditioning, the three of them giving you quick nods and smiles of encouragement before you step in -- evidence in hand and a racing heart in the other.
Learning, Part One

Chapter Notes

Apologies in advanced for missing the past few updates. The schedule will return to normal after today!

I've been preparing a bunch of buffer chapters to keep on with a consistent schedule.

Take care, and thank you for reading until here. :-)
With the next passage, you start to wonder when Sans had written this book for him to have made this chapter as abundant as it was with both human and monster knowledge. You mark where you left off and search for the publication date at the front pages, dating back to three years ago. It catches you off guard, the fact that he knew this much already at such an early time -- when monsters were barely just getting adjusted to the Surface -- making you wonder over when had he learned about all this.

>> Monsters only carry one specific soul colour while humans’ can vary from up to seven different shades, each with a different trait. However, it’s possible for-

The sound of someone approaching the living room interrupts you from reading the paragraph in its entirety, eyes looking away from the book to see a familiar ball of fluff running down the stairs, the pitter-patter of nails on wooden flooring fast as he rushes himself towards you.

“Arf-arf!”

Toby barks when he jumps at you, making you close the book to prevent it from getting dirty. You set it aside along with the notebook while he cradles himself onto your lap, tail wagging even as he closes his eyes, lays his head down, and drifts off to sleep. Faust shows up next, looking tired and frustrated when he sees the dog in your hold.

“What’s wrong?” you ask, unable to contain a smile when you see him huff.

“Toby ate the solar system!” he exclaims, throwing his hands up in the air. “He- He didn’t even eat it, though -- He just. . . absorbed it.”

“How, exactly?” you ask again, smile more prominent this time around. “You mean he ate it without chewing?”

“No! He just. . . climbed up the dresser and stood in front of it ‘till all the planets disappeared right through him.”

“. . .What?”
You stand up straight when he describes you the scenario, mind completely forgetting the dog on your lap was actually part monster.

That was another one of the things you were just getting to learn about monsterkind. While there were human-like monsters who could work, read, and talk, there were also animal-like monsters like Toby and the few guard dogs who could only bark, play, and be petted. It was still strange for you to adapt to those differences, but even stranger still adjusting yourself to your similarities.

Monsters had monster pets, a sentence you couldn’t quite wrap your head around yet. But then again, ‘ending up engaged to, and moving in with a living, breathing skeleton monster after having him assigned to you as Faust’s math tutor’ didn’t sound so simple either.

You watch as Toby gets off your lap and jumps out of the couch, going off into a run up the same stairs Faust had chased him down from.

“Come back here, planet-eater!” Faust exclaims, following after him. “I got a good grade on that thing, and I’m not gonna let you have it!”

Left at peace once more, you’re incapable of getting back to your book now, mind still processing the fact that you had indeed ended up engaged to, and were in fact moving in with a living skeleton monster you got to know by having him assigned as Faust’s tutor -- the very same person who had gifted you the book and who you had taken a huge step in your relationship with barely weeks ago.

Night falls when you reach chapter five of the book, mind too caught up with all the information for you to want to stop reading. The fifth begins with a recap of everything you had learned so far and continues on with explaining the different types of monsters, the first few pages covering Toriel and Asgore’s species. You skim past all the types until you reach the part about skeletons, too enticed by curiosity for you to wait for the pages that discussed the type you were actually dating.

>> Alongside robots and ghosts, skeleton monsters are a rarer find across the kinds. They can reproduce through the soul just like any other type, though their souls can also be fabricated in laboratories. It takes large amounts of skill and research to successfully create them, and the chance for them to be born is as rare as finding a monster with determination, so that limits the
amount of skeletons that can be born per decade when compared to the growing population of spider, bear, and rabbit monsters. <<

You plan to read another paragraph, though a cool feeling on your neck stops you from getting any further in the chapter, Sans’s chin resting on your shoulder.

“You’ve been at it for like four hours now. You sure you don’t need a break? I, uh, know I said it was kinda embarrassin’ having you read that while I’m here, but. . . You can ask me if you have questions.”

He sits beside you on the couch, taking notice of the notebook already shockfull with annotations from the book. You grab it and move it out of the way, giving space for him to scoot closer to your side and for Toby to make his inevitable appearance again, jumping right in the middle of him and you when Sans so much as attempts to close off the distance initially left by the notebook.

“I think I’m doing fine for now,” you reply, eyes lingering on the book for a few seconds before you face him again. “I’m just. . . a little curious about something.”

You hesitate to bring up the first question that popped in your mind since reading about his type. As far as you knew, almost all the monsters you had befriended so far acted as family to him, the only actual familiar tie he had being his brother Papyrus. It was tricky trying to come up with a question that wouldn’t sound too nosy or abrupt towards the topic.

“And it kinda made me wonder about a few things. . .” you add, trailing off in your words.

“Like what?” he questions, irises flickering with interest.

You hesitate once more, hands toying with the pages of the book and gaze faltering from staring at him, a brief moment of uncertainty that makes the monster shuffle a bit closer -- as much as he can with the dog in between him and you. He waits, the only sounds present being of Toby’s faint snores and nature muffled by the closed door of the living room. You set the book aside, squeezing your hands closed and opening them afterwards.

“Do you. . . have any other relatives aside from Papyrus?” you inquire back, managing eye contact with him again. “I was reading about how skeleton monsters’ souls could be fabricated, so it made me wonder.”
“Tibia honest with ya, I have no clue where I came from. I know I had someone behind my existence, but I dunno whether they were my parent or creator. I have some old memories in my old lab, but I don’t remember much. All I know’s that I’ve been lookin’ after Paps since I was around Faust’s age.”

Sans’s response arrives much faster than you expected, how easily those words had flown out of his teeth only intensifying your curiosity and desire for knowing more. He grabs the now sleeping Toby and sets him down on his lap, one hand moving to pet the dog while the other places itself carefully on your own hand.

“Ever read Frankenstein? ‘Cuz that’s how it feels when I look back to the past sometimes. I don’t know how or why I ended up here, and it’s been hard to adjust at times.” He slips a hand against your cheek, fingers grazing with your skin as he stares directly into your eyes, a prominent trace of fondness to his staring after he blinks once, expression shifting from troubled to comfort. "I eventually got used to it, but . . . it still feels nice to think about it sometimes, y'know? Haven't had someone ask me 'bout that inna while."

"Do you wish you could've know them better, or are you fine with that now?"

"I don't really wonder much 'bout it now, but I guess it kinda shows I wanna make up for it with how I took the news that Paps hadda move out soon. I don't mind the quiet and privacy, but . . . It just doesn't feel right when I get back home from work and there's nobody or nothin' to look forward to -- Toby's livin' with me now, though he kinda just disappears aluva sudden every few days."

"So you've been feeling . . . bonely lately?" you question, a teasing note to your voice despite the initial hesitation of saying that out loud, worry for dampening the mood of the situation vanishing when you hear him chuckle.

"Very," he replies. You feel your soul flip when he leans himself against you, grinning as he plants a kiss against your lips. "Having no one to talk to when gettin' home kinda leaves a hollow feeling in my bones -- the silence reminds me of how much of a numbskull I really am."

Neither of you comment much after that topic's over with, settling by letting him rest against you, finally able to feel the pull of his soul and your own. It's a cozy, comforting sensation residing at the very center of your chest, his skull resting against it while you wrap your arms around him, the dog remaining perfectly still while you shimmy to make yourself more comfortable on the couch. You close your eyes, letting your mind find peace and ease until you hear Sans's voice mutter something under his breath, groggy with sleep.
"You did good back there. I know I couldn't be with ya, but watching it all from the TV was exciting. I'm... real glad I met you, (Y/N)."

He goes back to sleep after that, no answer given when you ask over the reasons behind him confessing all those things in so short and sudden of a moment. Rather than an answer, he nestles himself closer to you, breathing steady as he dozes off completely.
You wake up in your guest bedroom, Sans gone from your arms and book placed next to the empty side of your bed, a note left on top of it. Disoriented, you sit up in bed and reach for the note, rubbing sleep away from your eyes before you can make sense of the words scribbled on paper.

**hadda go back to my place.**

**you were out like a light, so i didn’t wanna wake ya.**

– sans.

The note leaves a smile on your face, mind wondering if he had used the same powers as those he slipped on you when your unstitched wounds were too severe for you to move around properly.

You stand up from the bed and stretch, a long, loud yawn leaving your mouth, how tired you still felt prompting you to check the time on your phone.

Still far from getting a hold of your surroundings, your eyes search around until you notice your phone left at the bedside table, screen blown up with over five missed calls and more than ten text messages left unread, including in two voicemails marked as urgent. Anxiety floods your thoughts when you make that observation, only simmering down to the slightest level possible after you read who the notifications belong to.

Your cousin was trying to contact you, the reminder you hadn’t kept in touch with him in awhile making guilt crash into your thoughts.

It had been long since you caught up with family matters outside of Faust, most of your relatives in strong disagreement about your divorce and some in deep disappointment over your choice of what they called ‘siding with the monsters’. To have one of your more understanding cousins attempting to keep himself in touch with you is enough to put out the worry building up in your mind, excitement replacing those fears.

You click on the messages first, pulled in by the thought of making amends.

**Answer me!!**
I’ve been calling you for the past two hours and you haven’t answered any of them.

I know you’re not ignoring me -- I know you wouldn’t.

Especially to me, your all-time favourite cousin.

. . . I /am/ still your favourite cousin, right?

– Sent five hours ago

Four hours.

Are you serious??

If you don’t answer in the next hour, I’m gonna drive up to that house you’ve moved into and ask that goat lady why you’re not picking up.

– Sent three hours ago

I warned you!

Past midnight or not, we gotta talk. >:(

– Sent one hour ago

Alarms go off in your head when you see how long it’s been since he sent that message. Given where he lived and the fact that he often drove a motorcycle, he could be here in less than half an hour.

You rush to get ready, scrambling to have everything in place while your mind starts to come up with assumptions as to what he could possibly want to talk about with you. It’s a race against time, feet going one way and thoughts going another. Shirts and bottoms end up scattered in bed as you hurry to find something decent enough to meet up with family. Shoes find themselves in the same condition on the floor, mind making a reminder you had to go shopping for clothes other than your work uniform, pajamas, and courtroom suit.

It takes a few more minutes of you hurrying around until you’re ready to go, steps rushing down the stairs as quiet as you can make them.
The soft ding-dong of the doorbell rings not five minutes into you making it to the living room, giving you no time to gather yourself together. In front of you stands your cousin the very moment you open the door, eye and skin colour the most notable factors to give out at you being related. The difference in reactions is the most striking, however, his upbeat self a large contrast from the puddle of confusion and stress you were currently.

He brings you back to Earth when he speaks up, happiness contradicting the anger and annoyance left on his text messages. “How’s it going, chief? Can’t believe it’s been two years since you last had a word with me! You could’ve at least told me about the engagement, y’know?” A smile shapes his lips when he goes to hug you, continuing when you both pull back. “Is it true you have a thing with a math tutor at that non-profit school everyone’s talking about? I know you married early, but I didn’t know you were that eager about doing it again!”

Mind conflicted as to how you could approach him, you look around Toriel's home and decide on letting him enter the living room, instructing him to be quiet and take his shoes off before entering.

"So you can wear shoes in, but I can't?" your cousin asks, a joking tone to his voice. "And what are you wearing, anyway? Are those supposed to be bedroom slippers, or are they dead rats?"

"We're not allowed to wear shoes inside the house unless they're bedroom slippers," you explain, smiling when he does the same. "It's not like it's eight in the morning, y'know. Your job may be at unholy hours of the night, but I'm only a cashier at a pastry shop, and Toriel's a school principal."

"I had to visit you somehow! And what better day than the one I find out you're engaged to someone else? That confrontation with the mayor was really something else! Who knew the most law-abiding officer in town would end up smooching a monster?"

He sits on the spot opposite to the one you had dozed off with Sans in, a bit of uncertainty to your step when you're left to sit on that same place again. You grow lost in thought, reprimanding yourself for letting negativity cross you.

"So how did you two meet? His name is Sans, right?"

It’s become physically impossible for you to snap out of it, thoughts lost in an unwanted spiral as words fail to leave your mouth. You feel yourself shaking and a cold sheet of sweat trail down your back, eyes closing and promptly snapping open when your cousin calls out your name once, the
concern etched in that single word overwhelming. His eyebrows furrow when you look at him, a deep frown falling on his face, replacing his enthusiasm.

“He is treating you right, isn’t he? More importantly. . . Are you treating each other right?” He stops to frown a second time, worry crossing his face. “If this was only a ruse to get publicity for the monsters’ situation, you should stop it. You shouldn’t put up with another relationship like Jessie, nor should Sans.”

“Wait,” you speak up, finally capable of wording out your thoughts again. “Where did you get that ruse idea from? I fell for him since that time he invited me to see some flowers from the Underground!”

“The news, honey,” he states, shaking his head. “You’re not safe from the mayor or those working for him. They’ll both gladly damage your image if it means it’ll benefit their cause. You chose not to take the path the department set up for you, so now they’re gonna keep making it difficult for you.” He covers a yawn and stretches right after he speaks, two actions that make you take notice of the bags under his eyes and the worn work uniform he wore. “So if it’s not a ruse. . . Are you happier now, (Y/N)? And don’t you dare lie to me -- I’m pretty sure that behaviour Jessie showed with you recently wasn’t the first time it happened.”

He glares sharply at you, daring you to be untruthful. You give into it, trying your best not to underestimate his weak but nonetheless well-intentioned attempt at making you open up to him.

“I’m happy,” you reply, staring at him. “He’s a very. . . interesting guy.”

“Interesting in what sense?”

A smile grows on your face when he asks that, sheepishness presenting itself when he smiles in return, a calm, patient look to his expression when he looks at you.

“Well. . . Aside from being a math and science tutor, he also worked a few jobs at the Underground, one of them I think had to do with star-gazing. He’s also really chill-looking, but then there’s times were he gets real worried about things and all.” You halt speaking to breathe in and huff afterwards, conflicted as to how much you could say to him. “And then when I thought he wasn’t a romance type of guy, he goes and gives me a note saying he likes me, too. I- I wasn’t even completely sure after that, though -- until I kissed him that one time, and he said he liked it. He even gave me a book about monsters, and I’m not sure if I can tell you this, but-“
“Jesus, (Y/N), calm down,” your cousin interrupts, a laugh erupting in between his words. “You’re all over the place. I get what happened before might make you more guarded, but you really shouldn’t worry as much as you’re doing just now. As long as you’re both treating each other right, you should enjoy your relationship with him. I didn’t ask you to excuse yourself or why you’re dating him.” He faces his lap, staring at his hands before returning to you again. “I may not know him yet, but if you’ve been supporting each other so far... I think you should go for it -- Go for that engagement, if you feel it’s the right choice. Maybe you were scared to act and stand up for yourself in the past, but I’m sure you’ve learned plenty now judging by how you dealt with all that stuff at the town hall.”

Overwhelmed with his visit, his words, and your doubts, you can’t avoid the urge to hug your cousin the next time he pauses, an act he returns by hugging back, the way he does reminding you of home and simpler times: when you were as happy-go-lucky as he still was, and when you didn’t worry as much as you did on the most recent years, beginning shortly after your relationship with Jessie became too much for you to handle.

You let go after a few seconds, smile returning when you see him grinning at you, an expression similar to the bailiff, policewoman, and Undyne’s when you were about to step inside the judge’s office.

“Do you want a soda or juice?” you ask, standing up from the couch. “We should catch up now if you’re free.”

“Juice is fine,” your cousin replies, grin growing brighter when you turn back to him. “We’re still not done talking about you, though -- You must tell me how he proposed to you!”

A chuckle slips in with his comment, his encouraging demeanor a more-than-welcome one.

“Fine with me so long as you tell me why you’re working so late and why you have bags under your eyes.”

It’s him who laughs next, the look he sends you denoting his surprise at you mentioning that topic.

“Fair’s fair. We have a deal, (Y/N).”
Sans's Perspective

Puzzled, Sans stares blankly at his room, twin bed the only problem he had left to solve.

If there was one thing he disliked about the new house, it was how exceedingly spacious it was compared to the one at the Underground, enough to make him hear the echoes of his footsteps whenever he walked past a room scarce of furniture or decor.

Where it made up with room to spare, it lacked in furniture. Only a small and green couch, a television set, a miniature bookshelf, and a worn-out coffee table occupied the living room, and only a twin bed along with his work desk filled the emptiness of his bedroom.

Was he really expecting to have (Y/N) move in when he pretty much occupied most of the furniture in the room all on his own?

Sans sits down on the edge of the bed first, laying down on it next, almost no space left for another person to fit comfortably in, much less a human almost twice as big as him. He was big-boned, sure, but (Y/N) was almost on the same level as Undyne and Mettaton. While Faust could easily
take up Papyrus’s old room, there was much to be said about the older human he had proposed to -
the one he had fallen asleep on with as much ease as he would on his bed after a long day of work
and being out.

He imagines bringing in a bed similar to the one at Mettaton’s hotel: big enough to fit both him and
the human, yet small enough to come in contact with them if he were to turn around or shift a little
closer.

(Y/N)’s old bed was out of the question. Their old house was a minefield of bad memories, the fact
he had once slept in that same place days before the day Jessie had tried to commit both assault and
murder in sending chills down his spine. It was still too complicated for him to bring up the subject
of how they were handling that themselves without making it awkward.

He couldn’t understand why the human would want to go back there just to retrieve holiday
decorations for the school, either. Toriel and the others had already taken up the job of retrieving
their and Faust’s belongings while the human was unconscious, so there was no need to look for
anything else. Living and reliving the past was what made the monster feel uneasy with the silence
and emptiness in the first place.

“Are you almost done, Sans? We will be late if we don’t leave soon!”

Papyrus interrupts him from going too deep into those thoughts. He sits up straight in bed to see his
brother waiting at the doorway, annoyed expression changing into one of confusion and subtle
concern when he stands up.

“Were you sleeping again?” his brother questions, glaring at him. “I told you to take those vitamins
if you were still having trouble with that!”

“No,” Sans replies, breathing air out of his nose cavity and furrowing his gaze. “I was just testing
somethin’ out. Figured I’d give things another check ‘fore (Y/N) and Faust move in.”

“Will the taller human be sleeping with you?

"I'd have to find another bed first -- This one's too small for us."

"Then why not ask Toriel for the one (Y/N)'s using now?"
"'Cuz it feels bad askin'."

"Have you even talked about it with the human? I'm sure they could help you!"

"I don't wanna make them think I rushed into this."

Papyrus huffs, giving up and placing his hands on his hips as he narrows his glare at Sans.

"Then what do you plan on doing? It would look worse if you were to tell them this when they've moved in!"

"I'll figure it out soon."

The monster watches as his brother shakes his head, sending him a judging look right as he warns him to wrap up and make it out of the house. He's left alone on par with the sound of the door clicking itself closed, leaving him to rethink his options one final time, aware he would be late were he to take another five minutes to finish getting ready.

He throws on one of his better jackets, huffs, and closes the door before leaving, stopping when he reaches the living room, where his irises spot a book he had been debating to hide even before proposing to the human. It was at the deep corner of the fiction area of the shelf, threatening him from a distance.

'A Soul's Rhythm' stood out at him from the rest, Alphys's penname 'Scale Fins' at another corner of the book’s spine. While it wasn't noticeable on a first glance, the book was a romantic fiction between a fire monster similar to Grillby and a human from the big city. Each time he passed by the book, he grew an urge to hide it, the thought (Y/N) could spot it or -- worse yet -- read it, making him reluctant to act. He had been on edge simply by handing them a textbook on monsters, so this was a whole different level in itself.

What would they think were they to spot a taboo romance novel in his collection?

Would they tease him about his tastes, or be completely weirded out by it?
"Sans! I'll leave you if you don't come out in the next three seconds!"

Interrupted again, he decides to leave the book be, still hesitant yet more convinced over his choice and the strength of his relationship with the human.

So what if they read it?

He could talk about the book with them.

They were dating him -- a monster -- after all!

More onset with his decision, he walks out of the living room and rushes after his brother already at the driver’s seat, vehicle turned on and ready to take off.

The heavy scents of perfume slip into his nose cavity right as he enters the store, the first person that receives him being a clerk clad with an apron and sneakers, a stark difference from the decor that surrounded him. The clients around are also dressed in finer clothing, making him feel a little more than underdressed when he spots people in business suits and formal dresses.

Rows and rows of clothing meet his irises, neatly hung to the walls painted in similar shades of white, silver, and gold, a hint of holiday cheer spread about in the form of pine leaves and ornamental stars and spheres. Any remarks about the store that reach his mind are stopped when Papyrus and Toriel walk into the room, catching the clerk by further surprise when (Y/N), Frisk, and Faust step in next. A few shoppers stop to look and gossip, though they don’t last much when an old lady at the far end of the store calls them out for staring. Her uniform is the same as the clerk’s: black and white with a hint of dark blue, although she possesses a higher level of authority based on how the shoppers react to her.

The clerk hesitates, a grimace showing his confliction as he looks at the group accompanying (Y/N), and later to the front desk, chewing on the inside of his lip before getting a word in on the situation. "Are you all here together?"
"Yes," Toriel replies, offering the man a smile. "We were told this was one of the few places we could go to for our shopping."

He nods once in response, casting a side-eye at (Y/N) as he frowns again. "You. . . You’re (miss/mister) (L/N), right?"

“That’s me,” the human agrees, nodding. “Is there a problem, sir?”

A response is left due as he excuses himself from them, running off to the main counter, where the short and elderly woman stands. Her greying hair is kept in a bun as empathy shows on her face, expression made less vivid when he speaks with her and is left to answer his doubts, accent sounding Dominican while his slips into Bronx slang with the pace of his speech. He makes gestures and frowns of all kinds while discussing unintelligible matters with her, the elder remaining with the same expression throughout, solemnity being the last emotion to show when the conversation ends. Appearing more secure of himself now, the clerk gives her a firm nod before tending back to the human left in wait by the entrance of the store.

“I’m afraid you’ll all have to stay in that side,” the man informs, pointing with his eyes and face over to the left corner of the store, a little less stocked though still divided by the same categories as the right side: men, women, children, teens, shoes, and undergarments. “We had to make some changes after those laws were made. They’re not supposed to be effective yet, but. . . It’s our landlord’s orders if we want to keep this place -- the lady over there’s the manager.”

“I understand that,” Toriel intervenes, stepping closer to (Y/N)’s side. “But what about fitting rooms? I do not see them on that side.”

“About that. . .”

The clerk passes a hand against the back of his neck, looking more flustered at her comment.

“They’re those two doors over there,” he adds, signaling at the left again towards two narrow, wooden doors set near the undergarments’ section of the store, a few cardboard boxes stacked next to them, opposite to where they would swing open from. “They used to be our storage rooms, but now we’re changing them. You can use them when you’re done picking out your stuff -- and I can help you with fitting if you need it.”
“And I can help pick your outfits,” the old lady speaks, emerging between the clerk and Toriel. “You’d best be looking your best if you wanna prove those people right!”

Sans stifles a chuckle, the woman’s determination made clear despite her being shorter than him, her hunched body over a steel cane making her appear much more fragile in contrast to the strength in her voice and the sharp look in her eyes. He sees her approach (Y/N) next, grabbing their face with her hands as a smile blooms on both their faces, the younger one of the two chuckling at her touch.

“You’re a fine young (man/woman), honey — Don’t let those people tell you otherwise!”

To his surprise, the woman lets go after patting their cheeks once and turns to him next.

“And you, dear,” she continues, smile turning warmer. “Make sure to do the same.”

She places a hand against his cheekbone, cupping his face the same way she had with his (girlfriend/boyfriend).

“I’m sure you’ll both achieve great things together if you set your minds to it!”

If there was another thing that became more difficult at the Surface, it was making decisions.

Sans figures he’s made a bad one by the tight spot he’s put in -- not only metaphorically, but in the most literal sense possible, too.

He’s bones against skin with the human, soul thumping whenever their fingers would graze with him as they made adjustments to his attire. Their breathing could be heard with how quiet it was inside the makeshift changing room, the faint smell of alcohol masked by peppermint gum catching him off guard. He doesn’t know how to bring it up without being blunt, though the dark circles under (Y/N)’s eyes and the slight clumsiness to their hands’ movements prompt him to ask either way.
“Hadda rough night? You look more tired than when I left.”

The human stops adjusting his dress shirt to stare directly into his irises, how little space the changing room provided making him shudder at the proximity, body subconsciously inching closer when they pull away.

“My cousin came to visit,” they reply, smiling. “He looked like he was having a bad day, so we went out for some drinks earlier this evening. I haven’t slept since midnight, though. He came to visit late, and sleep kinda just slipped past me.”

He flinches the next time he feels their hands fixing his collar, managing to cover up a shaky breath by speaking up again.

“How’d it go? I don’t think I’ve met any of your relatives yet.”

“It went well. He asked about you and our engagement.”

“Did he take it well?”

“More than I thought he would.”

As if reading his mind, (Y/N) lands a kiss on his teeth, staying long enough for him to return the gesture and for his hands to grab tightly at their waist. That causes them to press against him, leaving him cornered between a flimsy wall and their sturdier body.

“ Didn’t take you for a bottom,” they comment, snickering when they break the kiss.

“A what?” he asks, arching a socket.

“Nothing.”
Sans lets them kiss him another time, craning his neck to the side for them to have their fun with, the sensation sending waves of euphoria through his soul and causing him to pay back to them in the form of careful touches, kisses, and neck bites. He keeps his eye sockets closed throughout, stopping when he hears a knock on the door and a soft voice ask over how much progress both they and himself were making with the clothes' fitting.
Cheery music blends into the background as you distract yourself with the decor spread around. The old Christmas tree you used at your old home was now at a corner of the dance floor, memories of when Faust made you buy it flooding your thoughts. While you (did/didn’t) celebrate the holiday, you had given up decorating for the occasion shortly after your divorce. You didn’t see a reason for it now that your family had broken up, yet Faust thought otherwise. He had been persistent to buy even the smallest tree the store had to offer, leading you to relent and decide on the best one according to the size of your home and budget.

White lights are wrapped around the tree while ones of varied colours are hung on the walls, one side of the walls being used as a canvas for the students to paint on, drawings varying from holiday-themed sketches to simpler doodles. A tacky disco ball stands at the middle of the ceiling, while red and green ribbons are placed on the tables occupied with various food, desserts, and drinks, the largest containing the diplomas for the students that were to graduate this year.

“Yo, (Y/N)!”

Undyne greets you first, standing in front of you and holding up a fist for you to bump. Unlike her usual attire, she’s wearing a suit and her hair is let down, the length reaching down to her waist and eyepatch changed to one matching the soft beige of her attire. You bump your fist with hers, smiling when you see her grinning at you.

“This place looks great! Is that tree yours?”

“It’s the school’s now. I’ll look for another one if Faust wants to this year.”

Alphys and Sunny arrive next, joining in on the conversation. The scientist has her outfit changed for a red cocktail dress and some short-height heels while the Whimsun wears a simpler, yellow sundress, along with a headband of a darker hue, antennae pushed away from her face.

“You- You’re so close to moving out!” Alphys exclaims, hands turned to fists as her tone grows high-pitched with excitement. “Aren’t you a little n- nervous or anything? I . . . I wouldn’t be able to sleep i- if I were in your place!”

“Can’t say I’m not,” you admit, smiling. “But I think I still haven’t grown fully aware of it yet -- It hasn’t hit me that hard, if I’m gonna be honest.”
“Are you okay, though?” Sunny asks, a frown on her face. “I- I mean with moving on and all that stuff. I know Faust took it well, but... What about you?”

“I think I’m ready to move on,” you reply, letting your smile grow more prominent as a way to reassure her with your expression. “Thanks for worrying, Sunny.”

A tiny blush spreads on her cheeks, frail hands moving to cover her face as she smiles back at you. “Just let me know if you’re ever feeling down.”

Undyne laughs at the sight of the Whimsun’s flustered look, Alphys holding back a smile of her own. The mood grows lighter, your own confidence over moving out of Toriel’s home and in with Sans urging you to speak with him about the subject, a topic you had failed to bring up a few days ago given the mild trouble that surged when entering the store and the more steamier situation that took place in the makeshift changing room.

Undyne distracts you from that thought by inviting you to meet other people, Alphys holding her hand and Sunny waiting next to you.

You focus on the party, though you still remind yourself to talk with him were you to spot him around the vast crowds of humans and monsters alike dispersed around the halls -- some families, some friends, and some close coworkers exchanging food, gifts, and conversation. All three of your companions stop walking when you make it to a small group surrounding Toriel, most of them familiar yet unknown faces, some of them you’ve met before, and a single one you recognized a little too well for your liking and general sense of comfort. The chance to escape is given to you when nobody notices your arrival on a first glance, but that doesn’t stop your company from making you stay by letting their presence known not long after you made your plans for escaping.

Lucy, Jessie’s most recent ex-(girlfriend/boyfriend) calls out your name, how on-edge their presence made you feel almost causing you to jolt and leap out of the situation. They were a subtle mirror of your appearance: in height, weight, skin, and even eye colour, Jessie’s preferred type clearly shown by how similar you both looked. The thought Jessie had ended up with someone almost on a sibling-like resemblance to you not long after your divorce drives chills toward your body, a tremble you try to suppress with that thought.

Noticing your discomfort, Toriel’s mouth falls into a frown as so does Lucy’s, the latter who approaches your side and asks if you would like to join them outside for a talk.
“I only came here to check how Faust was doing,” they explain, looking at you. “I knew he wrote about having a monster as his tutor last semester, but I didn’t really expect you’d end up dating him.”

Your mind goes blank for a moment, until you remember the English assignment Toriel had given him more than a few months ago. You first recall the little compliment and goat lady doodle the monster had left for Faust, and afterwards come across the faint memory of the drawing he had made of everyone. A sting pierces your chest when you think back on how much hope Faust had for Jessie and Lucy then, and how he stated his happiness despite the confusion of having three parents and one tutor influencing his life.

You wonder what he would write now.

‘I live with (Y/N) and Sans now, and Lucy visits sometimes, too. I can’t see Jessie much, though -- They’re in jail.’ sounded like a too drastic and abrupt of a change for all that to have occurred in half a year.

“(Y/N)/Internal server error”

The (woman/man) calls out your name again, stopping you from your spiral as you shake your head softly, tears pricking at your eyes. You breathe in deeply, trying to prevent yourself from breaking down.

Would things be as complex as they were now had you taken action earlier -- hadn’t you let things go out of your reach?

It was hard for you to believe Faust was coping with only weekly therapy sessions with the Whimsun at his school. She had been kind enough to continue offering her services even after the semester ended, while Faust had been brave enough to continue pushing through with it. You, on the other hand, were still having trouble adjusting to your surroundings, moments like these hitting at places you didn’t want to remember any longer.

“I’m sorry, I . . .” You hesitate in your words, not wanting to come off as rude. “I don’t think I can talk about this right now. I can tell you how Faust’s doing, but beyond that, I . . .”

“How could you take it -- them?”
Making up for your inability to finish that statement, Lucy brings up a question, one that takes you awhile to process.

“I have no clue,” you admit, stifling a chuckle void of humour. “I was blinded, I guess. I knew Jessie didn’t like me working for the benefit of human-monster harmony. . . But I kept going through with it. I didn’t think when we adopted Faust, either -- that Jessie wouldn’t change with it, and that they would still keep trying to control me.”

“You have too much patience -- I dumped Jessie barely a month into dating them.” A small smile shows on Lucy’s face, one you would find comforting weren’t they so resemblant to you in appearance. “Nobody but my mother can tell me what I can and can’t do.”

A smile of your own slips in with their last statement, though it doesn’t last long. “I was just stupid and scared. Ironic considering what my job used to be.”

“That still doesn’t take their faults away -- I’m just glad they weren’t like that with Faust.”

You don’t notice you’re crying until you feel something cold and sticky run down your cheek. A deeper frown forms on Lucy’s face as they rummage through their belongings, most likely to fetch out a napkin for you.

“You can’t keep living in the past,” they advise, handing it to you. “Maybe you could’ve acted differently back then, but now is now. You should keep going forward now that you’ve got a different mindset and that you’re dating someone else.” They wait for you to wipe your tears away, a subtle, encouraging grin shining through when you form a more confident look of your own. “Monster or not, you’ve got a family now -- a real one. Toriel’s got you, and all those folks you’ve been hanging out with, too. And if what Sans told me’s true, then I think you guys are both putting effort into your relationship. That’s what makes things flow.”

“What did he say?” you ask, left muddled by the (woman’s/man’s) words.

“You know that ring he gave you -- the one the news’ been trying to get a scoop on?”

“Yeah?”

“It ain’t store-bought. The guy apparently made it from some minerals found at the Underground.”
It takes a full minute for Lucy’s words to dawn upon you, mind clicking when you think back on the little black box with the key and the ring. The shock of being proposed to again had taken most of the attention off the general appearance of the ring, though you still remember the silver look it had and how it shone when being casted out into the light. The star-like rock he had given you after your friendship bloomed had a similar vibrancy to it, yet you can’t so much as begin to imagine how he managed to craft a ring from scratch in the first place.

“I didn’t come here to make your life difficult, (Y/N),” Lucy speaks up once more, moving you away from those thoughts. “I’m only here to at least meet my ex’s son for one last time now that he’s gonna be taken under a new wing, so it really makes things easier knowing he’ll be staying with you and that tutor guy.”

You stay quiet for another while, every statement that came out of Lucy’s mouth making you realize more and more things you hadn’t grown fully aware of.

“I’m happy for you three.”
On and On, Part Two

You hug Lucy when it’s time to say goodbye, Faust doing the same when he reaches your side. He arrives breathless and wheezing, reddened face and wrinkled clothes making you deduct he had been playing outside, the bunny monster he was pretty much close friends with at this point strengthening your conclusion as to where he had run off to. His two other monster friends are in the same condition as him, exhaustion made even clearer thanks to them being made of fire. Their flickering embers have faded from a strong shade of orange to a faint yellow, the pair rushing off with their parents to rest. The bunny leaves next, waving goodbye before walking off to get herself cleaned up.

As Lucy leaves last, you’re left with more questions in terms of those related to Sans, though he isn’t anywhere near to be seen among all the people gathered in one same hall. Undyne and Alphys are now dancing at a farther corner of the room while Sunny’s occupied talking with Nasptablook and Shyren, the three complementing each other with their varied levels of introversion. Toriel’s busy greeting parents and students into the celebration, Gerson helping her deal with the growing number of guests making their way in, and Papyrus serving the younger students of the bunch some snacks.

“Can I go with Frisk and MK?” Faust asks, excitement slipping from his voice when he spots the two from afar. His gaze is hopeful while his body remains still, impatient for your response.

“Go ahead,” you concede, laughing. “Just don’t go past the school gates, alright? It’s too dark out.”

He nods vigorously, excitement turning to full display as he thanks you, hugging you tight. You try to fix his clothing before he runs off, though his energy beats you to it. Instead, you watch as he joins the two friends in a conversation and decide to walk around when assuring yourself he would be alright left on his own.

A familiar tap on the shoulder makes you look elsewhere to come across with the bunny girl’s parent: the brown bear who had once rescued you from being squished into the angry crowd Undyne had tried to calm after the new laws were mentioned on the radio. He offers a hand to you, inviting you to dance. You try to look for his wife, though you can’t spot her nearby. The observation leads you to form a new one: the same bear that was currently standing in front of you had come to the school alone again. The last time you had spotted him with his wife had been the day they both offered to give Faust a ride to school.

“Is everything alright, sir?” you ask, treading lightly in your words. You try to look for a more recent memory, eventually coming across the picture the number going by ‘Jessie’ had sent you. The fear in the bunny woman’s eyes as she was held captive while the bear was kept facing the ground was still vivid in your mind, Sunny and Solana’s own conditions present among your
memories all the same. “You, uh. . . look a little down.”

You accept his offer to dance and wait as he takes the lead, carefully holding onto your left shoulder and right hand as he follows along with the rhythm of the ballad already halfway through reaching an end, a faint smile managing to break past the stoic look on his face.

“I am fine,” he assures you, looking down. “Though I have to admit seeing you here brings back memories I have tried to suppress.”

You switch sides with him on par with the change in music, shifting from a slow song to a more rhythmic one. “Is this about your. . . your wife?”

“I’m afraid so.” It takes him awhile to continue, face remaining cast down at the floor. “Even before these laws were mentioned publicly, she had been having second thoughts. She was scared for the future -- that our daughter would not have a proper future if, well. . . if she kept on being friends with humans. I did not agree with her, so we decided to take some time away from each other until we both cleared our heads. The day she came to pick up her belongings was the same day the masked people broke into our home, so it has taken far longer for her to snap out of her doubts and the reasoning behind those fears. It’s truly not a safe place anywhere -- for her or for any of us. But she still believes this can be solved so long as humans and monsters stay separate, while I believe this can be solved so long as we don’t hide and submit ourselves to this lifestyle anymore.”

Another song comes up as the latest one ends, leading you to break up. You stay still as you watch him stay quiet, eyes shiny with melancholy and smile shaking, barely kept firm by his positive attitude. You offer him a soft pat on the shoulder and grip him tight, enough for him to finally meet your eyes and form a stronger smile.

“Seeing you progress is what gives me -- what gives us -- hope. I can hardly remember the last time I received as much optimism as I did when I heard the news of you getting engaged soon. . . Knowing you have moved on despite everything feels like a breath of fresh air. It gives me hope that she will do the same, and that so will I someday. Our daughter is already doing that by herself, so it’s only the two of us left.”

You both conclude your conversation and plan to take your separate ways after that, though not before walking over to the drinks set by one of the tables. He grabs a soda while you pick your favourite out of all the options, staying by his side until you both finish your drinks, and wrapping things up by smiling at him right before he tends to his daughter playing with other students.
“Take care, sir.”

“Right back at you, (Y/N).”

You’re barely given enough time to stay in one place for longer than a few minutes as the celebration grows bigger, bumping in with someone new or familiar whenever you walked as much as two steps forward. Toriel invites you to have something to eat while Gerson asks over how you’re doing. Sunny calls you over to meet her younger sibling whereas the school therapist invites you over for a chat, and Papyrus questions over your progress with the case. You fulfill all of those events, clock marking half past nine when you’re finished.

Students can already be seen taking their leave, most of the diplomas gone along with the snacks left on display.

With the decrease in people around to see or listen, Nasptablook changes the playlist for his personalized tunes while Shyren hums to the beat. Everyone present stops to watch and listen, Undyne joining in by taking the keyboard placed next to the speakers.

It’s an abrupt change, traditional holiday music swapped for a melody shared between the ghost’s synth, the fish lady’s piano, and the siren’s humming.

Gerson begins to tap his cane with the tune, encouraging others to join in. The youngest students laugh and play while the oldest are the ones who clap and stomp their feet, parents and guardians accompanying them while Toriel watches, pride in her eyes and posture as her face is overtaken by joy. The sound of drums and cymbals comes from one of the band members of the school, another following up with a more low-pitched piano melody, and a third playing the saxophone.

The last instrument to join is a trombone, the monster you had been searching for since the beginning of the winter gathering showing up from the door leading to the playground. His attire is the one you had helped him adjust at the changing room: a simple, grey suit with a light blue necktie and some black dress shoes to go with it.

“A toast for another year!”
Mettaton’s voice is heard next. You move your eyes away from Sans to see the robot standing next to his cousin, wine glass raised high as he grins bright, wavy hair kept away from his face and clothes changed for a long, navy blue dress with white high-heeled boots.

“For another year teaching, learning, and working for this school! Nobody can tell us we’re not allowed to work together,” he adds, pointing with his microphone at the audience. “It’s thanks to people like you that this school can continue offering its services to the public. We thank you all from the bottom of our souls and hearts for staying with us and for allowing your children to stay here.”

Next, he points at you, catching you by surprise.

“I would like to ask (miss/mister) (L/N) here to step up.”

He then points at Sans, who almost messes up a note when having attention turned to him.

“And Sans, too,” he continues, widening his smile. "I would like to have a word with you all about the recent event that's made our school as well-known as it is now, and who were -- who are -- the two main people behind the rise of it all."
I wasn't able to upload this part last Friday, so here's a double update for today to stay up-to-date!

You walk up to the stage first, Mettaton helping you reach him by placing the wine glass at the podium in front of him and taking his free hand in yours, microphone being held in his other hand. He urges Sans to step up next and waits until he gives in for him to continue speaking.

"I'm sure most of you already know who these two people are," the robot continues, sending a subtle glare at Sans when he sees him still hesitating by afar.

You smile at him and shrug as if to state your very own confusion over being pulled into the stage, encouraging him to join your side.

"While the rumours were first indecent and taken under a negative light, a tutor from this school ended up falling for the parent of one of our students. Many saw it as a mocking act -- a careless choice made by both people involved; a rash decision that would only lower the reputation of the school and tamper with monster-human harmony. Only very few people believed in their friendship, and much less their more romantic feelings towards each other."

Finally, Sans makes it to the stage, posture stiff as he waits for the robot to keep on speaking.

“But now, it’s different. The two, along with their son, have built a family out of this encounter. They started off with nothing but their connection with the school and are currently on close enough levels that (Y/N) and Faust will be moving into Sans’s home.”

“Shouldn’t (Y/N) be married for them to be agreeing to that?” a voice asks, lost in the crowd gathered to watch you three stand at the stage. The music stops, Nasptablook observing from behind his equipment while Shyren shies behind him. Faces turn this way and that in search for the one who made the comment, though they’re unable to stop the culprit.

“Didn’t you hear?” another voice murmurs, amusement in their tone. “They shared a bed with their previous (girlfriend/boyfriend) when they were younger!”
“Enough,” Mettaton intervenes, stomping his boot against the floor, the sound of his metallic body against wood provoking a loud ‘thump’ to reverberate across the hall. “These are the same rumours I’ve been talking about. What they chose to do with their past private life is their business — Not everyone follows the same traditions.”

“But they were being careless. How else would they end up with someone like Jessie?”

You feel a hand slip around your waist as comments and counters keep rising, Sans’s grip strong as he pulls you closer. Your eyes meet with his face to see him facing the crowd, expression unreadable and posture changed to a stable one.

“Would you all just be quiet for one minute?” the robot speaks up again, eyebrows furrowed at the crowd, a frown complimenting that expression. “If we want to keep on with what we have now, we have to be calm and at peace with each other — not bring someone down like this! Please listen, and be mindful there’s still students around to watch.”

“That guy’s received nothing but trouble since he got the hots for a human!” the same man who had mentioned your name the day you went to pick up Faust’s grades exclaims, daughter trying to stop him by pulling persistently at his leg, a frown and tears making her desperation show. “He’s been sentenced twice for being around (Y/N) and their kid, and now you expect him to live with that — to act as the parent their ex never was?”

“There’s plenty monsters he could’ve gone out with, yet he chose the hard way!” a white bunny monster adds, joining the man in his reasoning. “Those new laws wouldn’t have been established earlier if the two had just stayed as strangers.”

The sound of the microphone shrieking stops everyone from getting further riled up with each other, a heavy set of footsteps taking over the silence that falls with the interruption. Everyone’s gazes turn to the stage again, where Mettaton’s passed down the microphone to a goat man clad in a black suit. His beard and horns stand out the most, straight mouth and sharp eyes unwavering as he stares down at the crowd.

“Please listen,” he begins, voice resounding enough not to need the microphone held out in front of him. “While I am not the greatest example of monster-human harmony, I would like to ask that you stop your comments and listen.”

He sets the microphone aside, noticing that detail himself.
“As many of you know, I have been under probation for the past two years. What I did and what I made others do during my time as a king is unforgivable, and I am aware it would be unrealistic for me to expect any form of sympathy from you all, but please do not act this way with those who are undoubtedly trying to make a change.”

He pauses to fix his tie, an action that gives away his nervousness despite his presence.

“It is in our nature — both human and monster — to fear change; to fear what is unknown. Humans were the first to show this behaviour many centuries ago, and monsters adapted; they eventually learned from that and practiced that behaviour themselves. We have hurt each other in the process of creating acquaintance with one another, but now that we’ve been given the opportunity to change that, I believe we should let people like (Y/N) and Sans create this change. Both kinds were once at peace, and we are being given another chance to achieve that again. I am certain that very few of you would believe me if I said the same monster who stands next to the human was once meant to be on the lookout for their kind — to be cautious, wary, and untrusting of them. I was… more than overjoyed the day I found out he was making plans for proposing, an act that was far beyond the reach of my expectations.”

The goat man faces you, expression shifting to a smile and kind eyes when you meet with his gaze. Everyone around does the same, expectant for what was to happen next.

“Would the two of you be so kind as to step up beside me? I would like to conclude with this final comment.”

You see Sans nod from the corner of your eye, urging you to react in your own way. After some quick thought, you manage a smile and nod afterwards, walking at the same pace as Sans’s until you make it to Asgore’s side.

His smile brightens when you reach him, though he brushes it off to stare at the crowd again.

“I am certain (Y/N) and Sans are not the only couple who are like this. I hope their continued growth serves as encouragement for those of you who are not ready to say it out loud yet. Matters have been indubitably difficult lately, but I am confident they will result well. If you would all show your support the day of the trial — the day we are given the chance to go against one of the major obstacles keeping us the way we are currently — I believe we can defeat the mayor in court and banish those laws in the process.”
Asgore hands the microphone back to Mettaton, stepping aside for him to close things up. The robot brushes some hair off his face, a smile shining through.

“Would you be able to show an item to the audience, (Y/N)? Perhaps the locket or the key to his house.”

Attention being brought upon you, your hand lets go of Sans’s and reaches for the top of your (dress/shirt), slipping under the fabric to take out the locket. You take a quick glance at it before showing it towards the audience, opening it for them to see the picture of you and Faust at the garden.

“Life can be as unexpected as it is difficult. Not even Alphys expected them to get together — and she loves shipping people from a distance.”

“M- Mettaton!” Alphys shrieks, embarrassment spreading on her cheeks.

“You know it’s true, darling — I’m not making fun of you for it.”

He breaks away from staring at Alphys to wink at you and Sans, a playful grin rising on his face.

“’Cuz I’m afraid I’m guilty of that, too.”

A waiting line continues to grow even as you sit down to eat, the catering you had helped Mettaton with turning out better than you anticipated it to.

“So are ya gonna work with Mettaton from now on?” Sans asks, an opportunity presenting itself now that he’s the only one present. The others are busy either talking amongst themselves or making the line to eat, Faust already lost in a deep sleep with his head resting on your lap, body spread across another seat.
“I think so,” you reply, placing a hand on top of Faust’s head. The plate rests in front of you, appetite hard to find with how overwhelming the prior situation had been. “I think it’s time I left that other place.”

“Still worried ‘bout being tracked down?”

“Yeah, I . . . I can’t close up shop late in the night without looking over my shoulder every few seconds.”

You decide to pick up Faust from your lap and set him down on the decorative pillows set close by. Sans shifts the pillows into a bed and waits for you to place Faust there, warmth reaching the back of your ears when you make eye contact with the monster, mind waiting for the right moment to bring up the subject with him.

“I’ve been wanting to talk with you about something,” you explain, sitting down again at the table and focusing on your food. “About . . . moving in with you and all that.”

Sans brings his chair closer, waiting for you to continue.

“I heard from Lucy that you made that ring yourself, and well . . . It got me thinking.” You try to find the right words, thoughts betraying you by filling your mind with uncertainties. What was at one point a conversation you wanted to start for the sole sake of thanking him for the handmade gift turns into you bringing up your doubts — ones that wouldn’t drown and instead resurface whenever you remembered the comments people made about your relationship. “Wouldn't this all be too much responsibility for you? I don’t want to pressure you into anything like that.”

He doesn’t answer, instead taking his drink off the table to sip from it. You watch him place it down beside his plate next, irises turning to you again.

“I love you, (Y/N), and I really wanna do this with ya. I wanna share my life with you and work this out together.”

He places a hand on your lap — where the stitches were still in the process of healing — carefully tracing his fingers on the bump left by the bullet wound.
“I’m tired of waitin’ — tired of thinkin’ I won’t be able to do something I wanna do. I know I can do this, so that’s why I asked you and Faust to stay with me in the first place.”

“Are you... Are you really sure about all this?”

He leans closer, enough for you to hear him breathing and see the bright white of his irises staring straight into you.

“What do I need to do for you to understand I’m sure?”

The way his gaze lingers on your lips leads you to look away, trying not to look embarrassed after what you had called him at the changing room. His attitude seems more confident now, though that doesn’t erase your worries as to whether he was being completely honest, or if he was still putting up a front regarding how he was coping with the situation.

“I’m happy with our relationship, and I want ya to feel happy, too,” he adds, taking his hand off your wound to place it on your hand and squeeze it tight. “Maybe it was hard for me to open up at first, and I know we’ve got all this stuff going against us, but now I’m real sure about this. And I don’t wanna let that opportunity go to waste.”

Further overwhelmed, you break into a smile and cover up a sniffle, embracing the monster to prevent him from seeing you tear up.

“Are those happy tears or somethin’? I really can’t tell right now.”

You chuckle at his comment, strengthening your hold on him as you press a kiss far against the side of his neck, trying your best not to end up the same way as you had with Lucy.

“They’re happy tears,” you assure him, holding back a grin when you press another kiss on the same spot, taking longer this time. “I’m just happy we’re taking our relationship to the necks level.”

“Just let me know necks time, then,” he retorts, sharing a laugh. “Ya really caught me off guard there — getting all sad and worried about this aluva sudden.”
It’s a brand new day.

You wake up to a skeleton monster still asleep, bedsheets shifting as you try to move as quietly as possible, not wanting to wake him yet. Today marked your fifth day since having moved in with Sans, though you were far from getting used to waking up in the same bed as him. The bedroom’s surrounded by sunlight, the curtains you had forgotten to drag yesterday letting the sun pierce through the windows, something he attempts to shield himself from by covering his face with your arm.

At that observation, you proceed to further inspect the room, body wanting to stay a little longer, mind reminding you of today’s trial, and consciousness not wanting to wake the monster up. The time marked on the alarm clock is what makes you come to a decision once you calculate how much time you had left for preparing for the big day ahead.

Sans stops you the second you try to stand up, hands grabbing your wrists as he moves himself on top of you, irises remaining cloudy with sleep.

“Good luck with today,” he speaks up, letting you go. “It really sucks I’m stuck here to watch you deal with all that by yourself.”

“Knowing you’ll be watching’s enough,” you state, smiling. “Today’s all give or take. I already did this once, and I can do it again.”

He grins at your comment, pressing his teeth against the tip of your nose and body weighing down on you whilst still avoiding the row of stitches on your leg, exposed by the pajamas you currently wore. You bring your hands around his waist, pulling him into a firm hug and staying that way for a few more seconds.
“I really gotta see your soul again someday.”

“Why’s that?”

His hand hovers over your chest, a small shock emerging from your body when it stays there.

“I can feel it now -- the same way I feel mine react to stuff, only more subtle.”

You take a look at yourself from the reflection of the car’s windows, suit and tie matching with the dress (skirt/pants) Muffet had tailored out for you, one of the skills that came with her being able to craft spiderwebs on a daily basis. Your hair’s combed back with gel while your face is coated with a light sheet of powder and lips with chapstick, something Mettaton had insisted you wore regardless of your preference towards makeup. A metal brooch holds your suit jacket together, only the shirt’s white collar slipping into view.

“Are you okay?” Faust’s voice asks, feet touching the ground. He gets off the car, stands up straight, and dusts his clothes clean, looking up at you afterwards. “You’ve been staring at your clothes for a while now.”

“I’m fine,” you answer, breathing in. “Just a little nervous, s’all.”

Faust nods at your words, a smile encouraging you to move forward. He follows you the moment you begin walking, obliging you to settle down into a steadier pace.

The wind feels constricting even with the trees surrounding the parking lot, the number of cars already present and the sight of people already gathered at the front of the building worsening that feeling. Faust holds your hand until you make it there, his manner of encouraging you helping you stay down-to-earth and preventing worry from settling itself in your thoughts.

He lets go when you reach your destination, eyes inspecting you one final time before he runs off to greet familiar faces, his way of scanning your state and general well-being causing a smile to
rise on your expression.

Left on your own, you look around, observing the few groups dispersed in the waiting area of the courtroom. Most of the monsters you knew were on the left side of the premises, others you didn’t know as well as them standing at a more distant corner, reluctant to join in on what they were discussing. Most of the humans present are unknown, though you can spot Solana and Frisk, along with the policewoman, bailiff, and judge waiting for you, the people you used to work with and for standing at a different spot, some grinning and some frowning when they spot you. The mayor’s the only one missing, your subtle desire for him not to show up battling with the less discreet urgency for you to confront him once and for all, pulse racing the more time goes on without you seeing him.

“Are you. . . Are you alright, (miss/sir)?”

You look away from your old coworkers to see a woman around your age standing in front of you, glasses almost on the tip of her nose and pale cheeks reddened with exhaustion. She’s short of breath, chest rising and falling a few times until she manages to say something else.

“S- Sorry for being late. It’s inexcusable of me considering my position here.”

You raise an eyebrow, confusion surging with her introduction. Your eyes take in her appearance: awkwardly stiff posture, overly formal clothing, and excessive apologies, three traits you were guilty of when starting out yourself, and the same ones you identified on the bailiff the day you faced off Jessie in court. “It’s fine, uh. . .” You look at her name tag kept hidden by the colour of her outfit. “Mrs. Cortez?”

Two things take you off guard, mainly the ‘Mrs.’ suggesting her to be married and secondly, her two last names, these the same ones as Solana’s. Her looking younger than you makes you wonder over her exact age, though her difference in appearance compared to Solana’s doesn’t surprise you as much -- given the tendency for physical diversity in her ethnicity.

“I’m. . . Yes!” she exclaims, clearing her throat afterwards. “I’m supposed to be your defense attorney for this trial. Th- The judge hasn’t shown up yet, so we’re all just waiting for the courtroom to open.”

You follow the lawyer to where Solana and the others are, one of the two questions being answered when they both greet each other with a hug and mention at being cousins. The ‘Mrs.’ before her last name is left unanswered, however, though you’re not in a position to ask over that subject currently.
“Do you have your evidence with you? Any witnesses or additional information should be consulted with me, as well.”

There’s not much time for further pleasantries after she asks that question, the same mask of professionalism you had once used falling over her. She keeps her gaze firm, lips shifting into a line as she waits, fixing her glasses and clothing in the process.

It’s half an hour past the time scheduled, crowd beginning to grow impatient and judge ready to consult over the situation. Five more minutes pass until the mayor makes his arrival, his presence and the sound of the door opening prompting everyone to stop talking and face him instead.

“Good morning, everyone,” he greets, smiling. “Please forgive my tardiness -- I was busy grouping a few people who needed to come with me.”

You freeze in place when the main trio responsible for kidnapping you show up next to him, two other people -- the young man and the older one in charge of preparing you for your ‘commemoration’ -- standing right beside them three. The next person to appear sets your mind on shutdown, Jessie’s distinctive features showing up among them five.

The courtroom’s filled with murmurs and whispers again, most against the idea of Jessie being here and some claiming what they had done to you was still possible of overlooking. Your breathing quickens as so does your pulse, palms and back building up a cold sweat as panic shoots you. You try to stay calm, a temporary peace of mind reaching you when you see they have their hands and legs handcuffed.

“I’m afraid I’m still missing one person,” the mayor adds, hiding his grin. “I’ll be right ba-“

“I’m here.”

You try to convince yourself you’re imagining things when you hear that voice: low, firm, and tired. The sound of metal clanging only prompts you into searching for him amongst the group
Instinctively, you call out for the monster, body reacting next by rushing to reach his side. You aim to be with him, though electricity prevents you from getting near him, the metal device tied to his wrist matching with the chains on his arms and legs. He doesn’t show much signs of being harmed by the bracelet's effects, though it’s a different case for you when you react late despite the warning he gives not to get too close, flesh sizzling and pain erupting as quickly as you flinch back.

"Too afraid to touch him now, (L/N)? It’s about time."

It takes all your pride not to glare at the mayor, mind seeking peace again when you see Sans’s attire and general state. Besides the subtle, grey circles under his sockets and the grim look on his skull, he seems in one piece, no scratches or wounds visible as far as your eyes could see. His irises bore into you, the bright white you had grown accustomed to changing for a fainter colour -- almost the same grey as his circles. You can feel your soul react to that look, the strong pull denoting his want for you to stay calm.

"Why the desperate look? Have you really not considered your failure of declaring me guilty can result in me denouncing you for false accusations? If I am not declared guilty by the end of this trail, I would have it in my right to revoke Sans's freedom just as well as yours."

You want to shout at him -- grab him by the collar and shut him up with a solid punch to the face. Realistically, you can only maintain your composure, eyes narrowing and hands clenching as you grit your teeth, anger near close to bursting.

"Please do not threaten (miss/mister) (L/N), sir," the judge intervenes, making you look towards her podium. Her hair's tied up in a high ponytail, making her sharp jaw and stern eyes stand out. "Mayor or not, I believe you of all people should know when to behave. Let us hear their defense before you get to your offense."

You can both see and hear Sans stifle a snicker, similar to the way he had when Jessie screwed up in their testimony. A smile would form on your expression weren't you troubled by the sight of him chained and handcuffed, worry still clear in your thoughts. You try to maintain a firm gaze and stable stance in exchange, wanting to look and feel confident for the mention of you bringing the mayor to court.

"Please proceed with your claim, (L/N)," the judge continues, shuffling and reshuffling some
papers, and placing them in front of her, gaze meeting with yours afterwards. "What are the reasons for you to be present here today -- why you're filing a case against the mayor of our town?"
Pre-Judgment, Part Two

She waits, as so does everyone else for you to answer her question.

You were running a risk not only for what had gotten you into this situation in the first place, but for the person who you were denouncing, as well. You had left your job for not agreeing with its principles, you had moved out of the town run by him, and now you were confronting him in front of a judge for a crime that had been dismissed by some and overlooked by many — at the very least, covered up due to the influences of the person behind it all.

Aside from your evidence and a few testimonies, you were more than small in comparison to him.

What were you even thinking, coming up to court to take down the very same mayor responsible for keeping this building standing?

You’re not given much space to think about that, time running out.

"I believe he was the one responsible behind my kidnapping and the damage done to some of my closest friends."

"And why do you make so high of an assumption? Do you have any immediate evidence to support your claim?"

Again, you’re caught between a rock and a hard place, confidence diminishing the more you allow yourself to think about the scarce likelihood of succeeding. Eyes watch you from all around, increasing the pace of your thinking.

“I have recordings with his voice in them — recordings from when I was being held captive in an unknown location. There’s also pictures of the location, and some witnesses willing to speak about what happened.”

“It was reported you were stripped out of all your possessions and brought unconscious back home. Who were the ones to gather that evidence, then? I require to speak with them to gather more detail on the subject.”
The next thing you do is hesitate, against bringing up the names of those who had rescued you for the sake of not involving them in your troubles. You try to think of an alternative, choosing to say the first thing that comes to mind.

“Well, Your Honor, I-“

“I- It was me,” Alphys’s voice intervenes, breathless with panic. Everyone turns their heads to her side to see her cower back right after standing up, anxiety clear on her features sweaty and shaking. “I did some research and I- later tracked down where (Y/N) had been taken off to. I created an infiltration plan and asked others to j- join in.”

“State your name and occupation before you proceed to tell me anything else, miss,” the judge requests, staring at her. “I assume you were one of the people who used to work for the Dreemurr family, correct? I feel as if I recognize you from somewhere.”

Alphys’s yellow skin pales as she casts her gaze down at her lap, twiddling with her fingers as a frown shows on her face. She seems more than reluctant to speak up, though Undyne places a hand on hers, giving her a gentle squeeze and smiling when she sees the lizard woman regain part of her courage. The scientist stands up again, facing the judge and avoiding the audience’s gaze at all costs.

“I’m Alphys, Your Honour. My rights as a scientist w- were revoked after I… after I confessed to what I had done to some of my patients at the Underground — th- those experiments involving the creation of the Amalgams.”

Whispers fill the courtroom again, chaos surging when one person chooses to stand up and yell about how Alphys’s experiments were one of the many reasons for monsters not to be trusted. Some agree while others do the opposite, guards rushing towards the scene to calm people down, these already close to erupting into physical confrontation.

“Do you see why your beloved fiancé’s chained up now? If a submissive woman like her can do that much damage to her own kind, who knows what he could do to you? For all you know, Sans could be a much bigger threat.”

The mayor helps with quieting the room down, voice surpassing the confidence you took long to gain.
“And are you not living on the same roof as him these days? Although I can understand Jessie took a questionable path, they were right in taking Faust off your hands. A boy like him and a weak (man/woman) like yourself would be far from able to defend yourselves were Sans to act violently with you two. You are running a high risk simply by wanting to continue a relationship with him.”

“What proof do you have for Sans being a threat?” the judge questions, remaining unshaken.

“He has magical powers beyond your imagination, Your Honour,” the mayor replies, looking away from your side. “While I am not one for making assumptions, I believe the only reason (L/N) hasn’t left him is because of them not knowing to what extent his powers can reach — They are ignorant of his capabilities and dangers as a monster. Nobody would want to stay with someone like him, were they to find out how ruthless he can be with his magic.”

The more he speaks, the more you continue to grow self-conscious of your beliefs, though you try not to doubt your relationship as quickly as you had the day of the winter gathering. You were still learning about the differences between his and your kind, the book he had given you serving you to learn more about the magic he scarcely used when around you. According to it, he was capable of teleportation and summoning bones for attack, yet you had only ever felt subtle, sometimes ghostly traces of his magic over your body, mostly during the time the wound on your leg was too severe for you to move around without struggling. His teleportation powers were not only capable of the basic function of moving around, but they helped balance you out during the time you were too weak to do that when so much as walking up some stairs.

Subconsciously, you place a hand over the wound, the fabric of your dress (skirt/pants) thin enough to make you feel the bump Sans had traced when having some time alone with him at the gathering.

“Excuse me, Your Honour,” you intervene, finally capable of regaining the confidence lost with the growing havoc of the courtroom. “I believe I haven’t offered my statements or evidence yet for the mayor to intervene like he has now. I still haven’t presented my reasons for bringing him here.”

The judge’s features soften up at your intervention, a near untraceable smile crossing her lips as she nods, allowing you to continue.

“Isn’t it strange the mayor knows about Sans’s powers that well — when he’s rarely ever shown them to me? I don’t want to jump to conclusions, but I would say his knowledge over those powers proves he was there the day of my kidnapping.”

At the sound of the crowd growing rowdy again, you wait for the judge to give you permission for
stepping forward, finally placing the evidence related to your statement and waiting for her to look through them. She demands silence before reading, beginning when the last person quiets down.

Without a word, she retrieves the audio clips Alphys had recorded along with the pictures Nasptablook had taken, a five-page medical record accompanying the evidence. The judge inspects the items thoroughly, calling out for the bailiff for him to take the audio clips to the department, all whilst keeping the files and pictures to herself.

“We will determine whether or not the audio captured is relevant to your claim,” she states, looking towards your assigned lawyer and later at the mayor’s — the two still waiting for their time to act. “As for the pictures. . .” She pauses to take them in her hold again, eyes scanning the images a second time. “They do seem to provide a clear image of where this incident happened, though I was informed the reason for the damage was due to an explosion unrelated to your situation. And although the faces captured here are too blurry to make out on a first glance, it’s possible we can send these to the department for further inspection.”

She sets the pictures down, picking up your medical record next. Silence is maintained all the while, audience waiting for her to comment again.

“And here states you did, in fact, receive partial damage from an explosion. No weapons or narcoleptic drugs were found on the scene, however — so that leaves us with questions as to how were you drugged and shot twice.”

The intercom above her shrieks, giving her a signal for the results of the clips sent to the department. Everyone present waits for another noise — be it of an officer declaring the audio either relevant or irrelevant, or the audio itself.

“You’re nothing but a joke, Sam.”

While it’s highly distorted due to the commotion surrounding the voice and the quality of the recording, you can still make out the mayor’s tone, unguarded by formality.

“Throwing your already failing reputation as a janitor and tutor just to satisfy your lust towards a human. Don’t you find it strange? Why else would you be given a restraining order for being near, (Y/N)? Why-“

Shouts and arguments in the background drown out his voice, though it returns after a few
“-They say history repeats itself, but it’s for a reason. We would’ve been better off minding our own business, each side to themselves. Why do you need to cross yourself with a human when there’s plenty monsters for you to choose from? Are there not enough of your type? Is that it? If not, why do you trouble yourself with (Y/N)? Or are you that desperate for their affection — That needy for filling the void in your sou-”

The next time, his voice is cut by the sound of his body being slammed against a hard wall, the thud strong yet giving out restraint from the attacker. Wheezes and pants can be heard as the mayor recovers himself from the blow, a laugh emerging from his voice.

“Hit a bad spot there, huh? I knew a guy like you was a lonely freak underneath that exterior. Why else would you take advantage of a recent divorcee — a victim of abuse and harassment? Of course they would choose to go out with you, having no other choice! The only reason (Y/N)’s even dating you’s because they’re too stupid not to realize how pathetic and desperate you are.”

Another voice interrupts the mayor’s forced monologue, how quick he is with his words preventing Sans from getting a word in his defense.

“Wrap it up already! (Y/N)’s losing too much blood — They’re not gonna last if we keep this up!”

You can identify it as Undyne’s voice, the next sound to follow being the explosion, audio ending afterwards.

Not a word is spoken when the clip ends, even the judge remaining at a loss for words.

Although you revised the audio twice before turning it in, hearing it a third time and in your current state made you uneasy. You start to grow uncertain about the future despite how far you had gone with the one put into question, attention being taken off the mayor to focus on Sans instead, a tactic you were trying to prevent since the beginning, given how much time it took off your opportunity to defend yourself against the main, alleged person behind your kidnapping.

The judge coughs, invoking everyone’s attention back to her as she shifts in her seat, ready to make her judgment for the day. You don’t feel at ease knowing an extension involved more time for you to prepare, given the mayor was going to receive those same benefits — benefits that could make him harder to prove guilty in court.
“It goes without saying this is certainly the mayor's voice. Although it is risky to base myself solely on these audio clips, they are enough for me to demand further investigation behind this case. It appears the explosion was not a mere accident as the news and the mayor have contrarily stated, hence why I will be requesting a thorough search to be made in the reported scene of crime. Any weapons that may have been overlooked should be taken into account now, and a respective group will be assigned to interrogate the people related to or present during that explosion.”

She looks towards Sans next, a frown making her lips strain, if only momentarily.

“As for you, Sans... I would be requesting you show me your capabilities as a monster and pledge you will wear a handicap if these powers are as strong as the mayor claims, all if you wish to keep residing amongst regular civilization. Otherwise, you would be obliged to move towards monster-only populated lands — of which I am certain you are aware involves you leaving many loved ones behind. Please make sure to state your agreements or disagreements once the courtroom is empty.”

She brings quiet over the room again, gaze centered on the audience.

”The rest of you are currently dismissed.”
Cameramen and women swarm the judge like flies, waiting for Sans to make his exit out of the courtroom. You chew on your lip as you stay behind, anxious to see him and ask over his decision: whether he wanted to stay or leave.

Rather than getting anywhere close to answering that question, you come across the unmistakable sight of him being held back by two police officers, these keeping him in one place despite the chains already weighing him down. His steps are heavy and loud, made heavier by how he's forced to walk faster, then slower, then straight, then hunched.

"Please, move aside, everyone. We need space," the judge demands, stoic expression talking for itself -- allowing no one to contradict her. "Make space for Sans to walk, and don't bother him with pointless questions. Whatever needs to be discussed will be brought up in next week."

You're close to choking up when you gain a full, unobstructed view of him and his walking pace: tired, slow, and sluggish. More restraints are placed on him in comparison with Jessie at court, who only had two pairs of handcuffs on them: one on their wrists and one on their ankles. Contrarily, Sans has multiple chains and a collar, making him look more beastly than he was ever supposed to be. His gaze acknowledges you, though one of the two officers pushes him to keep on walking, breaking the moment.

He's forced to look down regardless of him simply arriving to talk with you, the clothes he has now holding the same colour of the town's local prison.

"You have fifteen minutes to say or do whatever you need with him before we take him away," the other officer mentions, handing him to you the same way one would of a disposable item. "Make sure to bring him back to us on time, else you're in for some jail-time, too."

You hold the monster tight as soon as he's handed over to you, the chains cold to the touch, the faint warmth his soul exuded barely there -- barely enough to make up for that temperature, only rising when you nuzzle him closer to your body.
"Can we go somewhere private?" Sans asks, strength returning to his voice. "I-"

Having no time to waste, you take his hand and lead him to the most private location you can find, this being a small corridor set at a long distance away from the waiting area and cameras still circling like vultures. There's only two doors to your view: one a visibly cramped janitor's closet and the other an old storage room, both which are locked from public use.

You corner him between a wall and your own body, eyes already brimming with tears.

"What did you choose? Wh- Why're you being taken away like this?"

Visibly perplexed, it takes Sans a while to respond, chains clanking as he goes to grab your arms, preventing you from wiping the tears away.

"Whatever I choose, I still have to go with 'em 'till the next day of the trail gets here. I ain't supposed to go nowhere 'till all this is over with."

At a loss for words, you can only grab his face with your hand, staring deep into his irises as you blink your emotions away and sniffle, weak smile shaking when you try to make it grow. You bite the inside of your mouth to restrain yourself and cup his cheekbones with your fingers, touching him with careful strokes. Sans doesn't say a word, watching as you try to regain some form of calm, no matter how small -- an almost impossible feat considering the reality displayed in front of you. It's hard for you to let go of his face, hand tensing on him.

"So it's not permanent? I. . . This still isn't right. The collar, the chains, I- You- They're not supposed to do thi-"

"Don't worry 'bout that now. There's somethin' else I gotta say before I leave."

"Wh- What is it?" you ask, frowning. "I really can't stand seeing you like this."

Sans looks up at you and shakes away from your hold on his face. He hands you a charm instead, placing the faux jewelry on the palm of your hand when he asks for you to bring it out.
"Tori put a spell on this," he explains, closing your hand with both of his, these kept together by the chains. "It's, uh... supposed to protect our house long enough 'till the case is solved."

You squeeze the charm strong in your hold, barely able to contain your emotions the more he spoke with you -- the more you looked at him in his current state.

"Always keep it with ya. I wanna come back home and see you and Faust waitin' for me -- safe n' sound."

"...So you're gonna wear the handicap?"

Sans's expression glooms with that question, irises dimming as his gaze narrows with what you can identify as dissatisfaction.

"Who do ya take me for, (Y/N)?" he asks, tiredness temporarily fading from his tone, surety and humour returning to his speech. "Or do I really gotta show ya how serious I am about you?"

His words are a challenge, a prominent hint of desire present in them, further made clear by him pressing himself closer to you.

Your soul tenses right as you take a sharp breath, caught on a similar situation to the day you were with him at the store's changing room. He waits for a response on your part, irises lingering on you, a brighter shade of white returning and replacing the faint grey from before.

You stop and think, reluctant to acknowledge the fact you had grown doubtful again -- not on the same level as from the day at the winter gathering, but doubtful nonetheless. Closing your eyes tight, you breathe in and try to search for an answer along with a bit of clarity -- any amount -- for your thoughts.

Next, you open them, ready to make a decision.

Choice #5.0
What will you do next?

a.) Hug.

b.) Kiss.

c.) Decline.

d.) Brush him off.

e.) Take it further.
You hug him, placing your chin on his shoulder obstructed by the chains. He responds by inching closer, keeping his hands against your torso, incapable of hugging you back -- handcuffs restricting the majority of his movements.

"I'm sorry," you speak up, flaring your nose and breaking into a frown. "It's been hard to believe this is happening -- that you're still here, even with everything that's been going on lately."

The monster's silent, the only hint at him listening being how his hands tense over your body, still keeping themselves close to you despite the hug reaching its end. Distant chatter can be heard from your hiding spot, though nobody can be seen walking around, the judge's orders obeyed to their fullest.

"I've tried to convince myself that things will turn out fine -- that all this will end soon, but... But what am I supposed to do now? You- You're being taken away, and even if you come back you'll probably still have limitations. No matter how much I think about it, I still doubt myself."

"Would ya do the same, then?" Sans asks, letting you go. "Take the easier route even if it's not the one you want?"

"Of course I wouldn't," you reply, huffing. "That's why I left my old job in the first place."

"Then there ya have it. The reason why I'm even tryin's 'cuz I have somethin' to look forward to -- a lotta things, actually." He lifts his hands closer to your eye level, both turning to fists when you pay attention to them. "There's Tori's school, my bro, kickin' the mayor's ass, Faust, and a damn good-lookin' future (wife/husband) waitin' for me to get back." One hand is entirely open by the time he finishes speaking, the other one still a fist -- waiting for him to list more. "And those are just the ones I can name off the top of my he-"
"Made ya cry again, huh?"

You laugh at his words and nudge him, poking your tongue out when he recovers from the shove. "That's just 'cuz you're being cheeky," you remark, smiling. "'Future (wife/husband)? Really?"

"There's nothin' wrong with dreamin'."

★

Choice B

You kiss him, soul sensing his own when your bodies are close enough to brush against each other. His hands don't move much -- these kept restricted by the chains tight around his wrists, though you can still feel when he reciprocates your actions, his soul's presence growing stronger.

The two of you break up, the aftermath of the kiss remaining in the shape of a strong, racing pulse shared between your soul and his. "You don't need to," you speak up, smiling. "I know I've been losing a lot of confidence lately, but I want to believe you -- I want to have hope."

"That's what I've been tryna do, too." Sans lets out a sigh, closing his eye sockets and opening them seconds later. "Knowin' we're living together kinda helps with that mindset. Never would've thought I'd be datin' someone like you, and even less I'd get this far."

"Am I that bad of a (girl/boy)friend?" you ask, covering a laugh -- feigning offense.

"Not bad, but ya sure got some low standards, pal. Dunno what made ya like me in the first place, but I'm glad ya did."

You shake your head lightly, giving into a full smile. A livelier look can be seen on his face, more noticeable when you kiss him a second time, hands holding his shoulders and keeping his body in place.
"Looks like you're the one doubting yourself now."

"Didn't think it could happen?"

"I sure didn't. You've always been a confident guy, even when you have your downs," you explain, booping his nose cavity with your finger. "And that's just one of the things I like about you -- aside from the fact you stay so calm when I do stuff like this to you. It's cute."

"I might look calm, but I'm sure even you know my soul's beatin' like crazy right now."

You hold back a laugh, feeling for his soul with the help of yours. "Maybe so, but that's still just as cute."

"Do I really gotta deal with you callin' me cute from now on?"

"If you're really gonna stay with me, then yes."

★

Choice C

You decline his advancements, too caught up with the current situation to devote yourself towards physical contact. Instead, you feel for your soul and try to reach out for his own, wanting to send him a message without having to strain yourself further.

"I... I want to believe you, and I do. B- But I don't think I can do anything with you right now. I feel sick right now and-"

"Ya don't have to make up excuses for me to not touch you, (Y/N). It can wait."
Nausea overtakes you despite his words, held back by the past.

"Sorry I keep bringing this up -- both things, really," you speak up, voice raspy with stress. "What I mean to say is. . . I trust you, Sans, and I want to believe we'll move forward together."

His expression relaxes, irises glowing brighter as he steps back. "Then let's do just that."

You breathe out, a weight lifting itself off your shoulders -- small yet effective all the same.

More at ease, the both of you spend the rest of the fifteen minutes talking about the future -- the ups and downs and your hopes and dreams, remaining hopeful for a better, more peaceful life, the prospect of being together for many years to come a worrying yet welcomed thought. It's only when the time limit's almost over that you manage to break out of your stress and unwanted memories from your ex, planting a kiss on Sans's cheekbone right before he leaves.

★

Choice D

You brush him off, mind a mess and thoughts barely settling down. Your chest feels tight, heart and soul indistinguishable -- body shaking with long overdue stress. His gaze meets with yours, though you look away as fast as you face him.

"I'm not sure what to think yet. I. . . I doubt anyone would want to live a life like this with me without wishing for something or someone else."

Sans takes a step back, facing the floor while yours averts towards the empty hall, privacy maintaining itself with your chosen hiding place.

Your conversation ends with that, those fifteen minutes you were given seeming to have duplicated
as you remain in silence, the only sounds you can identify being the distant murmurs of the people waiting for your return. A barrier establishes itself between you, neither him nor yourself capable of making it crumble.

★

Choice E

(Mild to Moderate NSFW Ahead)

(Discretion is advised for those under 13.)

You respond by kissing him first, hands circling around his neck and fingers slipping under the steel collar. He groans in response -- loud and borderline feral, making his beastly appearance look weak in comparison to how his soul responds to your touch, wild and persistent. You plan to slide your tongue into the next kiss, though you feel something wet and slippery enter yours instead, his hand grabbing the back of your head to deepen that feeling. Against your desire not to break the moment, you steal a look at him only to see no tongue or anything resembling it when he pulls back, a bashful grin on his face when he does so.

"How's that for illusion magic?" he asks, waiting for your opinion. "I don't got a tongue, but I'm learnin' howta simulate one."

Remembering the time limit, you grab him, pressing another kiss right against his teeth, keeping your mouth slightly parted in hopeful wait for that foreign, albeit stimulating sensation again. He delivers, though not in the same place as before. The wet feeling slides right across your neck, making you hold onto him as you let out a response of your own -- a groan muffled by you biting down harshly on your lip. You desist and shudder when you sense his tongue all the way down to your collarbone, close to where his hands go to feel the beat of your soul.

His hands go lower, chains making his movements clumsy as he reaches for your suit's bottom piece, hiking your legs for them to wrap around his waist, his back pressed against the wall to keep you that way. With those fifteen minutes on your mind as well as the place you're doing this in, you force yourself to stop, both his hands already working with your (skirt/pants), going lower and lower the more seconds pass. He only stops when you tell him to, heat reaching your face when you realize how far you had let this go.
Sans crosses another day off the calendar, the continuation of the trail barely two days away. He’s
grown used to his cell, always alone and only thriving with what little energy he could get from
human food. An agreement was made on his powers being too unknown for them to trust him with
a cell partner, and they hardly believed the concept of human and monster food being separate --
how each replenished different energies and how each had its individual purpose.

He’s weak -- weaker than he ever was before.

“You’ve got a visit, pal.”

An officer shows up behind the metal bars, a set of keys in one hand and a handicap in the other.
“Your human’s here to talk with you, so we’ll give you a chance to step out, so long as you wear
this ’till you’re back in your cell.”

He makes an effort to cast his gaze away from the officer, spotting (Y/N) behind him, looking
more attractive than he had ever seen them before.

Perhaps it was his emotions speaking, but they looked about as refreshing as an oasis during a time
of drought, reserved smile and reluctant body language only driving out his want to see them -- to
be near them again. Their warmth was something he missed whenever it was time to call it a day,
having to settle with a wooden plank made to pass off as a bed, no mattress or blanket whatsoever.
Only a pillow was given to him, yet it was about as thick and sturdy as a soda cracker, texture on a
similar level.

“You’ve got an hour and are allowed to go as far as the backyard. Don’t try to go further, else you
want this thing ringing and us going after you.”

Sans nods, far beyond wanting to spark conversation with the man -- the same one who had labeled
him a beast rather than a monster, and the same one who had laughed in his face when talking
about his relationship with (Y/N).
The ‘your human’ was starting to get on his nerves, words sounding more possessive with each time they came out of his mouth.

Maybe he was in love with the human, but he was not their property -- nor were they his. The way the man said it changed each time, sometimes using it to refer to him being nothing but property, and sometimes using it to make (Y/N) seem lowly for letting themselves be owned by a monster.

“Do you need to sit down, Sans?”

The same person he was thinking about aids in making him shake away from his ever growing irritation towards the officer, their careful touch enough to help his soul reach a sense of calm.

“I’m alright,” he speaks up, breathing in. “Think we could just stay here? I don’t really wanna deal with anyone else right now.”

“Of course,” they reply, smiling. “Why are you even asking? I’m here for you.”

Sans manages to loosen his smile, lured by the calid traces of their voice and the bright look to their eyes, seemingly hopeful and ready to see the mayor’s face again.

“Did ya find anythin’ good? You look nice.”

Their smile widens, hands grabbing his arm to pull him close. They make him sit next to them -- outside of the cell, but remaining close to it, keeping in mind his words by sitting beside him on the waiting bench of the office.

“I might’ve found something good.” (Y/N) lets go of his arm, facing their lap, smile vanishing entirely. “Maybe it won’t be enough to get the mayor behind bars, but. . . It should be enough to get him off your back and everyone else’s.”

“Whaddya mean it ain’t enough? Any piece of evidence should be enough to tail ‘im down.”

They look at him, managing another smile, this one tight-lipped and shaky. A single attempt at speaking makes it falter, visage losing its confidence. “If I do that, it would mean everyone who
helped me would be put at risk. Alphys’s in a tight spot again ‘cuz of what she said in court, so if I uncovered what you guys did to rescue me, then . . .”

“Then what? Ya gotta be truthful, (Y/N). Good intentions or not, ya need to be honest with the court -- We already knew what we were signin’ ourselves up for by breaking into private property and facing those guys.”

“But that would mean you’ll all get some sort of penalty for what you did! I- I don’t think I can handle that. Seeing you here’s bad enough as it is.”

Wary of their train of thought, Sans searches for something -- anything that might help contradict their statement and turn it around, their conclusion far beyond what he agreed with.

Frisk had taken the job of forming the infiltration plan, while Toriel, Mettaton, Napstablook, Undyne, Alphys, and himself were in charge of executing it. He already knew what he was getting himself into by facing the mayor, and the others were the same. If there was one thing he had learned from having been given the opportunity to reach the Surface, it was that acting the way he had before wasn’t going to be effective. Even if his powers were only useful when his enemy gave him enough karma to turn against them, he still had to take action now.

Leaving things for last wasn’t an option anymore.

He grabs their hand, rubbing his thumb over the engagement ring, the scenery and sensation both equally surreal. To know (Y/N) had finally worn it was a feeling similar to that of stargazing actual stars rather than the small, glowy rocks from the Underground -- an understatement, even. It was far beyond complex for him to grab onto the concept that he was actually doing this -- that he had actually crafted a future with them by his side.

“No matter what happens in court, the worst thing that can happen’s we get a few years of sentence or probation. I’m sure that new judge wouldn’t go farther than that if you show proof of the mayor setting all this up. Hell, wasn’t he the one responsible for you even losing consciousness in the first place? Are ya really gonna let that go unnoticed -- even when he went s’far as orderin’ some folks to hurt people you’re close with? I’d say now’s not the time for you to start doubtin' yourself, pal.”

He holds their cheek next, blinking once before placing a kiss to their lips.

“I believe in ya, (Y/N).”
The human sighs as soon as Sans pulls away, shoulders stiff. They stand up and request for him to stay in place, walking off to the exit when he nods.

He waits for their return, irises focusing on the clock by the officer’s desk, noticing he was already twenty minutes into their visit. Five more minutes pass until their return, emerging from the same door with a large, paper bag in their hold.

Carefully, they sit down next to him again, peering into the bag and shuffling some of its contents before looking back to him. “They wouldn’t let Faust go with me, but... This is for you.”

From the contents they retrieve a lollipop and a folded sheet of paper. He takes the items, hope growing inside his soul when he inspects them. “He made this?”

The lollipop, while disfigured, shines with colour, traces of magic present inside it. Shades of blue, black, and yellow cover the sweet, simulating a starry sky. The paper reads for him to enjoy it, a ‘come back soon’ thrown right under it.

“Yeah,” (Y/N) replies, nodding. “I, uh... have something for you, too.”

A cupcake is the next thing to come out of the bag, a fainter trace of magic emanating from it. He takes it, bread soft -- hinting at its freshness.

“Toriel was teaching Faust how to make monster food, so I figured I had to learn too if we're gonna keep living together. It’s... not that strong, but the taste shouldn’t be too horrible.”

“The way you’re sayin’ that just makes me wanna taste it right here and now.”

“Please don’t,” they say, laughing. “It’s embarrassing.”

“That's karma for reading my book while I was still around.”

They try to stop him, though he uses what little magic he has left to avoid that, creating a small
barrier between them and himself. He bites down on the pastry without second thoughts, almost instantly absorbing the little magic possessing it. The flavour spreads in his mouth: spongy, frosted, and just a tad too uneven in terms of salt and sugar. It was still warm, that sole factor making up for the rookiness of the human's skills when it came to preparing sweet foods.

“I’s good.”

“You’re lying -- I can see it on your face!”

Sans chuckles, half of the cupcake already gone. “Maybe it needs work on a few places, but it tastes good -- That, or it’s just my hunger speaking.”

(Y/N) returns his laugh, though it’s not long until they frown. “Don’t they give you anything here? You didn’t tell me you were hungry the last time I called you.”

“It wasn’t all that important back then. ‘Sides, they still hand out human food, so that should be enough ‘till I get outta here.”

Frown deepening, the human narrows their eyes at him, handing him the bag.

“Don’t say that. Your health is important, even here,” they state, persisting until he takes the bag in his hold. “These might not be good, but here. I- I’ll take you out for some actual monster food when you’re out for the day of the trail.”

He laughs again, glancing at the clock to see fifty minutes had passed, leaving him with only ten. “Thanks, cupcake. Tell Faust he’s a good kid.”

They look offended -- disgusted even, a sight that only makes him grin wider.

“Don’t you dare use that nickname with me again.”

“Fine. I’ll try not to. . .”
“Don’t-“

“...Sweet n' Salty Pastry.”

“That’s worse!”

Alone again, Sans can only pace back and forth, cell silent with the exception of his feet being dragged around the cold, cement floor. He tries to find memory of anything that might help for tomorrow’s final day of investigation -- anything that could help (Y/N) turn out successful and not end up in jail themselves.

While the treatment he was given was far from hospitable, he was partially lucky to have a cell for himself. Having someone else around was poking a bear with a stick, his background more than sufficient for him to be in constant conflict with someone opposing with his choices. At first, he was avoided for the simple rumour of the strength of his magic, yet as the days passed, they began taunting him, noticing how weak he was becoming the longer he went on living without monster food.

Sans doesn’t dare to imagine what others could do to (Y/N).

Unlike them, he still had some fight in him, while he could tell the human had not yet recovered from the aftermaths of their kidnapping. The stitches were still far from reaching full recovery, and there was much to be said about the strength of their soul despite him being able to feel it now. They were tired, he could tell -- using all the strength they had in them left to take these matters to court.

He can only hope the lawyer assigned to them is capable enough to carry on with the case and persist with the human until the end. It was difficult coming up with a scenario that involved them losing. He wanted them to win -- to be back home with them, Faust, and nothing else besides peace and quiet.

The monster sits down on the wooden plank, pushing the pillow aside to take out the note and lollipop Faust had left for him. Traces of magic are stronger compared to the cupcakes (Y/N) had
prepared for him.

Was the human not yet aware about them being able to control those abilities, or was there truly something going wrong with their soul? Worse yet, were they losing Hope as he had so many times before, or was he overthinking things? And wouldn't that imply they wouldn't have even bothered visiting him today?

Sans relents with a huff, incapable of grasping an understanding towards their line of thought. He takes mental note to ask to see their soul again soon, afraid of his deduction being -- or becoming -- a truth.
The same procedures as the first day are made once more.

Today marks your fourth day in court, two you had spent dealing with Faust’s custody and two that involved you confronting the mayor. While you had won the first case and were hoping to prove your accusations on the second one, you couldn’t shake off the embarrassment that came with being viewed as a familiar face to the people working for the judge.

Your lawyer walks with you to court, though not before rushing towards the policewoman to place a quick kiss on her lips, answering your question in regards to who she was married to. She gives a shy smile afterwards, turning back to you as quickly as she pulls away.

“D- Did you manage to visit Sans during the week?” she asks, sparking casual conversation between you, in wait for the trail to begin -- to continue where it left off. “I hope those guys didn’t give you too much trouble. You should’ve had the right to visit him at least once before today.”

“They didn’t let me take Faust with me, but I could still go by myself,” you answer, smiling at her. “It was only an hour, but... It felt like more -- In a good way, I mean.”

She nods, averting her eyes from you to look around the room, no guards or judge present. Only the audience is viewed sitting close by, quiet and impatient.
You feel cold at the sound of chains clinking, sound growing louder as you wait, gaze not daring to stare at the entrance of the courtroom. Followed by that noise is muffled mockery and varied forms of interjections, some hinting at surprise and others at shock. You continue waiting, heart speeding when the doors open.

In arrives a grim-faced monster, silent and still. Guards order him to move, though he refuses. He doesn’t budge, not even when he’s threatened to be shocked the same way as you had when approaching him the first time you saw him chained.

The mayor enters after him, the ones who had carried out his plans following behind, Jessie entering last. Your stomach twists when they glance at you, how hard you had tried to forget and how much effort you had put into moving on crumbling to pieces, courage taking a hard blow in the process. You grab onto the podium and prepare yourself. The lawyer beside you beats you to it, though -- a glare contorting the gentle look on her face.

“Were either opponents capable of investigating further? I believe a week was enough time. Not too long and not too brief -- fortunate, considering Sans had to stay under surveillance for the past week,” the judge speaks, appearing from a single, small door adjacent to the ones you came out of.

“(Miss/Mister) (L/N) and I went to the crime scene as soon as the date was announced. The officers there wouldn’t let (L/N) in, even with their ID and their purpose, but I was able to take that matter into my hands,” your lawyer explains, toying with the left end of her glasses.

The judge grimaces before speaking, hands resting over the podium when she arrives, looking deep in thought. “I would need to have a word with those officers, it seems. Were you prevented from researching anything else at any point?”

“Yes -- On our second day of visit, Your Honour. They claimed the mayor was there, busy investigating the scene himself.”

Whispers begin to rise amongst the crowd, leveling down before the judge can ask for calm. “Very well,” she states, nodding. “Thank you. That is all I require from you two for the moment being.”

The atmosphere changes as soon as it’s time for the mayor to speak. Confident, he folds his arms over the podium, facing the judge directly.
“Do we truly need to go through all this again, Your Honour? Just look at that guy,” he exclaims, pointing with his head over to Sans, looking weak, dull, and tired. “He’s a danger to society! And wasn’t he supposed to wear a handicap? Or were his powers not deemed strong enough to have him restricted?”

“The final decision will be made at the end of this case, mayor,” the judge replies, frowning. “Please allow your assigned lawyer to speak for you instead.”

“I don’t need him.” He laughs, shaking his head. “The evidence I have here will be all you would need to end this charade right here -- once and for all.”

“Could you show it to me, then? I do not want to waste time with your foolishness, mayor.”

Louder whispers take control of the room, judge intervening when they turn to full-on commentaries about her and the mayor.

“Certainly.”

With that, he walks forward, files under his arm being taken and placed in front of the judge. She remains silent, eyes scanning the files -- still untouched by her hands.

“Where did you obtain this?” she asks, raising an eyebrow. Her steel visage falls along with the strength of her tone, confusion genuine. “What you have here should not be possible to obtain unless you are affiliated with a monster.”

"And where’s the harm in that, Your Honour? I have my sources,” he counters, smiling. “And if (miss/mister) (L/N) here can screw a monster, I can very well make an acquaintance who is one. Formal relations are fine, but I simply do not think humans and monsters should be friends -- and even less fuckbuddies.”

“Mayor,” the judge exclaims, sharp voice returning. “Do not speak so crudely. There are-“

“I am convinced Sam here’s only using marriage as a cover-up for lust. He’s only interested in what’s under (L/N)’s clothes and nothing else, and I can prove it. He views them as nothing but-“
“Enough. I will not tolerate any more foul language from you. I will look over your evidence, and if it’s true what you say. . . Only then will I justify it.“

You feel a hand on your shoulder, looking next to you to see your lawyer smiling at you, facing the judge after you return her gesture. “If I may intervene, Your Honour,” she begins, letting go of you. “Sans was given the option to leave this situation, wasn’t he? If this truly were a one-sided relationship, I believe he would have left the second there were any trouble. If not, why would he stay if his. . .” She coughs, a faint blush dusting her cheeks. “. . .'playbuddy’ gave him that much trouble to begin with?”

“Weren’t you here last time?” the mayor’s lawyer asks, snickering. “(L/N)’s past relationship makes them an easy target. No one in their right mind would want to date a monster, so it’s only logical that he would go for them. Quoting the audio: ‘Why else would you take advantage of a recent divorcee -- a victim of abuse and harassment? Of course they would choose to go out with you, having no other choice! The only reason (Y/N)’s even dating you’s because they’re too stupid not to realize how pathetic and desperate you are.’”

Disagreements and laughter drown out both the mayor and the judge’s voices, leaving you alone with burning ears and an even larger blow to your pride.

“To Hell with that,” Sans intervenes, anger slipping from his tone.

You look towards him, how stoic he looks and how firm his voice is prompting everyone to stop their arguments and face him instead.

“How could ya possibly prove I only want (Y/N) for that? Did ya film us? ‘Cuz I’m sure ya didn’t. And even if ya did, what does any of that prove?“

Nobody dares to speak up, in wait for him to carry on with his words.

“That’s a natural thing for humans, so long as it ain’t forced and both people agree with it. Some people like it, some people ain’t even interested in it. As for me. . . I don’t really care s’long as I have a connection with that person, so saying I only want (Y/N) for that single reason’s a stark contradiction to how I feel. It’s impossible for me to care that much for someone if I don’t make any connection with them in the first place -- And that’s just how most monsters work. Our souls’re what make things that ‘complicated’ for us, and what allow us to relate to human sexuality.”
“And what do you know about any of that?” the mayor asks, scoffing.

“Enough to write a damned book about it,” Sans replies, unwavering.

The judge brings silence with her mallet, frown and knitted eyebrows capturing her expression. “Let us settle down now,” she demands, an uneasy note to her voice. “It seems we have gotten off the rails with our main topic. Whatever needs to be discussed about this new subject will be continued after we are through with our main concern.” She gives a pause, rubbing her forehead. “Could you present me your evidence?” The judge directs her words at the lawyer beside you, who perks up in response.

“O- Of course!”

She walks with fast steps towards her, placing every item you had gathered since day one of the final week of investigation. You had remembered Sans's words the day you visited him and came to the decision of including every piece you found: the residue of the weapons Mettaton used to blow a hole into the building, a piece of a surveillance camera Alphys had messed with, scales that had fallen from Undyne when tackling you down before the explosion, and leftover bottles of medicine carrying traces of Toriel’s magic in them.

Those were the four main pieces that could denote your rescue, yet -- at the same time -- these could be used to turn against them. The only one who was safe was Napstablook, him being the only one not to intervene majorly aside from taking pictures and filming some audio. Sans was also a separate case by himself, being accused of guilt even when having audio prove the contrary.

You brace yourself, waiting as the judge and the lawyer discuss things amongst themselves.

Curiosity poking you, your gaze travels elsewhere, focusing on the crowd -- humans on the right and monsters on the left, as customary. You see the bailiff waiting next to the judge’s podium and the policewoman stand by two other guards, the latter looking uneasy as she watches her wife deal with the situation. Four of the monsters involved in your rescue are mixed with the rest of the crowd, Frisk standing with Solana again and being accompanied by Faust.

Sans is the only one you can’t spot immediately.

As soon as you do, however, you instantly wish you hadn’t, anxiety rising when you see him glaring at the people involved in your abduction, behind the five standing Jessie -- teasing him and
"Did you really think the Surface would be any different?" you hear, voice you can identify as Jessie's, even with the rest of the noise drowning out your thinking. "It's no better here than it is at the Underground. I don't know what your King or whatever told you, but you're not going anywhere besides down. A weak guy like you has no place anywhere in the world." Jessie pauses to stifle a laugh, making you flinch when they make eye contact with you for a split second. "And (Y/N)? They're as weak as you. I guess it makes sense you'd wanna try put a ring on someone like you."

Sans doesn't comment, an apologetic look crossing his irises when he catches you staring. The white glow is almost gone, making his gaze close to hollow weren't he still trying to stay firm.

Not much time passes until a faint sheet of white starts to cloud his vision, increasing slowly as time passes on.

Everyone else is too busy caught up with discussing the evidence you had brought, leading you to wait with a racing pulse -- to see if he would snap out of it, if you could intervene, or if the judge would finally comment about the items now in her possession.
“Court is dismissed for the next two hours,” the judge proclaims, an edge to her tone. “Those involved with this case are prohibited from leaving this town. The rest may go wherever they please.”

It takes a moment for people to stand up, these still occupied discussing what happened. A few faces spare you looks of encouragement, some of judgement, and several with pity, the last one you’re not particularly fond of. Some of your monster friends arrive to speak with you, though you excuse yourself from them, wanting to stop the guards already busy walking Sans out of the room.

His irises are still as dim as you had seen them moments before -- if not dimmer, a lost look visible in the way he stares at everything and everyone around him.

“I’ll be back soon,” you warn, directing your words at the group, though mostly at Faust. He’s standing beside them, finally allowed to join the monsters now that he wasn’t required to sit apart from them. Frisk and Solana join in, too -- the bailiff, judge, former judge, and policewoman all gathered to one side, concerned expressions on their faces as they talk with each other. “I’ll be back in a minute.”

“Take your time, dear,” Toriel suggests, the careful sound of her voice soothing your mind. “I can take Frisk and Faust to lunch while you manage.”
“And I’ll go have a word with that guy,” Undyne adds, the way she says it while staring over at the mayor making you imagine she would roll her suit’s sleeves up were she in an old-timey bar fight. “That was no way to talk about my friends. I’ll ask him a thing or two about where he got whatever information he gave the judge that made her lose her cool.”

“I doubt he’ll want to say anything,” Mettaton comments, arms crossed and mouth shaped into a frown. “He’s as stubborn as I was when I used to work underground -- It’ll take a lot for any of us to understand him, or why he’s even doing all this in the first place.”

“It’s still worth a try!” Papyrus exclaims, grabbing Alphys by both her shoulders, startling her. “Alphys had the courage to confess in front of many people! I am positive that if she overcame that fear, it’s also possible we may learn something new by talking to him.”

Seeing everyone engage themselves in the topic, you smile and dismiss yourself from the group, clutching onto the locket hidden underneath your shirt for support. While it was hard to concentrate with the burning worries of the case and the situation between Sans and Jessie, you feel grateful to see everyone gathered safe in the courtroom -- to know Faust was here, to see him with Frisk, to see Solana join in, and to see almost all the monsters you had closely befriended to the point of them feeling more like family. It’s a reassuring factor for your doubts, hope rising within and encouraging you to look for the missing monster of the crowd.

★

It takes you a good fifteen minutes to track the guards and Sans down, having to ask others where he had been taken off to.

As soon as you do, you feel fear cling onto you --rough and unmoving. The mist you had seen clouding Sans’s vision is now a thick fog, only a trace of his face able to be seen through it. Your thoughts instantly click at that sight, remembering one of the chapters you read from the book the monster wrote.

“W- Wait!” you call out to the guards, feet stuck to the floor. “Leave him alone!”

You finally break out of your shock and hurry towards Sans’s side. A few guards try to stop you, though they give in when they see the fog grow darker, seeing less and less of his face the longer it takes for you to act. You force yourself not to stare at Jessie sitting by the benches afar -- kept under watch by two officers -- and grab Sans’s shoulders tight, shaking him as roughly as you’re capable of and shouting his name when the fog refuses to fade from his skull. His body feels limp despite him still standing, unresponsive and unnaturally hot to the touch.
“What did you do to him?” you ask, looking at the guards and later towards Jessie, not bothering to mask your anger. “Why is he like this?”

“Dunno,” Jessie replies, shrugging. “Just talked some sense into him, and he got all pissed at me. The guards here were trying to check what was up with him, but none of the medics here know how to care for whatever he has.” They stop to grin, eyeing you up and down. “He was being too idealistic,” they continue. “Marrying you? We both know that wasn’t as magical as he thinks it is, but I can’t blame him. . . You’re looking as good as when I first met you. Word of advice, though? Don’t keep up whatever it is you have with those monsters if you want to stay sane longer.”

“I wouldn’t have to do that if people like you didn't make my life so difficult,” you retort, body tense and voice matching it. "We were legally divorced when you decided to stalk me for making friends with monsters."

"And you were illegally making friends with them, even when you knew you had Faust as your responsibility -- Maybe the city allows you to do whatever the Hell you want, but you still belong to this town."

"He was our responsibility, but you were rarely there. And you only showed up when I started getting close with Sans."

"It was for your own good, (Y/N). You were and still are letting yourself go to waste with someone like him. Why not date that Mettaton guy instead? At least he looks like he'd know how to take you in bed."

Repulsed, you hold back the urge to take the argument further, seeing Sans's face almost entirely covered by the fog.

"Whatever you say, it's my life. I didn't marry you so you could own it -- We were supposed to do the opposite."

"What? Feel free?” they taunt, grinning wider and leaning forward in their seat. "Who the hell even told you marriage's a form of freedom? That's just what idealistic people think. It's a burden to many and a responsibility to few -- And you're actually supposed to devote yourself to that person when you're married, not turn against me the way you did."
"That would've only worked if it meant both people would do the same."

"Are you saying I never cared about you?"

"I’m not sure what to think anymore."

A door closing and approaching footsteps let you know someone else’s stepped into the waiting room, helping break the argument -- the resentment bubbling between you. You look towards the person, seeing the judge standing with an additional pair of guards by her side. She orders them to grab Jessie, the other two responsible for looking after Sans and them helping follow those orders.

“Please allow (L/N) and Sans some privacy. I can watch over them on my own.”

“You sure, ma’am?” a guard asks, directing a concerned look at her. “One of us can stay -- just in case.”

“I am certain,” she persists, nodding. “And please take Jessie back with you. I do not want them near (L/N) any longer.”

“Right away,” another guard speaks up, tipping his head before leaving back with the other guards, these busy keeping Jessie in place.

Goosebumps form on your arms and back when you hear them speak in the midst of their resistance, voice brimming with ire. “I regret ever thinking you’d be any better for anything besides sex. Being with you’s like hiring a prostitute -- fun when you’re doing it, bad when you have to pay for it. Sam’s just wasting his time with you.”

The judge places a hand on your shoulder, as if to keep you from answering back at them. Beyond angered, however, you can only take the bait, voice breaking when you speak up. “It’s not just about him. I- I’m not about to let all this go to waste. All those friends Faust made and all those people I got to know weren’t for nothing. It’s my choice -- I wanted a new life, but you kept me from having it.”

“And you fucked up mine,” they reply, snickering. “I mean, really -- Eighteen years in prison? For what? I was only trying to get the only thing you’re good for.”
“You tried to kill me in the process.”

“Tried’s the key word there.”

The judge squeezes your shoulder again, harder this time. She gestures over to Sans, distracting you from staring Jessie down any longer. You can only hear as they’re escorted off to a vehicle, metal ringing as they move around.

“I am in no position to say this, but please do not lose sight of yourself now, (L/N).”

You sigh and close your eyes, allowing yourself a moment of weakness before tending back to the situation in hand, receiving support by her rubbing steady circles around your back.

★

Tired, you get down on one knee and accommodate Sans closer to your eye level, hands grabbing fistfuls of his jacket. You feel yourself growing weaker -- body swaying when you try to stay in place.

“Is he injured?” the judge questions, casting her attention back to you. “Do you need me to bring you something? Perhaps a medic?” Concern traces her voice, silence amplifying it.

You shake your head. “I’m not sure,” you reply, sighing. “It’s the first time I’ve ever seen him like this, even though I’ve read about it before.”

She nods and steps back, staying on watch for anyone that dare tries to snoop into the room. Meanwhile, you attempt to find any clue that might hint at the monster’s recovery, though it’s harder for you to do than it was for you to read about it. You soon feel Sans’s hand place itself firm on the back of your head, pulling you to face him.

“Wh- What’s wrong?” you ask, voice breaking again. “What’s happening to you?”
“(Y/N) . . .”

“Yes?”

You shake out of his hold and grab his shoulders, choking back a sob when the judge settles in to help you out.

“. . .I’m sorry.”

“For what, Sans? Wh- What are you even saying?”

“I always lose hope -- I ain’t strong enough.”

As the fog continues to grow, your desperation reaches new levels. You grab his face and try to search for any sign of his irises -- to fan off the fog preventing you from looking at him.

“You are strong enough. I . . . Y- You’re still here with us.”

He places a hand over where your soul would be, movements weak as he tries to stay firm. “I’m not -- I’ve never been. But I’m glad I had the chance to be vulnerable around you and Faust . . . And to have you as my family. I don’t think I’ve ever gotten that far before.”

At a loss for words, you hug him tight, taking in the feeling of his body and soul -- something you would overlook on a regular time spent together.

Now that you’re in this situation though, you take him in completely: the weak beat of his soul, the oddly smooth yet rough feeling of his bones, the unnatural warmth, his scarce breathing, and the faint scent of antibacterial soap -- the same one you had smelled on him when visiting him in prison, most changes you overlooked until this moment.

“Stay with me,” you request, cupping his cheekbone as best you can, and settling for his jaw when the fog blocks you from holding onto him any closer. “I . . . I believe in you -- your strengths and your vulnerable points.”
You wait, closing your eyes and bumping your forehead with his as best you can, tears threatening to spill, heart increasing its pace, and soul aching for a solution. Shock goes through you when he grabs onto your back, arms placed around your waist.

The fog remains when you look back at him. His gaze is still lost, though a more stable consciousness stays stuck to him.

“This really you, (Y/N)?” the monster asks, sincerity in his question. “I ain’t imaginin’ you, right?”

“It’s me, Sans -- I’m. . . I'm here.”
Judgment, Part Three

The fog fades, granting you an opportunity to see his face again, conscious and focused. It’s a short-lived moment, eye sockets closing when he verifies he’s safe in your hold.

On a different day, you would’ve most likely panicked. In contrast, you grab him tight, feeling the weak traces of his magic reach your body when you brush your hand against his torso, locating his soul. Hadn’t you learned from the book he had given you, the situation would’ve been handled in an entirely different way.

“He needs to eat something -- monster food, I mean,” you explain, facing the judge when she moves closer to help. “Is there any place close by that sells that?”

The judge hums, closing her eyes and rubbing her forehead as she tries to find an answer. “There’s a general store a few blocks away from here,” she states, snapping out of her thinking phase. “I can send someone to go with you, if it helps, and I can extend the recess period if necessary.” A smile makes her much more approachable, her current tone different from the one she used in court. She fetches a phone from her pocket, gesturing it to you. “What do you say? Just say the word, and I’ll contact someone to take you there.”

You look down at your lap to see Sans safe in your hold, almost comatose weren’t he still muttering things under his sleep related to his self-declared failure and incompetence. His gaze is furrowed, making him look troubled even with how limp his body has gone. He’s vulnerable, for certain -- showing his trust by not flinching when you place a hand over his soul, this one still hidden, only letting its presence known by the remaining magic coursing through it.

“Please do,” you mutter, pulling him closer. “Who should I leave him with?”

“Leave him with me -- I’ll ask the bailiff to help me while you’re back.”

Happy with the knowledge Sans would be staying under more trustworthy hands, you nod and lay him down on one of the nearby benches, letting go when the judge stands beside him.

“I’ll be back soon.”
You avoid bringing attention to yourself by lowering your head as much as you can, convenience store packed to the brim with customers, most of them with their eyes glued to a television screen playing a thorough recap of the first day of the trail. It’s impossible for you to ignore it, even more so when an overview of today’s continuation plays, the clip ending on the worst part possible -- the part where the mayor had begun to speak and your lawyer intervened.

“Isn’t that them over there?” a person asks, driving out your pulse -- vainly when you look around and realize she’s referring to you on the screen, shown during one of your weakest moments: seeing Jessie enter last through those doors. The fear was unmistakable, the amount of effort you put into overcoming the aftereffects of that experience almost appearing to be a near-complete waste when you see yourself on television, lacking direction.

“Need help, (miss/mister)?” a clerk asks, appearing next to your side.

You avoid looking at him, smiling instead to remain polite, hands tightening when you try to think of something to say. “Well... Yes, actually,” you reply, bracing yourself. “Do you carry monster food here?”

Briefly, you glance at him, a quizzical look crossing his face. His gaze moves this way and that, searching for the aisle.

“It’s aisle number eight.” He smiles back, crossing his arms, toned muscles making him look more like a bodybuilder rather than a regular clerk at a convenience store. “Nobody ever goes around there much, but we keep the aisle as our personal policy.”

“Thank you.”

With that, you leave towards the aisle and scan everything in it as soon as you get there. Most of the products displayed are similar counterparts to human food, plenty requiring a stove or skillet to be cooked. You look for what doesn’t require any preparation: bottled water, crackers, a muffin, a bag of chips, and a juice pouch, all these the first items you take with you. Memories flood at the chips and juice combination, the image of Sans tutoring Faust a cherished one.

In a time crunch, you don’t allow yourself much time to reminisce beyond that point and pick up a few more items along the way, keeping your head low as you make it toward the checkout counter -- the place most taken over by the customers.
“On our most recent update, the monster involved with (Y/N) (L/N) has gone comatose, presumably due to the lack of proper care he received in prison. He was refused monster food even when it was specified it was different from human consumption. It’s reported that the last thing he ate that possessed anything close to monster quality was what his significant other brought to him two days before today. The monster is currently under recovery. More updates on the subject soon.”

Nobody comments on the update, making the silence eerie, only interrupted when items are scanned and when a baggy-eyed cashier calls for the next customer to step on forward.

The person before you steps aside, gaze signaling for you to go first. Others stare at her initiative, cashiers stopping in their work to look toward you and customers shuffling around their purses and wallets to search for something.

One by one, people begin to hand out money at the cashier left to tend to you, some offering what little change they have while others take out larger sums of money, a few checks thrown in along the way. Nobody speaks throughout, situation feeling surreal, the warmth of their actions being the one thing to contrast with it.

“Would that be all?” the cashier asks, facing you.

“Y- Yes,” you stutter, caught aback.

Nodding, she calls out for a bagger to help you with your items, calling out the next customer when completing your payment. She hands you the money left from what others had donated and refuses your attempt to pay with your own money, a smile crossing her lips as she mouths a quick ‘good luck’ to you before tending back to her work. Others nearby offer you smiles and well-wishes of their own, encouraging you even as you step out with a handful of groceries and the change pocketed safe in your wallet.

★

You finally make it back.

The waiting hall is full by the time you get there, almost an hour having passed since you left. People are gathered around the judge, though she keeps them at a distance, Sans still laying on the
“They’re here,” someone mentions, bringing attention to you.

You stay in place, intimidated by everyone’s gazes. Familiar and friendly ones help you cope, while angered ones keep you at bay.

You see Toriel, Gerson, and Papyrus helping treat Sans’s condition, Undyne glaring at the mayor, Alphys being interrogated, and Nasptablook fretting his worries to his cousin. MK and Frisk help Faust stay calm, looking red-eyed and puffy-faced from a distance, the way he looks making you imagine he would be clinging onto Sans’s side weren’t he being aided by his friends. The policewoman, your assigned judge, and Solana are close by, offering support to some of the human and monster children who had pulled their parents to see the case in person, all of them you figure are students from Toriel’s school judging from how they refer to him. Jessie’s no longer in sight, as so aren’t the group of five involved in your kidnapping.

From the corner of your eye, you spot the bailiff running towards Sans and the judge’s side, a first aid kit in hand and a pair of medics -- one human and one monster -- following behind him.

“Let (L/N) try with what they brought first,” the judge speaks, nodding for you to approach her.

You return that action, holding the groceries tight and being helped with them by the same, brown bear monster you danced with the day of the winter gathering. His wife and daughter help him in the process, motivating others to do the same -- either by clearing up the path or unpacking what you had bought. The crowd urges you to go with Sans while they unpack, smiles -- both sad and glad -- shown on their faces.

You're careful when approaching the monster, sitting next to him on the floor as your hand hesitates over him. He looks far from waking out of his comatose state, though you're not close to giving up yet. As a result, you gain determination, preparing yourself for both the good and bad, and keeping in mind his fragile state when nudging his shoulder -- your first attempt at obtaining a response from him.

“Sans?” you call out, pressing a hand over the center of his ribcage, hot to the touch. “C- Can you hear me? You’re heating up.”

He shifts. A pained groan leaves his teeth when he moves so much as an inch, cold sweat
contrasting with the temperature. “(Y- (Y/N),” he murmurs, hand finding your soul.

Troubled, you’re only shaken out of your confusion when having the groceries placed next to you, displaying an array of materials to work with: from something as simple as bottled water to something as complex as monster medicine. You take out the bottled water first and bring it to his mouth, remaining hopeful.

Your soul stiffens when you see him drink, emptying the bottle with three long gulps. The next thing you give him are chips, similar to the brand you had given him the first day of Faust’s tutoring lessons. It’s not until you close it off with the juice pouch that he opens his sockets again, a deep fondness to the light in his irises when he stares at you, grabbing the back of your head and pulling you close.

“Chips and juice, huh?” he teases, bumping his forehead with yours. “Never thought I’d have that menu again.”

You break into a smile and hug him tight. He’s still weak, though it’s a great, if not drastic improvement from his initial state. His grip is careful around you, the way he rests his hands on your back making it seem as if he were cautious to touch you -- as if you would disappear were he to embrace you any stronger.

“Thanks, (Y/N). Never thought I’d be lucky enough to have ya here with me like this.”

As soon as his grip loosens, you feel the urge -- the instinct -- to call out for the medics, both who hesitate at your call but respond just as quickly to get to your side. The monster checks his soul’s pulse while the human starts preparing a moveable bed for him. Faust, Frisk, and MK stand by you when Sans is placed in bed, pulse marking he could make it, but that he needed urgent medical attention to do so.

“His HP’s in danger,” the monster medic consults you, keeping his voice hushed to prevent Faust from crying further. On a closer look, Frisk and MK both look teary-eyed, though it’s clear by the expressions on their faces as to who had been supporting who. “It’s a miracle he’s still living, considering he only has one in count.”

“Y- You mean his HP?” you ask, still processing his words. "He's got only one, then?"

“Yes, (miss/sir). It’s a rare occurrence, but a known one, still.”
Your entire body shakes when you take that concept in. You start to think over what would’ve happened hadn’t you brought that lollipop and pastries to him two days ago, mind going to darker places by imagining him turned to dust -- leaving no recognizable traces behind.

You hold back the impulse to rush off with the human medic already mounting him on an ambulance, though everyone around encourages you to do the opposite.

“You’re his family now, (Y/N),” the judge mentions, smiling. “Go -- And take those items back with you. You and Faust may need them on the way there.”
The room is still, sterile, and silent with the exception of the monitor's soft beeping. You're unable to tune it out, afraid it would change the pace of its rhythm when you were least prepared to.

Sans is resting in bed, eye sockets closed and soul barely beginning to lower its temperature. It's still hot to the touch, and his sweating is still just as persistent; a tub with soapy water and a cloth are placed next to his bedside for that purpose. You huff and hold back a frown, growing uneasy at the thought of him taking longer to wake up.

". . .Sans?" you call out, waiting.

He barely stirs.

Worry increasing, you crouch next to him and place a hand over his chest, vainly hoping you could help him in some way. You call out for him again and ask a question the next, frowning when you see nothing changes.

"I miss you," you comment, smiling. "Maybe you think it's silly, or that it's too soon to be missing someone. . . But I still miss you. It's been what -- two weeks since we last did anything together? It's hard to believe it's been that long since the first day of the trail happened."

You grab his hand, rubbing circles with your thumb and biting your lip to avoid getting more sentimental than necessary.

"I was thinking. . . What would wait for us when everything calms down -- even if it's just a bit? Don't know if it's too optimistic, but I was imagining it all. . . Seeing Toriel establish a high school, and who knows? Maybe a college. . . Seeing Undyne finally get that job as an officer, Papyrus work with his new promotion, Faust move up another grade. . ."

You squeeze his hand tighter, smile growing.

"G- Getting to live with you longer, bonding our- our souls. . . *Marriage.*" You stop in your rambling to stare at him, smile tightening when you see him still recovering. "What about you -- your specific goals, I mean? Maybe you could finally go to college. . . And get that degree in science, math. . . Whatever path you want. Maybe I could take a baking course while you do that, too -- 'cuz those cupcakes I made really need improvement."
Almost immediately as you hear him mumble, you glance up to see him moving around, expression furrowed as he shrugs the sheets off his body. He doesn't open his sockets, though you listen to him speaking under his breath.

"(Y/N)?" he asks as soon as he wakes, gaze narrowed at you.

You stand up and lean close to him, lips pressed into a tight line as you try to avoid frowning. "What's wrong? Does it hurt anywhere?"

He speaks barely intelligible words, these explained by him gesturing at his chest, a faint white glowing under the beige of his hospital gown. "Don't- Don't call anyone yet, just. . ." You try your best to understand him, though his pain proves stronger than his capability to speak clearly. "Just. . . Bring my soul out, please."

You nod and place your hand over his chest, nervous yet eager to go through with the process. Your hand shakes, though he grabs your wrist, keeping you firm as he manages to say something else.

". . .We'll do it together."

His hand leads you to the center, where the glow's gone fainter, heat rising in its place. You close your eyes and wait, his hold on you growing stronger when the temperature continues to increase. You're tempted to ask over what's going on or at least have a grasp at understanding the situation, yet you stay firm in what you're doing, only pulling back when you feel his soul closer. Sans letting go of you serves as another signal for you to pull away and open your eyes, these widening when you see the state of his soul.

It's there -- A faint white covering it, the temperature he had been fighting off for the past four days emanating from it. His hand grabs your wrist and leads the way again, hold careful around you. "This is gonna sound fairytale as hell, but. . . But hear me out."

Despite yourself, you laugh, caught off guard by the embarrassed note of his voice. "What is it?"

"Try. . . Try bringin' out that magic you used to make those cupcakes. Your ancestors practiced magic, so you should still have some of it left in ya."
"But wasn't that just Toriel helping me out?"

"No, it was you -- Same goes for Faust."

A stampede of questions charge at your mind, though you keep yourself from asking them, eager to be done with this process first before doing anything else. "Then what should I do next?"

"Kiss me before the clock strikes midnight -- Only true love's kiss can break my curse."

"I'm being serious here, Sans."

The two of you share a laugh, his hold on you growing weaker as he takes a hand to wipe a tear off his face. "Sorry, pal. All you gotta do's bring that magic out and lead the way."

Nodding, you do as instructed, hands tensing over his soul as you close your eyes and concentrate, trying to find it. It's difficult for you to know what you're supposed to feel exactly, but you stay resolved, holding back a laugh when he comments something related to an ogre and a princess.

"Shut up," you demand, chuckling. "You're gonna make me lose concentration."

"Whatever you say, prince(ss)."

You burst out a laugh, hold loosening on his soul. "A- Again with the nicknames? I swear you're-"

A small spark of (s/c) flies out of your fingers, aiming right at his soul. Your first instinct's to freak out, yet it's fought back when you see him grinning at you, bright and honest.

"Keep doin' that," he states, laughing. "As much as you can, though -- Don't go wearin' yourself out, 'cuz then you'll be the one gettin' hurt." He scoots back and pats at the space he leaves beside him. "Sit here if ya want, (Y/N). Helps with the process."
"You sure that's not an excuse to get close to me?"

"Maybe it is."

You climb next to him in bed and sit down, keeping your hand over his soul as you wait for magic to continue flowing through. The glow increases while the temperature lessens, a sight that helps calm your doubts down.

He rests his head against yours as you wait, irises displaying the same brightness as his soul. "I missed ya too, pal."

"You were listening?"

Your question follows immediately, mind clicking back to the time you had said that to him -- just a few moments ago. It was strange for you to think you had been close to losing hope, only to have him wake up not long after those thoughts plagued you. Seeing him awake again's what helps ease you down a notch, hope returning and increasing the more time you're able to share with the monster. You take him in similar to how you had the day he was close to giving up -- his touch, his temperature, and the faint thumps of his soul.

"Yup -- Heard ya say you're thinking 'bout marriage," he replies, urging you to stop overthinking.

You grow reluctant, lacking the words to express what's in your mind. "Do you feel ready for it?"

"After all this, I kinda feel ready for anything."

The magic's strength falters when you hear him say that, his tone and the expression on his face far too earnest for you not to feel tightness in your chest again. Your lips form a line again as you try to regain focus of your goal while your hand manages to pass one last surge of magic at his soul before he tells you to stop, exhaustion hitting you at the same time you let go.

"Don't wear yourself out," he warns, grabbing your arm. "We can't help each other that way." A familiar, playful grin returns to his expression, gaze facing yours. "And we can't have a weddin' if we're both sick."
You hide your embarrassment by looking away, biting back a smile. "Wh- Where could that be though? I don't think there's any place near that allows that."

He grabs your hand in his, making you stare at him. "Havin' you accept my proposal's enough, but we can always do the vows, even if they ain't official."

Feeling it's your turn to tease him, you kiss his nose cavity and chuckle, pulling away afterwards. "You sound really eager about this," you remark, letting your smile show. "Is Mettaton threatening you, or do you really wanna do this?"

"If you feel it's time, then I'm ready for it also. 'Course I didn't think that far when I gave you that ring, but it's what I want in the end -- to be with you." He stops holding your hand to shift in bed, the same bashful look returning to his face. "Dunno if I'll be the best spouse there is, but I wanna try to be at least a good one."

"What's your idea of a good spouse?"

"Figured you'd ask."

Sans stands up right as he chuckles at your question. He has to shuffle around to get the fluid bag patches attached to him out of the way, but you help with that by getting out of bed and moving the equipment around until he's able to move around better, being careful not to snap anything out. Once you're done, he's able to stand up, the same equipment that had once been an obstacle helping him move around, one hand grabbing the pole and the other resting by his side.

He walks over to you and uses his free hand to hold onto your face, similar to how you'd done previous occasions -- when getting ready to kiss him or when seeing him in a comatose state, ready to pass out. Then, he pulls away, looking lost in thought.

"I thought I'd be ready to answer if you asked -- I expected you to. But now that we're actually here..." Sans laughs, the way he covers his face and how the monitor changes its pace subtly making you tense with worry. "It's actually way harder to answer."

Tears are present when he uncovers his face, yet the same smile is also there, unmoving.

"But if I had to say only one thing, I guess it'd be someone who makes you feel the same way
you've made me feel -- right now."

Those tears increase when you approach the monster, feeling them running down your neck when you pull him in and let him rest his face on your shoulder.

"Thanks for being here, (Y/N)."
Word about his recovery spreads as soon as Toriel and Papyrus learn about your achievement in channeling magic. They inform everyone they can possibly think of, causing for the waiting hall outside Sans's room to be overcome by familiar faces, Grillby, Gerson, Undyne, Alphys, and Faust the first ones to enter the area. You can also see Solana, Mettaton, Frisk, and MK nearby, most of them busy running around and helping others make preparations for Sans's extended stay in the hospital.

"How long does it say?" Mettaton asks, tilting his head as he stares at the flowers Toriel and Papyrus place around the room, helping bring some contrast to the plain white walls and the monotony of no decor.

"A month, at least," you reply, checking the papers. "Says here he needs to recover a lot more now."

"Then it's settled," he declares, startling both people in their flower arranging when he steps in, looking focused as he helps them look more like bouquets rather than simple flower vases. "We'll organize a Christmas party with just the lot of us! I'm guessing we'll also have to spend New Years here, too."

"Never thought you'd do that for me, Met," Sans comments, gaining your and the robot's attention, the latter who stops arranging flowers to grin at him.

"Never said I was doing this for you. I'm doing this for the sake of your family, since I'm sure Papyrus, Faust, and (Y/N) would appreciate it rather than having to spend those days all gloomy and bored until you recover."

Parents of children Sans had tutored begin to show up inside the room while others leave to make space to walk around. Grillby, Gerson, and Undyne discuss the lack of closure regarding the trial while Alphys teaches Faust over how to care for monsters, going over the basics and adding more detail whenever he asks more about a topic. Solana, Frisk, and MK help Mettaton with the planning while the same people once busy adding flowers to the room move on to help organize what Sans would need for his month-long stay in the hospital.

"And I see somebody here's finally wearing that ring," the robot teases, moving his attention to you. "You and I need to talk soon."
"I'm guessin' this is more for (Y/N)'s sake, then?" Sans teases, chuckling.

"And for your brother's, too. I'm sure he'd appreciate you going after what you want instead of doing like you always do."

Papyrus is too busy to hear his name mentioned, though you can still imagine him agreeing were he to overhear the robot's words.

"Who's the doctor in charge of him, anyway?"

"Oh," you mutter, caught off guard. "I haven't checked yet." You shuffle the papers around, searching for the doctor's name amongst all the information displayed. "It's-"

As quickly as you find the name, you frown. You're asked over your well-being, the name you read over Sans's medical records numbing you on the spot. The name of the doctor in charge of his recovery and month-long stay sounds all-too familiar to you, those suspicions being confirmed when Sans asks what's wrong and reads the notes himself.

"Sure you can go talk with 'em?" he asks, glancing at his brother next, now less busy than before. "Paps could try going instead."

Hearing his name called this time around, Papyrus stops his arrangements with Toriel to stand next to you while Sans sits straight in bed. He furrows his gaze when he sees the two of you holding papers in your hands and Mettaton stand next to you. There's a scrutinizing look to his skull, and he prompts himself to speak up. "Is something wrong? What do the papers say?"

You tense and turn to him, holding the papers strong enough to make them crunch and stop yourself right after. "Nothing's wrong with him, it's just..." You sigh, unknowing how to approach the topic. "The doctor written down here kinda doesn't like me very much."

"Why would that be, (Y/N)? I thought only the mayor and Jessie were the ones who disliked you!"

"That's kind of an understatement, Paps," Sans comments, a nervous chuckle leaving his teeth.
Papyrus withers, cheerful expression dimming for just a split second before going back to its regular state. "But how could the doctor be their enemy? The only enemies (Y/N) has made have been for their battles in court! Why would the doctor here hate them?"

"It's a long story."

Papyrus and Mettaton exchange looks, Grillby joining in by confirming the truth of that statement.

". . ." ("It's a delicate subject.")

"He's my brother, and (Y/N)'s my (sister/brother)-in-law! What could any of them two possibly try to hide from me?" Papyrus comments, furrowing his gaze as he grumbles a 'Nyeh!' in complaint. "That's ridiculous!"

"And I'm in charge of scooping drama," Mettaton adds, placing his hands on his hips. "How could I not know about this?"

". . ." ("The three of us agreed it is something we cannot share unless they both want to. Only my daughter knows about it, and that's only since she was working with me that day.")

Despite their curiosity, both people informed let the subject go, Mettaton looking more hurt than you would guess when comparing him to Papyrus. The latter -- on the other hand -- looks more angered than hurt, glaring sharply at both his brother and yourself.

"While I do not think it's right to be hiding these things, I am still at your disposal, (Y/N). Who is it I need to speak with?"

"I can deal with this," you state, more determined than before. "I. . . I think it's about time we talked this out -- once and for all."

"You sure you don't want Paps to go?"

"I'm sure."
To say the mood's tense is an understatement, having to stay still while you wait for the doctor to find Sans's files proving almost harder than having to confront the mayor in court. You watch them take out and slide papers in, stopping when they retrieve the ones proving the reasons for the length of Sans's stay. They hand that paper to you and wait. Surprisingly, the bunny monster remains stoic and makes no mention of the night at Grillby's, staying quiet throughout. Though while you figure they were simply too drunk that night and that it had been too long since you last saw each other, the look they direct at you when you give the file back says something else entirely.

"The least is one month," the doctor states, placing their notes down with a loud thump. "Despite his recovery, he's still in a fragile state. It would be risky to take him back home."

"Then. . . Wh- What should we do until he recovers?" you ask, grimacing as you try to hold yourself back, memories of that night drowning your thoughts and tuning out all other senses. "We're so far from home. . . Is there someplace near Faust and I could stay until he recovers?"

"It's not necessary for you to visit him that often. I can assure you he's in good hands, (miss/sir)."

There's a glare to their look masked by the topic you're discussing with them. The files are messy with the way they slammed them down, and you can see tired eyes stare into you, reminding you of their drunken state and the words they spat at you.

"He's my fiancé," you insist, exasperated. "I can't just leave him like this."

"He'll be sleeping most of the time."

"No, I won't."

Sans appears from his room, dark circles again more prominent than before. He rests his body against the door frame, tired in spite of the magic you used to heal him.
"I appreciate the help, but I think you know more than anyone else (Y/N)'s someone I trust. Just 'cuz they're human doesn't mean anything -- A similar mentality's what got us into this mess in the first place."

You flinch the moment the bunny monster turns around, sharp and violent. Their glare is fully uncovered now, intensified by them burying their nails into the files, controlling themselves for the sake of keeping these intact.

"You're saying (Y/N)'s somehow innocent? They were the one who seduced and led you on. I would've stopped this had I known you'd be naive enough to fall for it."

"I'm too tired for this, bud."

Sighing, the skeleton rubs his forehead and winces, facing you right after he recovers. His irises are brighter, though not as bright as you were used to witnessing the five days straight you woke up on the same bed as him -- the five days after you moved in with him.

"Ain't there an inn somewhere 'round here? I know it'll be useless tryna convince you that I'll be fine, so you and Faust can stay there, if ya want. I'll cover the costs, but make sure you keep that charm with ya at all times."

He's standing in front of you by the time you process his words, fingers cupping your cheek as he stares into your eyes, grinning afterwards.

"Maybe we can't be in control of what life'll throw at us, but we can still try to choose our path. And if I'm gonna choose it, that involves me keepin' you guys safe even while I'm still recoverin'."

You hear the bunny monster grumble something under their breath as they breathe in deep and compose themselves shortly after, though Sans standing in front of you keeps you from seeing anything else. Lulled, you grow sleepy when his fingers travel to the back of your head, closing your eyes as you take in his touch and the feeling of his fingers on your skin.

"I'll go there, then," you reply, smiling. "And I still have that with me -- right here." You slip a hand under your shirt to retrieve the old locket and charm, both hung around your neck. "See?"
He nods, looking relieved. "Keep it close. Hell knows what life'll throw at us next."

Looking a little more than irritated, the doctor steps in and shoves a file at you, frown faltering when you make eye contact with them. "Visiting hours are over, but you can come back tomorrow morning," they explain, harrumphing. "I- I don't intend to lower my guard, but thank you for being here for him, (Y/N). I will . . . inform the staff in charge of him about you and your son."

"Thank you."

The bunny monster dismisses themselves with a sharp nod, no other comment or reaction given besides the quick once over they give you before storming off to another door, seemingly towards the waiting hall. You can hear the heels of their shoes click fast as they rush off and a door slam shut, leaving you alone with Sans, who holds back a grin when he looks back to you.

"Making progress, don't you think?"

"Don't know if you could call that progress, but . . . Sure."

You move away from the doctor's desk and stare down at the floor, twiddling your fingers as you huff, letting out the adrenaline from confronting the bunny monster.

Sans laughs, sitting down on one of the chairs nearby, completely disregarding the fact that you were meant to leave while he was meant to be back in his room. "C'mere, (Y/N)."

You feel a chill run down your spine, the way he says your name hinting at what he wants and making you look away from the floor. His posture is another hint, along with the longing in his irises.

"What's wrong?" you ask, arriving next to his side.

Rather than offering for you to sit next to him, he stares at you and pulls you with what little magic he has for you to lean over him. He presses a kiss against your cheek, chuckling when you shut your eyes closed.
"Let's hope they won't kill you with their glares by the time I'm outta this place."

You kiss him back, grinning. "Let's hope so."
"You just have to imagine that every bruise is a hickey from the Universe. And everyone wants to get with the Universe." – Finn, Adventure Time

Third Person POV
Sans's Perspective

Three days have passed, and it’s almost Christmas.

Sans has managed to stay in touch with others, though the person he least learns about is (Y/N). Aside from knowing they were staying at the inn he had told them of, he knew nothing about the state of the trail and even less about whether the charm was working in terms of keeping them and Faust safe. He’s skeptical of the mayor, even more now with the news of him having gained intel from a monster.

It would be too far-fetched for him to declare it could be one of the monsters he was friends with; he wouldn’t even assume that about Mettaton, how far he had gone for the sake of (Y/N) and Faust enough to make the skeleton see past the things he disliked about the robot to instead rely on him. He starts crossing out names and suspects, a headache piercing through and delaying him more than he would want. Alphys had her tendencies to run her mouth a little too much sometimes, but he thoroughly doubted her ever exchanging words with the mayor -- even Undyne loathed that idea on her own.

Breathing in, he tries to continue, though he feels that same headache cross with him again, on par with the feeling of something sharp tightening around his wrist. Sans’s irises flicker as he looks down at his hand, only to find nothing but surface-deep scratches on his wrist. The same feeling attacks his ankle next, vanishing even quicker and latching onto his neck right after.

Finally, he’s able to grasp onto the thing hurting him, grabbing it with his healthy hand in spite of the danger it involved.
“Do you have a death wish, Smiley? I wouldn’t try that if I were you.”

In front of him appears a yellow flower -- *the* yellow flower, if he were to be specific. Flowey, the supposed friend Frisk had tried to keep stable ever since leaving the Underground, was now standing in front of him, a smile on his face.

“You’ve gone soft, haven’t you?” the flower taunts, a smug look overcoming his features. “A few years back, you would’ve caught me first try, and you would’ve told me off the minute I showed up in front of you.”

“Only if you tried anythin’ funny -- There’s a difference, pal.”

“I’ve seen you cry, Smiley. You’re not the same as before.”

Sans tenses with that callout. Though he didn't want to agree with the flower, he was speaking the truth. It would've been a cold day in hell before he allowed himself to cry in front of someone a few years back -- let alone the kind he was supposed to be on the watch for when he used to be a sentry. He had even cried tears of laughter during his conversation with the human the day he got his restraining order. It was safe to say he felt comforted, and that he was being much more careless when it came to staying guarded around them.

“You've fallen hard for (Y/N), haven't you? So much that you've allowed yourself to be weak in front of them.”

The flower wraps its vines tighter around Sans's neck, grinning when he sees him flinch.

"You've cried. . . You've gotten angry. . . You've worried over them. . . And you've even proposed to them recently, when just a few years back, you couldn't even care less about what happened to your kind! You waited until the last minute to intervene back then, but now- Now you're actually *trying*, even though you suck at it. You let your precious prince(ss) be kidnapped that one time not long after Jessie tried to kill them, just like how you let your brother die in the past!”

"There's moments when even I can't or shouldn't intervene. Paps had hope the fallen human could change, so I let him -- What kinda brother would I even be if I told 'im he couldn't have that hope?”
"And what kind of brother were you to let him die? You could’ve done something way earlier -- But you used that stupid promise with Torie- th. . . that goat woman and your 'karma' as an excuse.” Flowey smiles, taunting the skeleton by leaning closer to him. “Tell me, isn't that the truth? Or are you willing to admit you’re not strong enough unless you gain karma -- that you would’ve been one of the very first victims hadn't you waited to grow stronger?"

"If that'll make you feel better, yeah. I'm not strong enough -- I'm weak as hell. But what’re ya gonna do about that? I’m fully aware of my weaknesses, pal.”

Sans's vision goes blurry when the flower's grip grows stronger. He sees him grin even brighter, looking pleased.

"I'll have my fun with your human when you’re dead -- more than others and I have already."

"What're you implyin'?"

The flower flashes his teeth with the rise of that question, a grin forming as more thorns spike out of his body and its trail of vines. "I'll tear them apart bit by bit. They might have a soul, and its trait might be defined now, but they're weak -- just as weak as you."

"They might have their weak points, but they ain't weak as a whole."

He hears the flower laugh, mockery and genuine humour interchanging.

"That's what you want to believe, Smiley. But how strong are they really if they let themselves be controlled by their ex? They dated Jessie for more years than they have with you, and not one time while you were in that picture did they stood up for themselves. They even told you to tutor Faust at school after Jessie told them to! (Y/N) made that agreement with their ex even though it involved keeping you out of the picture -- And don't even get me started on your restraining order and the mayor!"

"They raised Faust on their own, endured an unhealthy relationship, got fired from the department for wantin' to help monsters, and’re still here even with all the stuff we've been through."

"But do those things really signify strength? They could've avoided all those things had they submitted to their fate."
"I really wouldn't call that strength. Or isn't that what you're callin' me out for?"

"Nice to see you're finally seeing things my way, Smiley. You-

*Knock, knock.*

A soft knock on the room's entrance door stops the flower in his triumph. Both Sans and him turn to face the door and hear a voice from the other side.

"Sans? Are you okay?"

The monster in question takes a look at the time marked on his phone, the usual hour (Y/N) was used to visiting at showing on the screen. He mutters a curse to himself, seeing the flower still taunting him on the side.

"Yeah," he replies, searching for an excuse. "I'm just, uh. . . showerin'."

"Why'd you lock *this* door then, dummy?" the human asks, a nervous trill to their laugh. "Are you. . . Are you really okay?"

The way (Y/N)'s voice sounds with their last statement makes warning bells sound in his head, followed by the urge for him to try and fix things.

"Listen, (Y/N), I-

Sans coughs loud when the vines grow too tight, vision blurring out almost entirely, saved by him trying to stay awake to use what little magic he can to open the door and reveal himself to the human behind it.

"S- Sans!"
Hearing is his only aid as he falls limp in bed, vines slipping off and freeing him completely. He gasps for air and feels (Y/N) stand next to him. Quickly, he tries to stop them when he senses they plan to call a doctor, though he hears them wince before he can get to that.

"Ridiculous," the flower states, laughing. "Never thought you'd want to live this badly, Smiley. Or are you trying to make up for your mistakes now?"

Sans can only manage to open his eye sockets to see (Y/N) being held captive by the flower, vines grabbing tight onto their neck, wrists, and waist. Pain is more than clear in their eyes, yet they keep themselves from wincing further by the way they close their eyes and bite down on their lip.

"You guys are too alike. No wonder you thought you'd get married!"

Blood splatters on the floor when Flowey squeezes the human's neck, their spit overcome by it.

"Leave them outta this. If you're here to make fun of me, then do just that -- Don't go pullin' (Y/N) into our biz."

"But it's just not as fun! You're telling me to let them go when you're actually reacting to this? I've never seen you show this much emotion at once, Smiley. Have you even looked at yourself in the mirror? It's- It's hilarious!"

"...you."

Flowey turns his head to the human, hearing them mumble under their breath.

"What?" he snaps, glaring at them.

"Screw you!"

(Y/N) sends a kick at the flower's face, a would-be sight to laugh at were Sans not in a dire situation at the moment. He still holds back a grin, though he manages to take advantage of the situation all the same. In the midst of the flower's recovery, he slams the main entrance door shut again and keeps himself from pressing the emergency button, aware of the danger it would involve.
having more people in the room. He watches as (Y/N) aims another kick at their opponent, sending the flower flying to his arms.

Blood can be seen tainting their mouth, clothes, and neck, though they look determined, facing the flower with sharp eyes. "I- I don't know what the hell you're trying to do, but... But I won't let you do it. I've had enough."

Flowey struggles to escape under Sans's grasp, although it doesn't stop him from biting down hard on his hand, something the monster counters by taking the bedsheets to craft a shield against the flower's teeth.

"Sans is not weak -- Neither am I. Maybe both of us were at one point, but I believe in him. I- I know he's stronger now."

"He's in a hospital, you idiot. How strong can he be?"

"I'm right here, y'know. No need for third person."

To his surprise, (Y/N) smiles -- honest and firm. He returns that gesture, further caught aback when they step forward; they wipe blood off them before doing anything else, a confident look in their eyes.

"I survived Jessie -- And if Frisk could deal with you, I'm sure I can manage with you, too. Surface or not, I won't let you have your way."

"You talk big for someone who got their butt kicked in court. Did you maybe forget what the mayor said about you? You're nothing short of a victim being taken advantage of."

Sans has a completely different perspective of (Y/N) next, their expression darkening the second Flowey comments on that subject, using words almost identical to the mayor's. They swipe the flower off his hands, glaring at him.

“I'm not that naive,” they state, frowning. “If- If I knew this was bad for me -- What I'm doing right now. . . I- I would try to break free.”
“Going to cry now, Softie?”

He hears Flowey cover a shriek when (Y/N) tightens their grip on him. They frown deeper, blinking back tears. "And what if I am? Does that make me any less strong? I love the life I have now, and I’d be enjoying it more if my town would stop shoving stupid laws down our throats. I have an actual family now, one that won’t keep me from growing. I-

Seeing their hold grow weak, Sans takes the flower back in his hands, keeping him in place and fighting back when he lashes out.

“I don’t know why you’re doing this, but I know who you are. I know Frisk kept you calm all these years, and that you were-

“Shut up!” Flowey exclaims, lashing a vine at their cheek.

The skeleton tightens his grip on the flower, watching quietly as blood drips from the human’s face.

“Don’t act like you know me.”

“Then I expect the same treatment, Flowey. I’m not a victim being taken advantage of. I’m (Y/N) (L/N): a human, a (wife/husband), and a (mother/father). But most of all...I’m a person. I will treat you the same if you allow me to.”

Expecting Flowey to talk next, Sans’s grasp breaks. He sees the flower scoff at him before leaving, his current state giving him no time to attempt to stop him from escaping.

“Where are you going?” the human asks, anger in their tone. “Don’t run from me when I-

The door slams open, in rushing an exasperated Undyne and an anxious Alphys, both accompanied by Frisk and Faust, who immediately hurry along to his and (Y/N)’s side when these spot him and them.

Chapter End Notes
Did you expect Flowey to show up, or were you caught off guard by it?

Here are some chapters that hint at him 'watching' over you.

1. Chapter Thirty, Parts One & Two
2. Chapter Thirty-Four, Part Two
3. Chapter Thirty-Seven
"The heck happened here?" Undyne questions, alarm in her tone. "Where did that flower run off to?!!"

“He escaped,” Sans explains, glancing briefly at the fish woman before going back to the human, who looks sickly and faint. "But that ain’t important right now -- (Y/N) got hurt tryna fight 'im off."

“Why didn’t you press the emergency button? We... We could’ve lost you.”

Frisk steps in while Faust approaches the skeleton. The older one of the two frowns deeply as they sign an explanation at (Y/N). Faust, on the other hand, helps Sans with his injuries, taking the first aid kit Alphys offers to him. “It’s more dangerous to get more people involved. It’s better to deal with Flowey alone than in big groups.”

Undyne steps in to help the human, looking troubled when she gets a closer look at their injuries. “That punk sure did a number on you, huh? Did you guys fight him off on your own, then? ‘Cuz that’s metal as hell.”

Sans chuckles at her comment, though it vanishes quickly, the sight of the human limp and weak reminding him of the day of their kidnapping and how close he had been to losing them. “We did. But (Y/N) got pretty scary-lookin’ there, though -- Told it to Flowey straight, and woulda probably kept goin’ at it if he hadn’t escaped.”

Expecting them to defend their actions, he sees the human droop instead. They fall to their knees, undoubtedly alarming Undyne further. “You okay there?” she questions, placing her hand on their shoulder, gripping them strong. “Not really sure if this place can treat human injuries, but want me to call a doc for you?”

The skeleton sees (Y/N) shake their head softly and cover their face, catching a glimpse of teary eyes before they hide. “It's fine. I- I was. . . I was just questioning myself for a moment there.”

“I- It’s okay to feel that way sometimes,” Alphys comments, making both the fish woman and the human look to her side. “You don’t need to feel or be strong all the time. It’s a- a natural part of e- every living being, even if it all goes. . . unnoticed sometimes.”
"Thanks, Alphys." The human frowns, sighing. “Christmas is coming soon and I just. . . I don’t know what to do with myself anymore. I know Faust wants to celebrate with all of us, and Mettaton’s been really helpful about all that, but I. . . I-“

“Breathe for a minute, cupcake. Your soul probably needs some follow up ‘fore you start gettin’ worked up again.”

Internal panic makes Sans blurt out the first thing that comes to mind, his words resulting in immediate embarrassment -- plus a grinning Undyne, a giddy Alphys, and a smiling Frisk and Faust glancing at each other.

“Remember that time you first felt its trait? It could be changin’ again.”

“How- How many times can it change, though? I mean, I've read about this before, but not to that extent yet.”

Alphys frowns, worry clear on her face. “I- It usually stables up when the human reaches a certain age. You’re still young, so it could take a while -- may- maybe until you’re close to your late adult stage for it to stay one way.”

(Y/N) looks away from her and everyone else, though Sans still manages to see their expression, tired and uncertain.

“Does that mean I’m not strong enough? Maybe that’s why I never stood up to Jessie until recently, or. . . or why I’m still having trouble with the mayor, or-“

“That doesn’t mean you’re weak,” he intervenes again, trying to stand up. Faust pushes him back in bed, warning him about his injuries. “It just means you’re growin’ -- that you’re learnin’ howta be strong.”

The four people present besides (Y/N) and himself exchange nods and begin to leave the room one by one, giving them privacy. Undyne is the last person to leave, helping the human walk to his side despite their words dismissing her help. “You need to rest just as much as he needs to, punk,” she comments, warning them. “I’ll go look for a doctor and see if we can put you guys in the same room or something. A soul check-up and few days of recovery should be the least we can do about you.”
“But what about Faust? I... I can’t stay here and leave him all alone! He’s my responsibility.”

“I’ll be okay!” Faust exclaims, voice muffled behind the door. The skeleton can hear Alphys shush Faust as quickly as he speaks, making him smile.

“I’m sure that can be worked out, (Y/N),” the fish lady comments huffing. “I know you’ll probably try to find outside help instead of trusting us, but I’m not letting you do that this time.”

“I already stayed awhile at Toriel’s,” they reply, resisting. “Leaving you guys in charge of him would be too much.”

“Aren’t we friends?”

“Of course we are, Undyne.”

“Then let me do this for you, punk,” she continues, grinning and placing her fists on her hips. “I’ve worked with kids for almost three years! Taking care of Faust will be a piece of monster candy.”

Sans relaxes when he sees the human agree with a reluctant nod, the dry blood stains stuck to their skin making him wary of their safety. Undyne squeezes them lightly, careful not to come in contact with their wounds. She leaves right after, leading him to wait until her and the others' voices hush to have a word with his fiancé(e).

“(Y/N)?”

“Wh- What’s up?” they ask, caught aback. They walk the remaining distance between him and themself, resting their body over the bed’s metal railings.

The monster reaches out for the hand they place over the railings, trapping it carefully in his own. “Anything tough happen these past few days? Somethin’ tells me Flowey was the last straw.”

He holds back a blush when the human rests their head over his hand, cheek soft to the touch. “...
He’s thankful they’re not facing him directly, the embarrassment he tried to hold back before showing through a faint red over his cheekbones. “I haven’t heard from our case ever since you got hospitalized. The silence’s gotten worse now, and I just feel like the worst’s gonna happen as soon as I let my guard down.”

Their cheek grazes further against his hand, the way they press against it causing their mouth to pucker. He holds back a laugh, how defeated they looked made less intense by their pouted lips and puppy-like nature.

“Then what about the news? Anything related to the mayor?”

“Nothing. It’s been... weirdly quiet since that day.”

Sans stays silent, processing their answers as he tries to connect those details with Flowey’s appearance. He doubts the judge could be connected to him, though he can’t shake the feeling the news could have made a scandal about the info leaked by a monster to a human long by now.

“No news ’bout that rumour of a monster helpin’ the mayor?”

“. . .No. Only silence -- That’s what’s been getting on my nerves.”

Sans can feel something wet touch his hand on par with the sight of the human blinking away tears. They lift their head off his hand, a faint imprint of his fingers lingering on the (s/t) tone of their skin. At that sight, he sits up straighter and scoots back, offering them a place to sit down and talk. They don't look to have the energy for the second offer, though they sit and lay down beside him, a melancholic trace to their eyes as they reach for his cheekbone and graze the back of their hand.
against it, a smile kept by them biting back their emotions.

"I... I was scared -- And I kinda still am."

"Kinda?" he teases, grabbing their hand in his and bringing it closer to his cheekbone. "Or mostly?"

The human laughs and changes their smile for a grin, a few tears spilling in the process. "Mo- Mostly."

Silence is kept permanent as the monster embraces them completely, letting them fall asleep to the slow rhythm of his soul and dozing off himself right after.

"I was kinda- mostly scared, too."

Sans remembers he's forgotten to check their soul in the midst of him dozing off, though he calms down when he feels the beat of their own soul: quiet yet present; weak yet persistent; undefined yet truthful.

In a way, he thanks the flower for giving him a wake up call. Maybe he had changed in quite a few aspects, but turning weak wasn't one of his transformations.

If only he could find a more general phrase besides 'to feel more human', he would use it.

Perhaps 'to grow softer' was a better fit to describe that feeling, albeit a bit ironic considering he was mostly made up of bones.
The night is cold and wet; leftover rain dresses the grass and flowers with dew. Only the patient bracelet you carry with you's what reminds you you're not allowed to venture too far. You hold Sans’s hand tighter and breathe in the freshness surrounding the air. He chooses to stop halfway into your walk, making you wait for him.

“Is anything wrong, Sans?”

He looks dazed. With a heavy sigh, his body slumps, though he manages to reply. “Tomorrow’s Christmas, and we couldn’t really spend it at home. I wanted Faust to spend it with a stable family, I guess -- Poor kid has me as a dad now.”

You can’t help the jolt in your soul, though you figure right now’s not a moment to feel giddy over the thought of getting married again -- to someone you trusted more than feared. You had long since complied and submitted to Jessie’s wishes, but now, you felt free -- free to be true to yourself while still keeping a stable family in the picture.

“Shut up, you dummy!” you exclaim, nudging him. “You’re gonna be a great one. Didn’t you say you raised Papyrus on your own?”

“It’s still hard for me to get used to it. You’re talkin’ to a guy who didn’t take up that job as a scientist ’cuz I thought I’d fail bad, and that I wouldn't live up to its expectations.”

Your senses peak at the new surge of topic. Wanting to know more, you move closer to him and watch as a caterpillar inches its way to the bed of wildflowers near you. The wind feels crisper and the sky grows darker, making you shudder. “So I take it you were gonna be a Royal Scientist, then? What were your plans for helping Asgore?”

You join the monster when he chooses to sit on the grass and see him offer a finger at the caterpillar for it to climb on. “I wanted to make life at the Underground a lil’ easier, and that meant tryna solve the water crisis and lack of positive change. The rivers, waterfalls, and all that were dryin’ out as the years went on, Hotland got even hotter, and it was real hard to make a change with the lack of supplies we had. Sure, Alphys built Mettaton’s body and all, but it was made from the few scraps we found at the dumpster.”

He hands the caterpillar to you, your fear over hurting it deeming you reluctant to reach out for it
quickly. It eventually climbs onto your finger, while Sans feeds it the leaf it had been inching towards. The way it chews helps you calm down a bit and observe it more closely, bursting out a laugh when it tickles your finger. “What about getting a degree as soon as that new college opens up? Maybe it’s not a hybrid uni or anything, but you’ll be able to study with other monsters there.”

“And tell them I’m married to a human?” Sans asks, grinning. “I’m sure that’ll go well.”

“You’re being silly,” you retort, pressing the caterpillar against his cheekbone, an act that makes him retreat when it tickles him with its fur and legs. “I’m sure they’re not against that idea -- It only makes sense they’d establish a monster-only college if every other uni within a fifty mile radius bans monsters.”

Sans huffs, frown turning to a smile when the caterpillar falls on his lap and squirms off for more leaves. “Sweet of you to have that kinda hope, but I’ve read their rules before, cupcake, and they ain’t that easy to get through. The second I tell ‘em I’m your husband and Faust’s dad, the quicker they’ll kick me outta there.” He kisses your chin the moment you tense and feel yourself frowning, eye sockets closed as he goes higher up, meeting with your lips. “Don’t get any ideas, though -- I ain’t plannin’ to leave you guys for somethin’ like that. Rather wait ‘till those hybrid universities get here and keep tutorin’ ‘till then.”

“Are . . . Are you really sure, though?”

Sans shakes his head softly, backing away. “Course I am. You’re tellin’ me I got a restraining order and an arrest on my records for nothin’? I love you, (Y/N).”

You’re not sure whether the dampness in your eyes is due to the quickening wind, his statement, or both at once, so you choose to counter it by resting your head against his chest, listening to his soul. The first time you had heard him say that, you clearly weren’t meant to hear it yet. Today’s a different story, confirmed by the way his soul beats and adjusts itself to the steady rhythm of your own. “L- Love you, too, Sans.”

You lift yourself off his chest and urge him to stand up, hands shaking when you grow aware of what you’re about to do.

Carefully, you get down on one knee and glance up at the monster, taking out a box from your (jean/skirt)’s pocket. His irises appear to falter and grow bright the next -- brighter than you’ve ever seen them before.
“Will you accept this ring? It’s. . . not custom made like yours, but I want you to also have an engagement ring with you.”

Sans seems ready to collapse, how tense and disoriented he looks making you bite back a smile. “That’s one way to turn me into a ghost,” he comments, breathing out. “Almost felt my soul leave my body for a moment there -- I swear I’ll never get used to this.” To your surprise, he kneels as well, placing his hand over the ring, the budget you set for it showing through its size and simplicity. He takes the piece and slips it on his ring finger, grabbing your hand afterwards. “Never thought I’d be gettin’ proposed to, but holy crap, it feels good.” Then, he grabs your face in his hands, a different intensity and passion present in his movements. His kisses are longer in duration and deeper in their intensity, giving you no time to rest or breathe as he follows one after the other.

“Sans. . .”

You feel his excitement through the haywire pace of his soul and his fervent touches, hands holding onto your body as if you were to disappear were he to release his grip on you. He shudders and brings you close; it takes him time to let go, his novice knowledge on how to cope with those emotions told by the reluctancy visible in him when he frees you from his hold.

“This what humans say ‘bout an endorphin rush? Never thought that’d be possible as a monster,” he comments, a hazy glint to his staring. “And where’d you even get that ring, anyway? You’ve been stuck here with me at the hospital for a good while now.”

“I have my ways,” you reply, winking at him. “Lets just say a friend had this planned out for me already.”

You watch as Sans looks down at the ring, the faint red that shows over his cheekbones masked by him breaking eye contact with you. “I, uh, dunno how to deal with this. The heck am I supposed to do now?”

Smiling, you hug him from behind and bring your lips close to his ear cavity, grinning when he shudders, his breath hitching at your touch. “You’re not supposed to ‘do’ anything now, Sans,” you reply, holding him closer. “Just. . . Just go with the flow. I’m sure you’ll figure this all out the same way you did when you decided to propose first.”

“I. . . I really did that, didn’t I?” He laughs, voice shaking. “Still dunno how though.”
He tenses when you bring a hand over his soul, all while maintaining the hug in place. “You really did, Softie.”

“Don’t you dare go there, Sweet n’ Salty Pastry.”

“Try me, Blushie.”
Extra: Christmas

Chapter Notes

To clarify, this fanfic takes place in an unspecified/made-up location. The weather is based off tropical climates -- where it rains instead of snows around this time of year!

Third Person POV

Sans's Perspective

It's a rainy Christmas.

Drops can be heard above, hitting zinc panels like a musician would with a drum. The smell of hot chocolate wafts through the air, mixed with the subtler scents of cinnamon and nutmeg.

Sans sees Mettaton enter the room, helping (Y/N) carry multiple trays of pastries and goods: pumpkin bread, sugar cookies, and a varied display of muffins and cupcakes. The robot wears another dress, while the human looks about as stunning as he had ever seen them before, a big deal for him considering he wasn't one to focus much on outer appearances. It's apparent by the way their clothes conform almost perfectly to their body type that Mettaton had been the main and only person responsible for making them look that way.

He feels breathless when they turn to him, a smile making him focus on their lips, glossy with chapstick. A hint of makeup covers up the scar Flowey left on their cheek, though he can still picture its location just as clearly. Marks are a bit more visible on their neck and wrists, though they're made less eye-catching by the same technique as before, in addition to the turtleneck sweater they wear right over their semi-formal clothing. In short, they were a great difference from the day Flowey attacked them, tired eyes and blood stains replaced for a brighter gaze and sharp clothing.

Noticing him, the human sets the trays down on a table and walks to his side. He sees them grin right before they lean over, lips closing in on his jaw, teasing him over a future kiss.

"You make a nice Santa Claus," they comment, smile growing. "If I'd known, I would've dressed up, too. You look cute."
"And you don't?"

They hum and grimace, placing a hand on their hip a little too similar like the robot behind them often did, a personality absorbed through the human now working for him. He tries not to see the resemblance, however, and chooses to grin instead, observing how they try to fix their clothing, tugging at it with how it sticks to their body. "Mettaton made me wear all this," they explain, gesturing at their clothes. "It's... really not my style, but he said it looks good."

"He said you looked good?"

"Getting jealous?" The devil appears behind (Y/N), placing his hands over their shoulders and flashing a knowing smile at the skeleton. "Don't worry, darling -- I've already got my eyes on someone else."

Sans's want to clarify he's not jealous is prohibited when another person enters the room, accompanied by two other people from what he can tell by the sound of their footsteps. He looks away from the robot and the human to see Grillby carrying drinks, the Snowdin shopkeeper carrying a pot, and a busy Muffet carrying all sorts of items, both comestible and not. The flame beckons him, though he hesitates, not quite sure over the idea of leaving Mettaton and (Y/N) alone now that he was labeled as jealous by the former.

He huffs and arrives next to Grillby, peering down at the table to see punch, fruit juice, and carbonated soda, along with coffee and cocoa -- all of them homemade. How the flame had that much talent when it came to mixology was a mystery to him, considering how limiting the Underground had often been for expanding knowledge on specific areas of labour and management. Then again, Grillby was a dedicated person, and him living close to the Librarby helped with the situation.

"..." ("Give this drink to (Y/N), and that one to Faust. Tell them it's from Uncle Grill.")

"Tryna get back at me for old times, huh?" Sans questions, nudging the monster on the shoulder. "I already paid my tab long ago, pal. Can't ya forgive a guy for takin' a while to pay back in full?"

"..." ("This isn't me getting revenge, Sans. I'm simply proud of you for doing what you've done so far. I sincerely mean it when I say I want to be Faust's uncle, even if it's unofficial.")

"C'mon -- We ain't even married yet. Cut me some slack on the teasin', will ya?"
"..." ("Yet. I've seen the way you look at (Y/N), Sans."

"Dad?"

Sans involuntarily turns his head towards the person who speaks up next, embarrassment crossing him when he sees it's Fuku. She exchanges words with Grillby, the agreement they come to seemingly related to her companion, considering how she immediately calls her over to join the event.

"..." ("Your face was priceless, but I guess that's what you get for having pranked (Y/N) in the past, don’t you think?")

Once more kept from fulfilling his wishes, Sans has to bite back his figurative tongue to deliver the drinks Grillby handed over to him, trying to find his fiancé(e) and Faust among the growing crowd a challenge harder than it sounded. What started off as a small get-together between close friends and family was now a massive celebration, keeping one of his targets busy as guests and acquaintances congratulate them over their engagement.

"Thank you," he hears (Y/N) say more than once, sounding more and more nervous with each repetition. "Yes, he made it himself." A pause, then more questions. "N- Next year, I guess? We haven't really set a date for it yet."

They sound too nervous now.

Were they as much as he was? It was hard to tell despite how open the human was compared to him. They cried when they needed to cry, smiled when they needed to smile, laughed when they needed to laugh. . .

But why were they trying to appear strong and certain over their engagement, if they weren't? That was another thing that made humans all the more difficult for him to understand, yet seeing (Y/N) in that position makes him want to try and understand those differences promptly.

"I'm, n- no. I'm not sure how to answer that."
"All I'm saying is, how would you have children with him?"

"It- It's possible through the soul. We would both have to be in agreement for that to happen, though."

"Still, isn’t that weird? I mean, what would become of your family? An adoptive son, a living skeleton for a stepfather, a divorced (woman/man) for a parent, and now a hybrid to the mix? How would that even wor-"

Sans steps in to see a woman with a bob cut and capri pants stand in front of (Y/N), a hand on her hip and a bag hung over her arm. She shares the same skin and hair colour as (Y/N), though her personality is far from being any similar to theirs. He stares at the woman and gives her a wary look, standing beside his fiancé(e) and supporting them by hooking his arm with theirs. “Gotta problem, ma’am?"

“That’s ‘miss’ to you, Sans,” she corrects, snickering. “Though what more can I expect from someone like you? Surely, you mustn’t know much about humans, as it seems you can't tell I'm unmarried.”

“Auntie, please,” (Y/N) intervenes, breathing out a shaky huff. “Can we please just put this behind us and get this over with? I want to enjoy the party -- Lots of people worked hard for it.”

“And you’re saying I didn’t?” their aunt retorts, scowling. “I’m the reason why you’re even allowed to celebrate in a hospital! Do you even know how difficult it is to have more than two visitors at once with a patient? Imagine what I had to do for this many people!”

Furrowing his gaze, Sans can only look between the two and wonder who the woman is exactly, or -- better yet -- how (Y/N) had not mentioned their aunt on occasions before this one. “I’m lost,” he states, chuckling. “Are you the manager here?”

“Close,” she replies, nodding. “I own and run this hospital, and intend to keep it that way. Your ‘fiancé(e)’ here and I worked together at the department before, though they're also my family. And while I’m not entirely in agreement with their choices, I am thankful that they opened up my perspective back then. It’s the reason why I left the department and why I’m even running my own monster-aimed hospital in the first place.”

“Then why’re you botherin’ them that much about our relationship?”
"I just think they could do better. You’re not exactly what I . . . envisioned, after all -- I thought maybe it was someone a little less-“

(Y/N) interrupts her this time, anger painted on their face. “Auntie,” they call, taking a step closer to her. “Don’t talk about him like that.”

“I’m just saying,” she states, shrugging. “You left a dangerous relationship barely three years ago. You should be more careful now.” For what seems to be the third time, Sans is unable to speak his mind, watching as the woman frowns, a trace of sadness slipping down her cheek as she then smiles and hugs the human goodbye. “Sorry for coming off too strong, dear. Just . . . know I want the best for you. It’d be a shame to see you fall after how much you’ve fought. Never forget that, (Y/N).”

“Th. . . Thank you, auntie,” they reply, trailing off in their words. "I'll, uh, see you again on New Year's Eve?"

"I'll look forward to it, sweetheart. Be careful out there now!"

As soon as the celebration calms down some and Sans finds an opportunity to be alone with (Y/N), he confronts them, itching to know more about the topic of them wanting to have a child with him. "So, been thinking 'bout havin' another kid, huh?" He holds back a huff with how strained his words sound.

The human leans their back against the wall, taking a sip from the drink Grillby had prepared for them. Whipped cream sticks to their lower lip when they pull away, the (coffee/chocolate) Grillby had prepared for them still warm -- a courtesy and prop of his fire magic. They clean the smudge by licking their lip, how much attention he puts into that sight making him want another kiss -- to remind himself of their warmth. "She was just asking. I don't want us to have a kid right away, but. . . ."

"You've been considerin' it."
"Exactly." They finish off the drink with one last gulp and grab the peppermint stick, holding it in place with their mouth. "You don't need to worry about it, though -- I already know it's best we take it slow, and that it's only common sense I give you time to think about it."

"Thanks, pal," Sans speaks up, grabbing a drink from Grillby's tray when he passes by. "I think I've got the answer already, but I guess I need more time to get used to it."

(Y/N) dismisses the flame's offer for another drink, instead thanking him and throwing the cup on the trash can nearby. "What would your answer be, then? I'm... curious."

The monster takes a swig from his coffee, hot enough to warm his soul, yet temperate enough for him to drink it quickly. "I'd say yes. I kinda... like the idea of havin' a family. All those years lookin' after Paps kinda stuck to me, I guess."

The human smiles, looking away when Faust calls out for them.

"Listen!" he exclaims, pointing at the ceiling. "Hail's falling from the sky! It's like snow... But harder!"

His excitement is barely contained; he grabs the human first and the monster next, pulling each to go follow him to the nearest window. "I know it can't snow here, but it's... it's pretty close to snow!"

Sans chuckles and places a hand over Faust's head, ruffling his hair. "Ya wanna see a snowfall?"

"Yeah! The people at the orphanage said my parents were from (Canada/the US), so it almost always snowed during Christmas! Could we go there someday?"

The monster watches as ice continues to hit the window and ceiling with soft, consistent thumps -- a louder one breaking the pattern every so often. "Think I've gotta better idea for now, bud. You ever heard of Snowdin? It ain't too far from here."

Faust beams at him while (Y/N) smiles, going behind the monster and squeezing his shoulders as a thank you. "It's a really nice place, dear. I went there once, but we could try going there again when we're out of the hospital."
"Gotta warm up, though," Sans adds, grinning when he feels (Y/N) close by. "It snows year-round, but it can get way colder 'round this time of year."

Looking excited, Faust embraces the monster in a hug, taking him by surprise. He mutters a string of thank you's and holds him tighter, easing down when (Y/N) joins in. "I- I'll do that! That's the best present there is -- You really are Sansta Claus!"

"Nah, kid." He laughs again, a tear escaping his socket when he closes them both, taking in the moment. "I'm just dressed like 'im."

"You still are to me!" the boy exclaims, persistent. "And (mom/dad), too -- They gave me a (dad/another dad) before Christmas even got here!"

He hears the older human cough at Faust's comment, hold loosening as they back away and look elsewhere, a hint of bashfulness smacked on their face. "That wasn't me, dear. We all just did what we had to do."

"And that still counts for me, too!"

The moments ends when Frisk and MK arrive, asking to play with Faust. Sans waits for the human to agree, though he's taken by surprise yet again when they nod their head, allowing him to make the decision instead.

"Go ahead, bud. Just be careful out there," he answers, holding back his emotions -- varying from happiness over his company to anxiety over how to do things right. "And keep the charm with ya, alright? Maybe it ain't the greatest, but it can protect ya while you're out there playin'."

Faust nods sharply and runs off with his friends after, voicing another thank you right as he leaves.

Left alone again with (Y/N), Sans looks up at them to see them smiling -- wide, bright, and confident. They give a thumbs up; then, they lean towards him and place a soft kiss on his teeth, staying there for a moment before pulling away.

"I'd say you're doing pretty good so far, Sans."
You've already lost count of how many times you've been in court by now. Rather than spending your day relaxing at home or with family and close friends on New Year's Eve, you're getting ready to finish what you've started. The mayor's late once more, a surprise for few and an expected outcome for many. You've had zero contact with the judge aside from her asking over your and the others' well-being, yet you manage to catch her right before she goes past the double doors leading to the courtroom.

"Can you please tell me why you've kept quiet about our case, Your Honour?" you ask, finally. Your breath hitches in your throat, and you find it difficult not letting your tone or words waver with uncertainty. "Are we... Are we in trouble? If so, please tell me the truth. I can handle it."

The judge faces you and frowns, sighing when she sees how onset you seem on getting a response. "I cannot disclose that information with you, (L/N), and for that, I apologize. You must wait until the mayor arrives for the final judgment to be made."

Feeling yourself grow irritated, you can only hope the mayor has a reasonable excuse for being late yet again. You find the locket under your shirt and grasp it tight, trying to find solace amongst your rising doubts. "I understand." you reply, nodding. "Thanks again for finding that hospital. I'm... I'm pretty sure you saved his life, Your Honour."

"Oh please, don't exaggerate, (L/N)," she counters, letting out a laugh before regaining her formality. "I only did what was necessary for his safety, though I do wish for his prompt recovery all the same -- And is that a ring, I see?"

You stay still, snapping out of your shock when you realize she's referring to the ring you finally decided to wear along with your everyday outfits. While everyone knew about your engagement -- mainly for the newspapers, reporters, and general rarity of the situation -- you had forgotten you hadn't shown any public 'proof' of it until today. Today, you were devoted to carry it through the remainder of the case, no matter what the mayor commented about it. Today, you were to fight until the very end, no matter ending in failure or success. Closure of any kind was necessary, even if unjust.
Gaining confidence, you tweak the ring towards a better angle and smile, ready to take on the mayor and your case once and for all. "It is -- I've been wearing it more often ever since he got admitted into the hospital. And I guess I might've... Proposed to him back?"

The judge raises an eyebrow, a smile breaking her distant exterior and changing it for a more approachable look. She giggles, speaking up afterwards. "Care to explain? That might be the first time I've ever heard of something like that!" Her smile widens, providing a temporary path for you to gain a closer bond with her. "I would like to imagine it means you gave him a ring back, then?"

"Exactly," you answer, returning her smile. "I did it on Christmas Eve. Had been saving up for it since the day he proposed to me first -- and so I figured that was the best time to do it. It's... one of Faust's favourite holidays, after all."

"I'm glad you did. Not only Faust seems happier lately, but I believe Sans looks more cheerful these days, too -- quite a change compared to last time."

"You've met with him recently?" Her words light a candle of curiosity, making you blurt out that question without thinking it twice. "Isn't he still supposed to stay in the city?"

The judge's smile barely falters, instead brightening when being asked more over the subject. "He is, but I visited him yesterday morning. He really looks to have recovered a lot since the last time I went there."

The conversation's cut short when her name's called upon from a distance. She excuses herself from your side, waving despite knowing you would see each other soon enough. Still, you wave back at her, a lighter weight to your worries remaining after the chat. The waiting hall is near empty now -- only a watchdog, a pair of guards, and your defense attorney remain, still waiting for the mayor to arrive.

"Do you think he's avoiding us?" your lawyer asks, fixing her glasses, a tick product of her excitement. "He talks big, but... Between you and me, I'd say he's a bit of a coward!" You laugh when she does, her giddy nature rubbing off on you regardless of the delicate situation you're in. "But whatever he may be, you can count on me, (L/N)! I may not be the most experienced lawyer out there, though I'll still give it my all to defend you until the end."

Her words and posture are equally determined as she nods at you, furrowed eyebrows adding to the intensity in her visage. A hint of nervousness slips when her hands shake the moment she goes to
gather your documents, though she counters that with a firm smile and another nod, assuring you once more over her dedication to your case.

"I won't rest until we at least prove the mayor wrong."

"At least?" you ask, grinning.

"The best would be sending him to jail!" she exclaims, placing a hand on her hip. "The way he treated you and the others out there is already enough of a reason to revoke his title as the mayor -- No decent leader should ever talk that way about the innocent, much less those who are trying to bring positive change to a community."

"Do really consider this a positive change?"

"Of course I do, (L/N)! Who do you take me for? I wouldn't have even taken up your case if I knew you or your companions were disrespectful in any way." She pauses in her speech, posture remaining firm and smile refusing to let go of her face. She looks confident, a great contrast from how anxious she often seemed to be. "Maybe it is a lot for people to take in at the moment, but what you're doing right now is far from shameful. Not only have you moved on from a, well... an unrequited marriage, but your monster friends deserve better treatment just as much as you do. I don't consider it reasonable for them to be limited to their success at the Surface -- simply because of outdated laws and stone-wall mindsets."

Before you can so much as take in every detail in her response, you're called over to the courtroom, open doors revealing a sight you had grown far too familiarized with.

★

An hour passes, and the mayor's yet to show up. Some of the audience begins to rise, gossip, and leave, while most of your friends and acquaintances stand up to join your side.

"Do you think something happened? Or maybe he's caught up with something important?" your lawyer asks, frowning as guilt overcomes the steadiness in her voice. "I... I wasn't too harsh with my words, was I?"

"You're fine," you reply, chuckling. "It's not like you cursed his name or anything."
Solana appears next, arms crossed as she glares at the closed doors, waiting to be opened by the mayor. "He's avoiding us, I'm sure. After what happened last time... There's no way he could still have the upper hand over your case, right?"

"I'm not too sure about that." You copy her actions of crossing your arms, growing uneasy the longer you wait over his arrival. "If he got outside help from a monster, I'm sure he could find a way to turn things to his favour again."

"Maybe the lad stuck his nose where it don't belong?" Gerson speaks up right after, sharing everyone's concern with a single question. "I've got a strong feeling he ain't absent 'cuz he wants to."

Conversations hush as the judge steps in, masking her own concern through a stern gaze. "Whatever the reasons for his delay may be, we will wait half an hour more. If he does not arrive by that time, then we will postpone this case for another day."

Rather than stressing over the possibility of that outcome, you can't shake off everyone's worries over his absence. Your phone rings, displaying Jessie's name and number on screen. Stress takes over almost immediately, followed by waves of anger, fear, and blunt confusion crashing against each other. You hesitate to answer, making people gather around you when they notice the uneasy look on your face.

"H- How?!" you ask, voice breaking. Your mind reacts, yet your body refuses to move, the concerned gazes people direct at you urging you to snap out of it. "How the hell is this possible?"

Finally, your body reacts, letting the phone fall off your hands -- thrown being a more fitting verb considering how much force you put into getting it away from your sight. Undyne catches your device just in time, her own expression tensing when she gets a glance of the caller's name.

"How in the world are they calling you? Isn't this that new phone Alphys programmed for you?"

You're prevented from answering, an eruption of noises keeping you from hearing your own thoughts. Sirens sound in the distance, a vehicle's tires screech close by, and two sets of footsteps approach the doors. In enter the policewoman and the bailiff from cases before, both out of breath when they burst into the courtroom, breaking the silence and gloom that had grown since your wait.
"The mayor," the woman speaks, taking a break as her legs give in. The man helps pull her back to her feet, while your lawyer excuses herself to help her wife. "He's. . ."

On a closer inspection, you see she's wounded, something she attempts to cover with her uniform's jacket.

"He's. . . He's dead," the bailiff adds, voice trembling as much as his body. "Looks like strangulation from a distance, b- but he's been sent off to forensics for an autopsy."

You grow faint when you hear a voice transmitted from your phone, calling your name. Undyne flinches at the same time as you, gathering herself to keep the phone from falling off her hands.

It calls your name again, its tone distorted yet familiar.
"What is it?" you snap, the voice's tone ringing in your ears. Undyne hands you the phone, letting go when she makes sure you're not going to fling it away again. "What do you want from me, and how do you know my name?"

"I'm Jessie. Did you seriously delete my number already?"

"You're not Jessie."

"Prove it."

You scowl, holding back the urge to squeeze the phone -- not wanting it to end up like the previous one. "Jessie or not, I don't need to prove anything to you."

"So that's how it's going to be, huh? You won't be talking that way soon."

"Empty threats won't work on me, 'Jessie'."

"Suit yourself, (Y/N)."

Loud, inconsistent banging sounds at the doors, making both the bailiff and the policewoman seek shelter, the man by backing away and the woman by holding onto the lawyer, incapable of standing on her own due to her wounds worsening by the second.

You take a step closer, observing how the doors shake with each thump.

"Open the doors," the voice commands, hissing.

"Why?"
“Open them.”

“Well, I reckon we shouldn't open 'em.” Gerson intervenes, cackling. “What's the rush, Jessie? We ain't got nowhere to go right now.”

“You'd open those doors if you knew what's good for you.”

“We'd rather not,” the bailiff adds, returning to his post by standing between the doors again. He stays in place, guarding the entrance from the unknown despite the growing strength and consistency of its thumps. "It's far from safe to be taking orders from strangers.”

“Like you have any reason to be judging me, Bailey,” it taunts, laughing. "Look at you, still working for this town. Aren't you a traitor? No loyal town officer would be in (Y/N)'s side, supporting them like you do.”

“What. . .” The policewoman is unable to finish her sentence, having to stop barely midway. She winces when her wife presses a gauze against her wound, keeping it from bleeding further. "What are you trying to do? Identify yourself and your purpose.”

“That's easy.” The voice pauses, static sounding through the speaker. "I'm the mayor!”

"The mayor's dead," the lawyer speaks, glaring at your phone. "Quit joking around, and tell us what you want from us.”

"But I am the mayor! I can prove it.”

"How, exactly?"

Shuffling of papers sounds from the speaker next. You wait in silence until it ends, the voice returning. "Law HM20XX: No human or monster should coexist in one same workspace. Law HM18XX: No human or monster should engage in relationships beyond that of regular passings and acquaintance. Do I need to read more? Now open the doors before I-"

"Anyone can read those laws.” You step in, remembering a few from your past training. "Law
"Oh, I know that, (Y/N). Anyone related to the law's heard them before." You're interrupted by the voice, who sounds more and more enthused with each second that passes. "That's why I'm making you deputy mayor, after all!"

Undyne intervenes next, snatching the phone off your hands as she goes to yell at the person behind the speaker. "The heck do you mean, punk? Quit playing around and show yourself to us. Nobody's gonna be your damn deputy mayor until we can understand what's going on here."

"Is that what you want, really? I'd be more careful of your words, Scales."

The courtroom quiets again, awareness dawning upon everyone. The judge and Gerson begin to escort people out of the premises, while the bailiff stays guarding the doors and the policewoman is helped out, the lawyer keeping her in place as Solana helps the pair reach a safer place. Papyrus pulls Frisk, MK, and Faust along with him, nodding sharply when Toriel gives him voiceless instructions on what to do from here on. Everyone braces themselves in one way or the other, gesturing at Undyne and you to proceed when the courtroom's been cleared up and the people've been escorted and guarded outside.

"Yes. Show yourself -- the real you, not who you're faking to be," you speak up, words on the edge of breaking, mind inventing countless scenarios as to how it could all go wrong.

Static, then the voice's return. "Fine," it speaks, a beat of silence following after. "You asked for it!"

As soon as those words are yelled, the doors burst open. The bailiff's sent stumbling back to the floor, making Undyne rush to help him and bring him with you. All three of you stand close by, keeping your backs to each other as you stay on guard, eyes jolting all around the room. It's hard not to falter in your mission when you see vines latch onto the walls and ceiling, overpowering the courtroom's entrance until it's covered by roots and leaves, sharp enough to be blades. Vines begin to scatter around the floor while you watch their movements, aiming at your feet.

You have to dance and tiptoe to evade them, though a few manage to capture you, drawing out blood as they latch onto your ankles, unrelenting. The bailiff is caught next, while Undyne is the last.
Trapped, you can only stare as countless vines, roots, and sharpened leaves continue to rise among the growing chaos of your surroundings, making it gain the appearance of a jungle rather than a regular courtroom. Undyne struggles and kicks to break free from her trap. The bailiff, on the other hand, moves less, though you can see how he shuffles through his uniform's back pocket, searching for something.

"Howdy!"

Your observation is cut off by bright yellow blocking your view.

The same flower from a week ago stands before you; a grin shows on his face, leaves providing a makeshift arm for him to use and place on your shoulder. "How's it going, deputy mayor? Do you believe me now, or do you need more proof?"

A wave of heat passes right by your cheek, followed by a fireball the flower evades as quickly as it arrives. Once the fire falls and dissipates, he snaps his head to the direction it came from and displays his full set of teeth in the shape of a smile. "Can't fool me again, old hag. I already know what you're capable of."

You try your best to glance behind you, though you can only capture a smidge of the situation, seeing Toriel's shape and clothing from a distance. More roots dash out, and -- in seconds -- she's pulled towards Flowey, kept binded as the flower laughs and turns his attention back to you.

"Now, where was I?" He grins at you, snaking a root around your neck and squeezing it only halfway. "Do you need more proof? I've got it right here with me if you need it!"

The rest is a blur as something heavy falls on top of you, the putrid smell that complements that experience one you recognized too much -- mainly from dark alleyways and remnants of street violence. A wave of nausea overcomes you when your gaze focuses on what keeps you held to the floor, weight preventing you from screaming.

"(Y/N)!" Undyne shouts your name, though you can only focus on the body lying on top of you: Jessie's, -- cold, heavy, and decaying.

"I've dealt with two of your problems already, Softie!" Flowey exclaims, laughs turning to full, unbridled bursts of excitement. "Isn't it fair you pay back by joining my side as deputy mayor? You'll have your benefits, too!"
A thud sounds as another heavy feeling settles over you, the last straw being when you look up to see the mayor's body right on top of Jessie's, whatever chance you had left to escape nulled by both's weight on you.

You scream, yet no sound comes out, faintness arriving after.
Near the End, Part Three

Familiar arms hold your waist when you wake up. Equally known surroundings and scents immediately drive out the awareness of being home. You turn to your left to see Sans sleeping next to you, chest barely moving as no snores leave him -- ones you had quickly gotten used to during the first few days you moved in with him. He shifts and moves closer to your side, how cold everything feels despite the bedsheets and the warmth he often exuded when around you nulled by your senses.

Something's not right, yet you can't move or do anything about it.

You try to wake him, though he barely responds, only making his hold on you stronger.

"W- Wake up," you stutter, mouth dry and throat raspy.

He doesn't move.

A new face enters the room, announced by the door opening and footsteps dragging against the floor. Faust greets you, eyes lacking their usual brightness as he instead shields himself with a blanket and an ice pack. He presses them both close to him and takes a step forward, placing the blanket over Sans's body and the ice pack on your forehead. Then, he sniffles, wiping a tear off his face as he turns around and exits the room, unresponsive when you try to call for his name -- voice still gone by reasons unknown to you.

You flinch when you feel a hand on the back of your neck, a kiss being pressed against it. Looking behind you, Sans has his eye sockets open, while his hand's busy toying with your ear, tracing its shape as he stares blankly -- at nothing in particular.

"Sans?"

You're allowed only little movement, enough to turn and stare directly at him. He doesn't notice the change and continues to gaze at nothing.

Persisting, you muster as much strength as you can and aim at his face, grabbing his cheekbones and yelling out his name.
As soon as you do, the cold lowers and nature's song takes over your hearing. Adjustment to your senses takes a while, though you're aided by hands helping you sit up and stay still. You can't open your eyes without dizzying, so you wait until the moment passes. Sans calls out for you, how real his touch feels causing you to look and see him, a view that's promptly blocked when he pulls you into his hold.

"Don't go anywhere," he warns, letting go after. "I need to go call the others."

He stands up from bed, urging you to take action and pull the sheets away from you. Before you can so much as stand on your feet though, the monster's back with more people, all of them who rush to your side, some hugging you and some asking over your well-being, none of them you can register as you mind tries to adjust to change.

"What's. . . What's going on?" you ask, breathing in when Faust joins your side, how comforting his presence is helping you gain stability. "Am I dreaming -- dead?"

"Uh, gonna be honest with ya, cupcake," Sans speaks up, a nervous chuckle leaving his teeth. "We thought you were. That shock you got back there was enough to give even me a heart attack."

"What happened back there? I. . . I don't remem-" A sharp pain stings your forehead, the flash that appears next one your brain cancels almost immediately. "I-"

"Don't," he warns, approaching your side. He joins Faust in the hug, sitting next to you in bed as he rests a hand behind your neck, similar to before. The ghost of his kiss is still there, made stronger by his touch, and the look he gives you. "You, uh, don't wanna remember that yet. You just woke up -- wouldn't be good to bring that image back again."

"Please, at least tell me what's going on," you plead, holding him back when he makes a move to stand up. "If I'm not dead, then. . . What happened? Wasn't Flowey-"

You come to an abrupt stop, chest tightening almost painfully as panic rises, fast and like a punch to the face. Faust notices and backs away, rushing off to the room's exit as he yells something about getting you some medicine. Your breathing turns scarce as flashbacks from the courtroom settle into your mind, holding on tight. Your body begins to shed a cold sweat, while your vision goes blurry. Sans holds you, Toriel assists him, and Alphys runs out of the room, calling out for Faust's name as Undyne goes right after her.
"Stay with me, (Y/N)," Sans calls out, voice louder than you had ever heard it before. "You're alive, and we're all gonna make it somehow, but we gotta have you living first -- Losing you's not an option."

"The mayor's dead," you mutter, tears spilling and staining his jacket. "And Jessie! They're... They're..." You grow dizzy, lack of oxygen making you rely on him more than you would want. "If I don't do what he says, then you'll all be..."

You can't finish your sentence, holding onto him tighter -- enough for him to stiffen and return your hold with more strength. "Breathe, pal. Nothing's gonna happen to us. We have a plan, but you'll need to calm down to hear it."

You let go of him, leaving wrinkles on his clothes when you pull away -- how hard your hold had been showing by how strong the wrinkles are ironed over the fabric. "Where is he? And wh- why am I still here when I could be-"

"Snap out of it, punk!"

Undyne returns, rushing to your side as she crouches in front of you. Sans stays back, allowing her to speak privately with you.

"Hear me out, (Y/N)," she asks, staring into your eyes, how patient she looks hinting at her experience with this sort of situation. "You remember I was caught by that flower demon thing, right? I escaped -- the bailiff and Toriel did, too. We're all fine, and we're gonna confront him when we're healthy and strong. Right now though, our armies are weak, and almost nobody believes we can do this -- even though we know Flowey more than any of those officers."

"The police are after him?" you ask, it being the first thing your mind can process.

"Ones who're not working for him. Everybody else at your town's screwed over unless we intervene in some way. Other towns and cities are trying to rescue that place, but they've already failed twice in the time you've been recovering."

"And yet they still won't let us fight," Muffet chimes in, sounding more annoyed than when forced to offer refunds and discounts at her bakery.
"Perhaps they think it's best for our safety, even though they are not entirely right about it!" Papyrus comments, nodding at the spider lady's statement. "Almost all of us here know what that flower wants, and what he'll do to obtain it!"

"M- Maybe we should let (Y/N) know about our plans first before we keep on talking," Alphys reasons, returning with Faust. "And let them drink this first -- It should help with what they went through just now."

Collective agreements follow. Half of those present begin to leave the room; only Undyne and Toriel stay. Alphys takes Sans with him after leaving you with the drink, discussing topics you assume are related to you based on the words that slip past your hearing. Muffet leaves a small bowl billowing with large puffs of steam before making her exit, joining Papyrus and Grillby's side when the former invites her to the kitchen. Frisk pulls Faust with them, while Solana arrives with a first aid kit.

"Get comfy, (Y/N)." Undyne speaks up, pulling a chair in front of your bed for her to sit on. "Before we tell you what'll happen, we need to talk."

You squeeze Undyne tight, thanking her when you pull away. Her face is brightened by a smile, though it dims when she sees your face.

"Are you sure you've got everything? You can tell me if there's something bothering you."

Against bringing up more doubts and questions, you battle with your thoughts. She ends it with her encouragement, persisting in her offer.

"It's just..." You pause, sighing. "Now that Jessie's dead -- and the mayor, I... I don't know how to feel. Should I feel angry? Sad? Indifferent? Relieved? Does Faust even know about all this?"

"He does." You feel cold when she responds, not daring to imagine how he must've reacted to their
deaths -- especially Jessie's. "Cried when he heard about Jessie, but to be honest. . . He looked a lot better when he found out you were still alive. 'Course that still affected him, but having you here helped a lot."

"How long has it been since. . . that day happened?"

"About four days? Sans's been looking after you, and Papyrus, too -- saying it was his duty as a brother-in-law and all. We took you back to the same hospital, and Sans kinda just insisted we all went to this house."

"Sans. . . left the hospital early? Isn't he. . . Isn't he still in danger? What if."

"He's receiving treatment on the side. But he's been persistent about this whole thing, how we gotta follow a plan and -- quote -- how he doesn't wanna make the same mistakes again."

Those words bring back reminders of Flowey's before his attack, words about how the skeleton had changed and how the flower would have his fun toying with what made him that way. While you're partially aware of it being due to your relationship, there were plenty of other reasons you could name right off the bat: his brother, the school, Faust, and all the other things he had and hadn't mentioned the day you were both alone in the car after the meeting with the city's mayor. He was much more aware of what he had, and how easy it could be to lose it all, an awareness that made him more expressive -- enough to cry, laugh, and anger like the flower had stated.

"We're not gonna let you go with us to face Flowey," she states, severity to her words. "We have a plan to defeat him without you being put in danger."

"What?" you snap, anger letting loose. "I can't just let you guys do all the work while I stay here! How would I even respond if any of you got hurt -- just be a prince(ss) in distress, and say 'oh, I was told not to do anything'?!"

"(Y/N), listen-"

"I won't let you guys go on your own."

"Calm down for a moment and-"
"I can't let that hap-

She stops your rambling by grabbing your arms, shaking you out of your spiral. "Gerson's dead because of him acting just like that!" Undyne exclaims, voice breaking. "Sure, he saved us all, but it was at the cost of his own life. He wouldn't listen when we said he should've left the job to someone else. Anybody but him could've had enough stamina to endure those hits, but he didn't listen. I could've taken those hits for him and still be alive!"

You hold Undyne tight, letting her shield her face against your shoulder blade. Carefully, you bring a hand to the back of her head, soothing her by stroking her hair.

"Don't just think about us," she continues, keeping her face against you. "Think about you, and what you want to do with your new life. As soon as we beat that flower, we'll have just that -- freedom. I'm sure of it."

Tears stain her face when she pulls back. You offer her your shirt to wipe her tears with, yet she declines, letting out a loud, hearty laugh and calling you a dork afterwards.

"I'll go wash my face -- don't need to dirty your shirt for nothing," she states, standing up from her seat. "I'll calls Sans over. Maybe he'll convince you not to join us with some smooches or something."

"Don't tease me, or I'll do the same with you and Alphys," you warn, nudging her shoulder. "But how's he taking it? Weren't he and Gerson close?"

"Like grandpa and grandson. Maybe you can get him to open up about it? He hasn't cried or done anything near close to that even though he was one of the first to know about his death. I want to think the news about Flowey and you passing out kept him from really feeling his absence."

You nod, a self-declared mission assigning itself into your mind.
"So..."

You start up a conversation with the skeleton as soon as he enters the room, left only to the privacy of him and yourself as the others remain downstairs.

"How... How're you taking this?" you ask, holding his hand in yours, tracing the ring you had given him, and rubbing steady circles with your thumb. "Anything you want to share with me? I... I'm hear for you, honey."

A tear escapes his socket, one he wipes away too quickly -- barely allowing you enough time to so much as try to wipe it away yourself. "Dammit," he mutters, snickering. "Say that again."

You smile and furrow your eyebrows, taking a moment to analyze just what he wanted you to repeat exactly. "...Honey?"

Sans laughs again, shaky. He sits beside you in bed, ignoring the chair Undyne had set out in front of you. Instead, he leans into you, resting his head on your shoulder as he imitates the action of tracing your ring with his thumb. "Thanks," he speaks up again, grinning. "Ya don't know how much I missed you. I... I'm grateful to have you still here with us."

Next, he pulls away, shifting on his seat until you're face-to-face with him rather than sideways. You watch him, taking in every change of expression and every moment of hesitation in his body language.

"That's why I need you to stay back while we deal with this. Flowey wants you -- He wants you under his power, but we ain't gonna allow that. All that time you and all of us spent fighting would be for nothing. Can ya trust me on this one, (Y/N)? Ya don't have to stay back completely, just avoid facing him off directly."

Choice #5.5 (Final Choice!)

What will you do now?

a.) Ask to do this together.
b.) Trust him.

c.) Don’t trust him.

d.) Hug him goodbye.

e.) Kiss him goodbye.
"Can't we do this together?" you ask, hope remaining. "I can help, even if it's from the sidelines. Or I could try to fool him -- Maybe make him think I'll agree, and distract him."

"We've already thought this out," he persists, holding your hand. "Whether direct confrontation or actin' as a distraction, it's risky havin' you anywhere near that place."

"Why is it so important I stay here? I can fight, and I can help you guys get through this."

His hand goes behind your neck, igniting the same spot he had kissed before. "I know you can, pal. But we've had four days to think about this. In the time you were recoverin', we thought this through more times that anyone could count. The kids'll stay with ya while we're out there, and that bunny we hired for babysittin' before'll be here, also."

"You're saying I need a babysitter now?"

"With that angry look you're givin' me, ya ain't far from it."

Tension fades as you give in with a smile, mirth leaving you in the form of a suppressed laugh. Sans lets go of his hold on you, the spot on your neck losing its warmth, not a trace of it staying. "It's for a reason, though. Have a look at your soul, and you'll see what I mean."

"How... can I do that, exactly?"

"Just, y'know... Uh, focus to bring it forward."

You attempt that, though you fail. One try after the other, you grow exasperated and huff, giving up with a fifth try.
"You don't know, either, don't you?" You grin when he evades your eyes, irises peering down at your lap instead. "I read your book page-by-page, and I never saw anything about the owner summoning their own soul."

"It's a work in progress," he admits, facing you. "Nobody knows how that can be done yet. We only know how to summon out other people's souls."

"Can you do that again, then? I want to see what you mean."

He nods, a bit of reluctance present in his action. "Sure -- Just gimme a sec."

You nod back, closing your eyes as you wait. To your surprise, you feel a hand place itself over your chest while the other goes to the back of your neck again, thumb placing itself on the same spot where he'd kissed you.

"Breathe."

You do as told, grabbing his shoulders when a sharp pain stings your chest. A wince escapes you as you bite your lip, holding back a cry. "This didn't hurt last time," you state, breathing out when Sans pulls his hand back. You keep your eyes closed, fearing another sting. "C- Can I look now?" You're uncertain, feeling his hand still on your neck.

"Yeah," he replies, hold pressing tighter on your neck. "Don't shake my hand away, though."

Agreeing with another nod, you open your eyes next, closing them again when you see only a glimpse of your soul. Scared, you maintain your grip on him, opening your eyes again to see your soul, grey, cold, and dim. There's not a hint of colour in it, any warmth it once had nulled by an ice-cold touch.

"Bettin' this house what happened back there's related to this," Sans states, flaring his nose cavity. "'Cuz, last time, I could still feel your soul, even if it was hard to. This time, though, we had a hard time knowin' if you'd live or not. That mark you feel on your neck's the only way I can know if your soul's in danger or not."
You choose to trust him, how relieved he looks giving pathway to vulnerability, if only for a moment. "Thanks, (Y/N). I know we missed New Years, but. . . Here's to us makin' it through this." He holds your hand, keeping his fingers close to the ring as he uses the other to grab onto the back of your neck, unleashing the same warmth from the kiss he'd given you earlier ago.

The sensation's strange although harmless; it prompts you to bring his attention to you, curiosity wanting to be fulfilled. "Why's my neck so warm? I felt your kiss before, but I don't think that's got anything to do with this feeling."

Sheepishness crosses Sans's face. Awkwardly, he looks away, preventing you from catching any visual sign of embarrassment. "Ya felt that? Sorry if it made you uncomfortable -- But I still have to do that to keep ya alive. That's why I told you to trust me. Ya ain't well enough."

"Wh- What? What do you mean? I feel fine." You give a bit of consideration to his words, the book he'd gifted you popping in between your thoughts. "Does it. . . have to do with my soul?"

"Yes and no," he states, pinching the bridge of his nose cavity as he furrows his gaze, looking back to you afterwards. "Course you were already physically hurt from the beginning, but these changes've been too much, too fast. Your body's pretty weak, but your soul's even weaker."

"But how bad is it exactly -- enough that you have to use magic to keep me alive?"

"Uh, pretty bad. I'd ask if you'd wanna look at it, but. . . You gotta promise ya won't faint -- 'cuz it ain't a pretty sight. At least, for me."

You agree to it, letting him summon out your soul like the day he'd proposed to you. It's a steady procedure, though it loses that stability when you begin to feel pain -- a sharp sting on your chest, centering on your soul when it's brought out. The feeling is unrelenting, worsening until he lets go of your soul, keeping his hand against the spot on the back of your neck and retrieving its warmth again. "Don't shake off my hold -- It's the only way we can keep seein' your soul without it fadin' away again."
"Is it too weak to be on its own?"

"That's one way to put it, though more accurate's whatever happened back at that courtroom gave little chance for your soul's recovery to happen."

You observe your soul: still, grey, and cold. It barely has a pulse, how colourless it looks and how frigid it is to the touch making an uneasy feeling settle in the pit of your stomach. You squeeze the monster's hand and smile, staring into his irises, warm and bright -- a stark difference from your soul. "I don't know what's happening, but. . . I trust you, Sans."

He squeezes your hand back, breaking eye contact with you, the same bashfulness from before returning. "Hopefully, I earned it. Don't wanna think it's just 'cuz of the situation."

You laugh, toying with his hand and shifting your fingers around it. "Don't worry, dummy -- You earned it."

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**Choice C**

You choose not to trust him.

He looks glum when you stand up, though he doesn't fight back; he only watches as you try to leave the room, though a sharp pain in your chest stops you from progressing. You refuse to accept his help even then -- furious at the thought of allowing yourself to be the prince(ss) in distress. Staying behind to watch wasn't in your plans.

"I'm sorry, but I can't trust you," you state, heaving when the pain grows worse. "I can't imagine staying here without doing anything. I. . . I have to help somehow."

"And you can, but not directly. Whatever you can do to help that doesn't involve physical confrontation would do you good -- your soul ain't exactly in good shape for you to be wearin' yourself out like that."
You hesitate, yet regain resolve. With a huff, you stable yourself on your feet again and attempt to leave for a second time, biting back the pain as you open the door and take your first step out. "I'll heal, and I'll fight."

For what has to be the second time in your year spent with him, you see him anger, body tensing as he stays in place, aware you would brush him off again were he to try helping you or changing your mind. "Fine, then -- Try if it's what you want," he declares looking away from you. "But now I'm not askin' you to trust me, just that you consider how weak your health is -- both in soul and physique -- and what could happen if ya tried direct confrontation out there."

"I'll go on my own," you persist, turning around and closing the door behind you.

You wobble in your steps, sharp stings delaying your walk as you try to leave the house, wanting some clarity.

Choice D

You hug him goodbye, eyes stinging when you take him in -- from the warmth of his touch whenever with you to the natural sturdiness of his body. "I'm... honestly not sure what to say, but... I'll try to follow what you guys say -- Just don't make me stay behind and watch you get hurt."

"We won't," he states, closing in on the embrace. "We just want you to stay here while you help, not go off and fight when your soul's so weak."

"Is it really that weak?"

"Very. Dunno if you'd wanna see it."

"I would," you reply, nodding. "Could you bring it out? I... I'm curious."
Sans affirms, breaking the hug to place a hand over your chest. He asks to close your eyes and stay still, his other hand going to the back of your neck -- to the spot where he'd kissed you. "Hold still, and don't shake off the hand on your neck. It's necessary for your soul to stay."

Although confused, you agree to his words. You close your eyes, stay still, and wait, a sharp pain making you flinch and reach out for him again -- hugging him stronger than before. A yelp leaves your mouth as you try to fight through the sting, relieved when he lets go, pain lowering when your soul shows up in front of you. One hand stays on your neck, heat remaining in the same spot as before.

Finally able to look at your soul, you shudder. It's grey, cold, and barely moves, its pulse almost non-existent. "You need time to heal," he explains. "Anymore physical confrontation could finish it off for good. That mark's the only way I can track down your soul. It's hard enough already with its pulse, but what you went through at that courtroom only made it worse."

"Thank you."

"For what, pal?"

"For explaining this to me."

You hug him again, being careful on your approach this time so as to not shake his hand off your neck. He returns it with more strength, however -- soul vanishing back to place when he lets go of your neck and holds you tight. "Anytime, (Y/N). I know I ain't the most positive guy out there, but. . . I'm tryna be more like it, and I say we'll get through this soon."

The two of you stay that way for a longer while, listening to your breaths and the sound of nature, more present with the window someone opens when they enter the bedroom, staying silent to avoid interrupting.

"We will."
You kiss him, one following after the other, lacking words to give him an answer with. Instead, you respond with your body and soul -- the latter that stings when you try to convey your feelings through it. He holds you still as if to prevent you both from falling in bed, yet that plan falls short, lips finding their way to his neck, the last kiss you place there making him shudder and pull away, keeping himself over you by placing his hands next to either sides of your head, body hovering over yours.

"I, uh, don't mind where this's goin', but I need to tell ya somethin' first, (Y/N)," he explains, sheepishness painting his cheekbones. "The reason I ask's 'cuz I need to be sure you'll stay -- no matter what. If it comes to it, it's a hard maybe. We already planned this out those four nights you were passed out, and we've got enough backup for you not to be put into higher risks. Stayin' here's already enough of a risk considerin' your health, but it's better than direct confrontation."

Sweat goes down his forehead, an aftermath of your previous display of affection. His irises are hazy with want, though there's coherence in his speech from beginning to end.

"I believe you guys can do this," you state, smiling. "And I'm glad you're explaining this all to me first. If it's that way, then... I agree with it. I just don't want to be useless and watch you guys get hurt."

"You're, uh, far from useless, (Y/N)," Sans states, shuddering when you slip a hand under his shirt. "Damn." He breaths out, closing his eyes sockets as he leans in, allowing you to explore his body more. "But ya still don't need to prove your worth -- 'cuz it already shows."

You stifle a laugh, pressing another kiss to his neck. "I can only imagine why you say that." You kiss his teeth next, smile growing. "But in all seriousness, thank you, Sans. I appreciate that."

The door to your bedroom opens, revealing an awkward Undyne, who barely addresses your situation to head towards your dresser, where she retrieves the medicine Alphys had given you. She opens up a window before leaving, giving her back to you until she reaches the exit, closing the door behind her.

"So I take it you're convinced now?" she remarks, voice muffled with the door and her own,
bashful tone. "That's good."
Guide for Choosing Your Ending!!

Chapter Notes

Below are the instructions on how to choose your ending, both manually and automatically!

Automatic Rules

Accessing this link: Ending Choices Quiz make your selection according to the choice you made in each chapter. When you're done, it should immediately direct you to your ending!

Manual Rules

Following the guide, sum up how many of each of the 4 categories you get. For example, out of the 6 choices available, 2 were Eros, 1 was Agape, and 3 were Storge/Philia.

In this example, your ending would then be the one with 3 of the same kind!
Hope this helped, and feel free to let me know if you have any questions about it. :-)

★

Chapter Ten - Choice #1

How will you reply to his message?

a.) Finish packing first (Storge/Philia)

b.) Don't reply (Acquaintances)

c.) Formally (Agape)

d.) Casually (Eros)
What will you do next?

a.) Tell him it's nothing. (Acquaintances)

b.) Tell him the partial truth. (Agape)

c.) Ask how he's doing instead. (Eros)

d.) Come up with a white lie. (Storge/Philia)
Chapter Thirty - Choice #3

What will you do next?

a.) Confront him. (Eros)

b.) Dismiss the note. (Acquaintances)

c.) Leave it for later. (Agape)

d.) Hold onto it. (Storge/Philia)
Chapter Forty - Choice #4

What will you do next?

a.) Save. (Storge/Philia)

b.) Don’t save. (Acquaintances)

c.) Attempt to grab the star. (Agape)

d.) Pull your hand back. (Eros)
Choice #5.0

What will you do next?

a.) Hug. (Agape)

b.) Kiss. (Agape)

c.) Decline. (Agape + Storge/Philia)

d.) Brush him off. (Acquaintances)

e.) Take it further. (Eros)
Choice #5.5 (Final Choice!)

What will you do now?

a.) Ask to do this together. (Agape)

b.) Trust him. (Agape + Storge/Philia)

c.) Don't trust him. (Acquaintances)

d.) Hug him goodbye. (Agape + Storge/Philia)
e.) Kiss him goodbye. (Eros)
It’s hard to be a spectator when the channel broadcasts breaking news. Flashes of battle between Flowey and his opponents are shown, though most are blurry with the heavy action being filmed, only a cameraman and a news reporter present to record them. You see the flower -- now a beast -- strike vine after vine, giving his challengers no time to recover from each blow they take. His strikes are incessant, and you can feel your heart clench when you catch a glimpse of familiar faces: Undyne giving it her best, throwing spear after spear at his main grabbing points, attempting to keep him pinned yet failing every try; Toriel trying her hardest not to show sorrow as she tries to talk with the flower in the very middle of battle; the brown bear protecting people nearby by warning them to leave; his wife doing the same; and a stubborn Temmie -- the one who’d fallen for you at the elevator -- distracting the flower by being as disruptive as she best could.

While she’s not in battle, you can tell Alphys is present when a decoy camera points directly at the flower, shooting a net at him in an attempt at getting him to stay still and listen. It doesn’t last, how sharp his leaves are making the would-be tough fabric snap like twigs. Muffet is another that shows her abilities through means aside from physical confrontation. Spiders of all shapes, colours, and kinds swarm Flowey’s vines and roots, nibbling at him from all directions.

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“You really know how to disappoint your creator, don’t you? I bet ol’ W.D.’s rolling in his grave or wherever he is with how pathetic you’ve become.” It’s Flowey’s voice, some struggle to his words despite the general tone of them. “If there’s anyone weaker than you, I pity them. I thought (Y/N) was the weakest at first, but at least they knew how to manipulate you into being a big softie! Who ever told you monsters and humans were ever meant to be friends? Isn’t what they did to you enough proof it’s not meant to be?”

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“Shut up for one second, punk,” Undyne calls, shielded by Temmie armor. The owner stands next to her, controlled shaking hinting at her eagerness to take action. Toriel joins in, Muffet and a spider-cupcake appearing behind them, giant enough to tower over everyone present besides Flowey -- kept higher by nature he rips off from the community gardens around him. “Can’t you see we’re trying to talk with you here? You’re way more stubborn than I ever was, and that’s saying a lot.”

“I didn’t ask any of you idiots to be my therapist,” Flowey snaps, baring his teeth at the fish woman. “Try to kill me if you want to end this. Your Mercy’s more than useless against me -- Either kill me, or I’ll kill you!”

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“Can’t you see what I’ve done to you? A few years back, you would’ve never been like this. I’ve made you weak, Sans. Our marriage will only consolidate that statement. You’ll be the talk of the town when everyone finds out you’ve been toyed with; fooled by a human to far ends.”

The second you see sorrow glint in Sans’s sockets, you turn off the television and gain strength to stand. You hurry off to the dresser, grabbing your bearings with you as you rush down the stairs, avoiding the shopkeeper bunny, Frisk, and Faust’s questions along the way. Soon enough, you reach your car, finally repaired and ready to ride. You get in without second thoughts, kissing Faust’s forehead before leaving, and telling the shopkeeper you would only be there to help -- not confront anyone directly.

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Flowey’s still mimicking your shape and voice, unleashing attacks at everyone he can get his hands on. Sans is left where you last saw him at, eye sockets lacking light, body lacking movement, and touch lacking any signs of consciousness. He’s alive yet not, how hard you try to shake him off his trance gaining Flowey’s attention from afar; others try to stop him, though he swats them off like flies, grinning wide when he sees you.

“It’s the deputy mayor!” he exclaims, a vine closing in on your waist. The flower takes you to his eye level, face and voice still matching yours. “How’s it going? You sure did a number on that guy -- I’m impressed!”

You grit your teeth, bearing the pain he summons by squeezing you tight -- tight enough for your ribs and chest to ache; he doesn’t gain a response from you, making his grip stronger on you.
Seeing your ring, he uses a thinner vine to wrap around your finger, grin widening as he chuckles, a dangerous edge to his laughter. “You won’t be needing this anymore, won’t you? I finally understand why you made yourself seem so weak! It was your tactic for weakening him instead, now -- Wasn’t it?” He doesn’t give you space to answer, instead squeezing your finger tighter and tighter, sufficient for you to bite back a scream when you hear bone crack, a sound that alerts everyone over your well-being. Your name is yelled as people nearby try to stop him, yet it’s too late. The finger along with its ring end up on the floor, blood tracing down your arm as the flower keeps you in his grasp.

You finally scream, deep from the throat. Tears form in your eyes and your breath hitches, though you refuse to let them spill, determined not to do that just yet.

“Duck!”

Hearing a familiar voice, you act instinctively. A beam of light shoots right at the flower’s face, bringing him down against his back. Undyne lassos you with one of the vines she snaps off the flower, helping free you from his hold and provide a more gentle fall to contrast with the pain of a loss finger.

You hear the same, familiar voice curse over the situation. He soon arrives at your side, grabbing the hand missing a finger. “(Y/N),” Sans calls, breathless. Sweat goes down his forehead as he winces, a sound that makes you focus on the deep red staining his jacket. “Please, leave. Don’t give ‘im the satisfaction of hurtin’ you. If there’s anybody he should be confronting, it’s me, Tori, and Fluffybuns. The rest here’re just tryin’ their best, but the rulers of Underground were the ones most responsible for this mess, and I was their successor. If I don’t do this, I’m neglectin’ one of my responsibilities.” You stiffen, closing your eyes when his hands go to your waist, pulling you against him. There’s a soothing feel to his tone, vamped by him letting one hand go to shield your injured one. “I got caught off guard for a moment there, yeah -- But it’s bound to happen. I’ve still got enough people supportin’ me to keep fightin’ ‘till my last breath. I believe in ‘em, and I'm tryna believe in myself, too. I wanna be able to say I didn’t give up, ‘cuz I won’t. I’m still here, (Y/N).”

Sans lets go; then, he smiles. A brighter light returns to his irises as he rips part of his shirt off, using it to bandage your wound. Its white fabric quickly stains red, although blood stops trailing down your arm, the previous traces already dried and turned a darker shade of red. “Sans,” you call out, hissing when he tightens the cloth harder against your hand. “At least take some time to heal yourself first. You won’t get anywhere if you don’t take care of yourself, either.”

He pecks your lips, pulling away to look at you. “I’ll do that soon. Just need to take care of somethin’ first.” There’s a pause to his movements when he tries to lift you both off the ground, irises flickering as he closes his grip on your hand, stopping when he feels the makeshift bandage
“Think ya could help me with that?”

You stay still for a moment, though the ongoing chaos between Flowey and the others prompts you to make a decision quick; you nod, although you’re not exactly sure of what he means with that. “What do I need to do?” you ask, getting back on your feet with him by your side, trying not to wobble in your steps along the way.

The monster takes your injured hand, placing it against his ribcage, made more accessible due to half of his shirt being torn away. “You’ll have control of my soul, s’long as you keep your hand and mind focused on ‘ere. Try to channel your own magic when I aim at the guy.”

“Wh- What?”

“It won’t hurt me. Just try to focus.”

You gulp tension away as you then take in a breath, shuddering when you feel his soul under your fingers, warm and light to the touch. The pain of your lost limb ceases, though you’re still fully aware of its absence. Wanting to focus, you close your eyes and hold onto the monster, stuttering an ‘I’m ready’ when you gain a connection over his soul.

He hums an okay while you keep your eyes closed, only listening to the same sound you’d heard multiple times before, both in television and presently. It’s louder than all the others, the strength of the attack sending you both flying back, shoes scraping ground and gravel as your rear meets the floor, Sans falling on your lap.

Loud cries erupt as Flowey’s sounds of struggle reach your hearing. Another net being shot can be heard, along with the voices of the two judges, the bailiff, policewoman, attorney, and Solana all shouting different commands at the townsfolk, Undyne’s voice joining in. The hisses of fire are heard next, giving out Toriel’s position in the attack. Muffet’s spider-cupcake growls, while the tip-taps of spider legs can be heard crawling around. It’s a growing cacophony of battle sounds, your cousin and aunt’s voice being the ones to cut through them all, feeling their support afterwards.

“Carry him,” your aunt commands. “I’ll take (Y/N).”

Sans’s weight’s taken off your lap, worry surging when you hear nothing from him, only the sound of his body being lifted as he’s pulled away from your hold. You try to stand up on your own,
though your aunt speaks up, stern voice scolding you over that attempt.

“Don’t you dare try to stop me now, dear. For once, listen to me and let me take care of this.”

You give in, too weak to move, and too weak to open your eyes.

Again, you sit by the television, watching the remnants of the battle being investigated on. A reporter stands behind all the rubble, microphone in hand as she tries to make her voice heard amongst all the noise surrounding her, heavy machinery and the shouts of police officers drowning out most of her voice. Wilted leaves, roots, and vines are scattered around, a few she has to kick away when they try crawling up her leg.

The bed you're sitting on creaks, interrupting you from watching the news as you choose to look behind you, Faust appearing next to your side. "(Mom/Dad)?" he calls, placing a hand over your arm, gaze narrowed. "Are you sure you don't need anything? Your hand. . ." He tries to stare at it, though he jolts, looking away with a shudder. "When will that doctor be here? Alphys says the replacement for your finger's already done."

"It's fine, dear," you assure him, holding back on patting his head, aware of his earlier reaction. "I'm fine like this. MK manages well without arms, don't they? I can grow used to this. And look -- I'm wearing the ring on a different finger now!"

You cover the wound, allowing him to see only the finger with the ring, a few scratches on it as a reminder of Flowey's attack. He hesitates at first, yet he manages to fight his fears, a smile showing on his face when he sees the ring glisten under the room's light. He reaches out for it, a calmer look to his gaze. "Is dad gonna be okay? He won't talk about what happened there. He's. . . He looks sad, but he won't tell me what's wrong."

Faust waits for an answer; you're unable to give him one immediately, thinking it over twice -- then thrice.

A week had gone by since Flowey's attack. Townwide evacuation was determined by the eldest of the two judges, acting as the temporary mayor until the next election came around. The leftover
magic the flower used still had its effects on the nature surrounding the town plaza, kept alive regardless of its owner having been sent to confinement until his judgement were to be made. Proof is shown as the reporter retreats, almost caught by a set of roots, a few leaves giving her cuts across her arms, legs, and neck. Faust watches the scene with you, still in wait for you to speak up.

"It's probably the shock," you reply, sighing. He stays still when you place the wounded hand over his head, passing it through his hair. "Gerson's death, too -- He. . . He was like a grandfather to him, so that has to be part of the cause."

"Let's try cheering him up, then! You're always good at that."

You grin at his comment, shaking your head as you place him on your lap, hugging him tight. "Let's see what we can do," you state, chuckling. "A funeral's going to be held for Gerson soon. But we can try something before that day gets here."

Papyrus enters the room next, two steaming plates of cannelloni on each hand. Grillby stands behind him, carrying two pitchers: one with fruit punch, and the other with iced water. People continue to show up, deja vu crossing with you.

By the end of it, your room's filled with visitors: Muffet carrying an additional tray of desserts, Toriel with a first aid kit -- ready to redo your bandages, and Undyne with a protein shake in hand, insisting you could use some to help make you grow stronger again. Alphys, Frisk, and MK arrive next, all three asking over your injuries -- discussing beyond the one involving your lost finger.

"H- How's your soul doing?" the lizard woman asks, pushing her glasses up to the bridge of her snout. "And your eyesight -- I- Is it doing better now? That. . . That light beam m- must've hurt it bad."

"I, uh, don't really know how to check my soul," you admit, an apologetic smile reaching your lips. "But my eyesight's good, I think. I can see the TV just fine, and it doesn't really burn that much anymore."

"The TV's literally two feet away from you, darling," Mettaton chimes in, appearing with a set of shopping bags in hand. "If there's something wrong, say it. What happened back there was no walk in the park. Even that Temmie crushing on you needed time to recover, and she's got the most endurance out of us all."
"..." ("And I've had more business than usual, lately.") Grillby comments, agreeing with the robot's statement. "..." ("It helps with finances, though it doesn't speak well of everyone's health. Even those who only fought from a distance were affected by it. Those who left the town are now trying to adapt to other towns and cities, and those who still fought though being weak are now under frequent health checks -- You really shouldn't be excluded from that bunch."

Again, deja vu returns. A few visitors begin to leave, making space for others and allowing you and Faust some time to eat Papyrus's cooking, Muffet's pastries, and bring it all down with the drinks brought by the flame monster. Only Toriel and Alphys remain when Frisk, Faust and MK leave next, all three forming assumptions as to whether your soul would be one particular trait or the other now.

You decide to check through the shopping bags Mettaton left for you while the goat lady and lizard woman discuss everyone's well-being. You soon come across a fresh set of clothing, along with a new pair of shoes. The other contains a music cassette -- another gift from his cousin as a way to make up for him not making it to large gatherings like the ones you seemed to have become a part of frequently as of late. It reads a more calming genre compared to the previous disk he gifted you, appropriate for your current state of body and mind.

When the two finally agree you're going to get yourself checked -- whether willingly or not, you store things back in place, helping Toriel with redoing your bandages and letting Alphys make an appointment for your eyesight. The last thing left for them to do's to check on your soul, though Alphys hesitates when it's time to summon it.

"A- Are you comfortable with me doing this? I can always l- look for a doctor."

The door opens again, in arriving Papyrus as he encourages his elder brother to step in, nudging him forward. Sans doesn't meet your eyes, though you can see worry in his gaze when he faces Toriel and Alphys.

"I'll do it," the monster states, a trace of surety to his words. "I ain't a doctor, though. But I'll take (Y/N) to one if we need to."

When the two leave, he kneels in front of you, sitting himself between your legs as he takes in some air, body shaking when he lets it out. You place a hand over his jaw, getting him to look up at you -- only to see a single tear run down his face, a couple more following when you ask him over what's wrong.
While you try to make him talk about his feelings, Sans has other plans instead. He covers up his sorrow, placing a row of kisses on your thighs, the only fabric to keep his teeth away from your skin being your (jeans/skirt). Albeit, he catches on quickly, stripping you off your bottom piece as he continues with his kisses. One hand presses you down in bed while the other grabs your waist, keeping you still as you suppress a shudder, feeling his touches grow warmer.

"Sans," you call out, holding him back. "We need to talk this through. Avoiding your feelings will only make it worse."

"I ain't avoidin' 'em. I just wanna be with you for a moment first."

"That can wait. You were crying just a second ago."

Were he to have lips, you would expect him to be pouting right about now. His grip on you loosens as he huffs, helping you sit straight in bed, him doing the same. "I just don't wanna go to that funeral. Havin' to see his urn -- his ashes again only makes it worse. . . Makes me aware I've lost 'im completely, and that I didn't give 'im a proper farewell."

"Come here," you beckon, pulling him back to your lap. "It's good to let all that out, but you shouldn't let it make you feel worse. I'm sure Gerson would've wished for your happiness instead, not for you to be putting yourself down like that. If you say he encouraged you to be happy, why would he want you to stop after his death?"

Sans stays quiet, a few more tears making themselves known as he lets his shoulders droop. He clings to you, burying his face against your chest. You feel his legs brush with yours when he shifts -- yours bare as a consequence of his earlier actions. "(Y/N)?"

"Yeah?"

"If the last word I had with 'im was that I was finally feelin' good about myself, would ya consider that a good farewell? I . . . I told 'im about you, about Faust, and about how I wanted to start a family with ya."
"You mean like a bigger family?"

The monster nods, nudging himself against your torso as he sighs, a sniffle being heard. "Exactly," he replies, certainty to his words. "I've never felt so comfortable around someone before. You and the kid've made me feel nice -- like I kinda deserve this life, even though my mind tells me the opposite sometimes."

"Why wouldn't you deserve this, Sans? You've worked hard and honest for it."

His sniffles turn to sobs, shaky breaths calming when you rub his back, soothing him.

"Guess I just feel that way -- It's hard to explain."

He pulls his face away from your chest, a hazy look to his irises when he stares up at you. It's a cocktail of embarrassment, lust, and fondness, all three manifesting themselves in the form of a hungry kiss, following one after the other until you're pressed down in bed again. One hand pins your arms over your head while the other goes under your shirt, pulling it off of you. His irises change colour as the sound of the door being locked surges between his ragged breaths and your own, hitched sighs and inhales. You can only manage saying his name, cut off when he presses his body against yours, friction rising between your hips and his pelvis.

“I love you, (Y/N).”

You scream his name next, caught unprepared when he sinks his teeth into your neck, drawing out blood. You grab him tight, hugging his waist with your legs as you try hint for more. His clothes feel suffocating against your body, urging you to take them off, yearning to explore more of him. He barely gives you a chance to, however, and uses his magic again to simulate a tongue, sliding it across the bite. His touches grow more desperate at the same time you feel your soul burn — an intensity never once felt before.

Only clad with underwear, you feel too exposed, a sudden want to cover yourself serving as a way to make him stop, concern replacing desire. “You feelin’ alright, cupcake?”

Tense, you grab his back, digging your nails into the fabric of his jacket, slipping it off him. “I... I refuse to be the only one like this.”
Catching on, the monster grins. “Could’ve said somethin’ earlier — Been wantin’ to do that myself now.” He leads your hand to his shirt next, helping you take it off as he finally brings it down to his pants, sensitivity showing when he shudders at your fingers brushing with his bones. “Y- Ya sure know how to make me weak — that flower was right all along.” You cover a laugh and finish the job, awareness falling upon you when there’s no underwear to deal with, having nothing to hide aside from bones. “You expectin’ somethin’ else there, (Y/N)? Dunno how to simulate that kinda stuff yet, but I can try other ways.”

Sans emphasizes his point by kissing you, ghost tongue slipping into it. It’s messier compared to previous kisses, a feral instinct to his actions. He goes lower next, licking the lowermost part of your stomach as he groans, deep from the throat were he to have one. You stay speechless, mind losing itself in the moment as you feel his tongue explore other places, stopping when he places himself between your legs again, ready to fulfill his next step.

“Never done this before, so, uh. . . Just tell me if I’m doin’ anythin’ wrong.”

The reminder of him being new to these experiences helps sober your thoughts, face hot enough to make you feel as if you’d just splashed warm water over it. The monster stays quiet as he waits for your response, bashfulness being set aside when you nod, giving him assurance over his doubts. “Alright,” you state, a grin showing through. “Don’t think you’ll always take the lead like this, though.”

“’Fraid I’ll take away your title as a top?”

“So you finally know what that stuff means, huh?”

You both share a laugh at your bickering, though the monster soon reminds you over the intimacy of your current situation, driving out another shudder from your body as he nips harsh on your upper thigh, reaching closer to his focus point.
Agape Ending

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“It’s the deputy mayor!” he exclaims, a vine closing in on your waist. The flower takes you to his eye level, face and voice still matching yours. “How’s it going? You sure did a number on that guy -- I’m impressed!”

You grit your teeth, bearing the pain he summons by squeezing you tight -- tight enough for your ribs and chest to ache; he doesn’t gain a response from you, making his grip stronger on you.
Seeing your ring, he uses a thinner vine to wrap around your finger, grin widening as he chuckles, a dangerous edge to his laughter. “You won’t be needing this anymore, won’t you? I finally understand why you made yourself seem so weak! It was your tactic for weakening him instead, now -- Wasn’t it?” He doesn’t give you space to answer, instead squeezing your finger tighter and tighter, sufficient for you to bite back a scream when you hear bone crack, a sound that alerts everyone over your well-being. Your name is yelled as people nearby try to stop him, yet it’s too late. The finger along with its ring end up on the floor, blood tracing down your arm as the flower keeps you in his grasp.

You finally scream, deep from the throat. Tears form in your eyes and your breath hitches, though you refuse to let them spill, determined not to do that just yet.

“Duck!”

Hearing a familiar voice, you act instinctively. A beam of light shoots right at the flower’s face, bringing him down against his back. Undyne lassos you with one of the vines she snaps off the flower, helping free you from his hold and provide a more gentle fall to contrast with the pain of a loss finger.

You hear the same, familiar voice curse over the situation. He soon arrives at your side, grabbing the hand missing a finger. “(Y/N),” Sans calls, breathless. Sweat goes down his forehead as he winces, a sound that makes you focus on the deep red staining his jacket. “Please, leave. Don’t give ‘im the satisfaction of hurtin’ you. If there’s anybody he should be confronting, it’s me, Tori, and Fluffybuns. The rest here’re just tryin’ their best, but the rulers of Underground were the ones most responsible for this mess, and I was their successor. If I don’t do this, I’m neglectin’ one of my responsibilities.” You stiffen, closing your eyes when his hands go to your waist, pulling you against him. There’s a soothing feel to his tone, vamped by him letting one hand go to shield your injured one. “I got caught off guard for a moment there, yeah -- But it’s bound to happen. I’ve still got enough people supportin’ me to keep fightin’ ‘till my last breath. I believe in ‘em, and I'm tryna believe in myself, too. I wanna be able to say I didn’t give up, ‘cuz I won’t. I’m still here, (Y/N).”

Sans lets go; then, he smiles. A brighter light returns to his irises as he rips part of his shirt off, using it to bandage your wound. Its white fabric quickly stains red, although blood stops trailing down your arm, the previous traces already dried and turned a darker shade of red. “Sans,” you call out, hissing when he tightens the cloth harder against your hand. “At least take some time to heal yourself first. You won’t get anywhere if you don’t take care of yourself, either.”

He pecks your lips, pulling away to look at you. “I’ll do that soon. Just need to take care of somethin’ first.” There’s a pause to his movements when he tries to lift you both off the ground, irises flickering as he closes his grip on your hand, stopping when he feels the makeshift bandage
around it. “Think ya could help me with that?”

You stay still for a moment, though the ongoing chaos between Flowey and the others prompts you to make a decision quick; you nod, although you’re not exactly sure of what he means with that. “What do I need to do?” you ask, getting back on your feet with him by your side, trying not to wobble in your steps along the way.

The monster takes your injured hand, placing it against his ribcage, made more accessible due to half of his shirt being torn away. “You’ll have control of my soul, s’long as you keep your hand and mind focused on ‘ere. Try to channel your own magic when I aim at the guy.”

“Wh- What?”

“It won’t hurt me. Just try to focus.”

You gulp tension away as you then take in a breath, shuddering when you feel his soul under your fingers, warm and light to the touch. The pain of your lost limb ceases, though you’re still fully aware of its absence. Wanting to focus, you close your eyes and hold onto the monster, stuttering an ‘I’m ready’ when you gain a connection over his soul.

He nods while you keep your eyes closed, only listening to the same sound you’d heard multiple times before, both in television and presently. It’s louder than all the others, the strength of the attack sending you both flying back, shoes scraping ground and gravel as your rear meets the floor, Sans falling on your lap.

Loud cries erupt as Flowey’s sounds of struggle reach your hearing. Another net being shot can be heard, along with the voices of the two judges, the bailiff, policewoman, attorney, and Solana all shouting different commands at the townsfolk, Undyne’s voice joining in. The hisses of fire are heard next, giving out Toriel’s position in the attack. Muffet’s spider-cupcake growls, while the tip-taps of spider legs can be heard crawling around. It’s a growing cacophony of battle sounds, your cousin and aunt’s voice being the ones to cut through them all, feeling their support afterwards.

“Carry him,” your aunt commands. “I’ll take (Y/N).”

Sans’s weight’s taken off your lap, worry surging when you hear nothing from him, only the sound of his body scraping the ground as he’s pulled away from your hold. You try to stand up on your
own, though your aunt speaks up, stern voice scolding you over that attempt.

“Don’t you dare try to stop me now, dear. For once, listen to me and let me take care of this.”

You give in, too weak to move, and too weak to open your eyes.

Again, you sit by the television, watching the remnants of the battle being investigated on. A reporter stands behind all the rubble, microphone in hand as she tries to make her voice heard against all the noise surrounding her, heavy machinery and the shouts of police officers drowning out most of her voice. Wilted leaves, roots, and vines are scattered around, a few she has to kick away when they try crawling up her leg.

The bed you're sitting on creaks, interrupting you from watching the news as you choose to look behind you, Faust appearing next to your side. "(Mom/Dad)?" he calls, placing a hand over your arm, gaze narrowed. "Are you sure you don't need anything? Your hand..." He tries to stare at it, though he jolts, looking away with a shudder. "When will that doctor be here? Alphys says the replacement for your finger's already done."

"It's fine, dear," you assure him, holding back on patting his head, aware of his earlier reaction. "I'm fine like this. MK manages well without arms, don't they? I can grow used to this. And look -- I'm wearing the ring on a different finger now!"

You cover the wound, allowing him to see only the one with the ring, a few scratches on it as a reminder of Flowey's attack. He hesitates at first, yet he manages to fight his fears, a smile showing on his face when he sees the ring glisten under the room's light. He reaches out for it, a calmer look to his gaze. "Is dad gonna be okay? He won't talk about what happened there. He's... He looks sad, but he won't tell me what's wrong."

Faust waits for an answer; you're unable to give him one immediately, thinking it over twice -- then thrice.

A week had gone by since Flowey's attack. Townwide evacuation was determined by the eldest of the two judges, acting as the temporary mayor until the next election came around. The leftover
magic the flower used still had its effects on the nature surrounding the town plaza, kept alive regardless of its owner having been sent to confinement until his judgement were to be made. Proof is shown as the reporter retreats, almost caught by a set of roots, a few leaves giving her cuts across her arms, legs, and neck. Faust watches the scene with you, still in wait for you to speak up.

"It's probably the shock," you reply, sighing. He stays still when you place the wounded hand over his head, passing through his hair. "Gerson's death, too -- He... He was like a grandfather to him, so that has to be part of the cause."

"Let's try cheering him up, then! You're always good at that."

You grin at his comment, shaking your head as you place him on your lap, hugging him tight. "Let's see what we can do," you state, chuckling. "A funeral's going to be held for Gerson soon. But we can try something before that day gets here."

Papyrus enters the room, two steaming plates of cannelloni on each hand. Grillby stands behind him, carrying two pitchers: one with fruit punch, and the other with iced water. People continue to show up, deja vu crossing with you.

By the end of it, your room's filled with visitors: Muffet carrying an additional tray of desserts, Toriel with a first aid kit -- ready to redo your bandages, and Undyne with a protein shake in hand, insisting you could use some to help make you grow stronger again. Alphys, Frisk, and MK arrive next, all three asking over your injuries -- discussing beyond the one involving your lost finger.

"H- How's your soul doing?" the lizard woman asks, pushing her glasses up to the bridge of her snout. "And your eyesight -- I- Is it doing better now? That... That light beam m- must've hurt it bad."

"I, uh, don't really know how to check my soul," you admit, an apologetic smile reaching your lips. "But my eyesight's good, I think. I can see the TV just fine, and it doesn't really burn that much anymore."

"The TV's literally two feet away from you, darling," Mettaton chimes in, appearing with a set of shopping bags in hand. "If there's something wrong, say it. What happened back there was no walk in the park. Even that Temmie crushing on you needed time to recover, and she's got the most endurance out of us all."
"..." ("And I've had more business than usual, lately.") Grillby comments, agreeing with the robot's statement. "..." ("It helps with finances, though it doesn't speak well of everyone's health. Even those who only fought from a distance were affected by it. Those who left the town are now trying to adapt to other towns and cities, and those who still fought though being weak are now under frequent health checks -- You really shouldn't be excluded from that bunch."

Again, deja vu returns. A few visitors begin to leave, making space for others and allowing you and Faust some time to eat Papyrus's cooking, Muffet's pastries, and bring it all down with the drinks brought by the flame monster. Only Toriel and Alphys remain when Frisk, Faust and MK leave next, all three forming assumptions as to whether your soul would be one particular trait or the other now.

You decide to check through the shopping bags Mettaton left for you while the goat lady and lizard woman discuss everyone's well-being. You soon come across a fresh set of clothing, along with a new pair of shoes. The other contains a music cassette -- another gift from his cousin as a way to make up for him not making it to large gatherings like the ones you seemed to have become a part of frequently as of late. It reads a more calming genre compared to the previous disk he gifted you, appropriate for your current state of body and mind.

When the two finally agree you're going to get yourself checked -- whether willingly or not, you store things back in place, helping Toriel with redoing your bandages and letting Alphys make an appointment for your eyesight. The last thing left for them to do's to check on your soul, though Alphys hesitates when it's time to summon it.

"A- Are you comfortable with me doing this? I can always l- look for a doctor."

The door opens again, in arriving Papyrus as he encourages his elder brother to step in, nudging him forward. Sans doesn't meet your eyes, though you can see worry in his gaze when he faces Toriel and Alphys.

"I'll do it," the monster states, a trace of surety to his words. "I ain't a doctor, though. But I'll take (Y/N) to one if we need to."

When the two leave, he kneels in front of you, sitting himself between your legs as he takes in some air, body shaking when he lets it out. You place a hand over his jaw, getting him to look up at you -- only to see a single tear run down his face, a couple more following when you ask him over what's wrong.
You hold him, keeping your body stiff due to the awkward position you're in: with him still kneeling in front of you, keeping your legs apart as he stands between them, hands holding onto your thighs for support. Hearing him sniffle, you take those hands and bring them to your neck, letting him hang onto you as you sit him down in bed with you. A smile manages to show as you grab his chin and press a kiss over it.

"I don't..." He trails off, sighing. "I don't wanna go to that funeral, (Y/N). I... I don't wanna see his urn -- his dust. It only makes me feel worse."

His sniffles turn to full sobs when you rub his back and rest your chin on top of his head, muttering words for him to ease down more. "Let it out," you suggest, keeping your breaths steady when he rests his ear cavity against your chest, searching for your pulse. "But don't let it make you feel worse. I'm sure Gerson must've wanted for you to be happy, so you should try to feel that way now that he's finally at rest -- that he died in Undyne's arms instead of an enemy's grasp."

"..(Y/N)?"

"Yeah?"

He pulls away to grab your waist, burying his face deeper against your torso almost right after, chuckle muffled with him pressed onto you. "Love you." His voice is just as vulnerable as his state, shaking every few seconds. "I... I dunno how else to say it. And I don't give a damn if W.D.'s disappointed in me. I love ya, and I love lookin' after the kid, too -- Though I still dunno how giving out some tutorin' lessons ended with me finding a bigger family."

"L- Love you, too," you reply, stuttering. You don't know what else to say, making up for it by rubbing his back harder and weighing your chin down on his head more. He returns your gesture, headbutting you at this point. "Um... Y- Your face, it's-"

"-too far in, right?" he adds, laugh muffled again by your clothes. "Was gonna check on your soul, but it feels nice from a distance. Real warm and toasty -- like a fireplace, but without the danger of gettin' burnt."

You laugh also, incapable of holding it back with how sheepish his words are, and how guilty he sounds about it. "I kinda want to see it, though."
"Same here -- Bet it must be lookin' nice now."

Sans pulls back finally, irises hazy yet bright, staring at you with a whole different emotion in itself; it's between lovestruck and embarrassed, sorrow interrupting for just a second. "We need to work on you holding back like this, though. You... You didn't tell me anything about Gerson until now."

"Felt it wasn't important back then -- If Undyne and everyone else was being strong about it, figured I should've acted that way, too."

"Your feelings are different from everyone else's, Sans. Forcing yourself to act one specific way's not good for your health."

You hold back your own embarrassment when he leans into you, pressing a kiss on your collarbone as he nods, and going back to keeping his forehead pressed against your torso afterwards. "It's tough, though. I... I ain't never been this vulnerable with no one." His eye sockets are closed now, breathing turning steady after he huffs, sitting up straight. "It's like I'm explorin' a whole new world now -- one I don't really know how to manage that well yet."

"You'll figure it out," you assure him, smiling as you reach for the back of his head, calming him. "We'll both figure it out, 'cuz if I'm being honest with you... This is the first time I've ever felt a connection like this, also. It's... It's overwhelming, honestly -- But a good kind of overwhelming."

Sans laughs, honest and airy. "I feel the same, cupcake."

You stay in that position for what has to be minutes, delving into each other's company, needing nothing but your embrace to fulfill your wants, a peck on the lips -- and teeth -- being given by both him and yourself every so often. A content feeling dwells in your soul as you close your eyes, combating your blurry eyesight and taking in the heat of his own soul, a calm pulse lulling you to sleep.

Shifting between consciousness and its counterpart, you catch a glimpse of the bedroom's door opening, Faust showing behind it. He hesitates, though he approaches the bed just as quick; he stares at Sans, and later at you, encouraging you to keep your eyes near completely closed as you observe him, gaze lidded to keep him from finding you out. You see him climb the bed and shuffle himself between you and the monster, the latter who shifts aside, sensing his presence. You do the same, giving out some more space for him and closing it off when he's laid down next to you.
Curious, you bring your attention to Sans next, surprised to see him in a similar state, keeping his eye sockets barely open as he stares at you, winking when he catches you staring. He hugs Faust from his side while you do the same by yours, closing your eyes completely once you spot Sans do that himself, breaths steadying as he tries to retrieve his slumber back.

In the middle of him and you trying to find sleep, he speaks up, hopeful and hearty. "If this's what it's like to have a bigger family, I want it to be with you -- 'cuz I'm. . . confident you'll be my first and last."

"You. . . You know you'd be my third, though, right?"

"Still doesn't change how I feel about you. Don't think I need more experiences other than you and my past interests to know I love you more than all those crushes I had and those dates I went on with that bunny monster."

Right as you think he's done whispering his thoughts to you, he holds the hand you'd placed over Faust to hug him with, grabbing it carefully. "Guess what I'm gettin' at's that. . . This all feels right."

You feel yourself smile next, growing dizzy with joy. "I feel that way, too, Sans."
It’s hard to be a spectator when the channel broadcasts breaking news. Flashes of battle between Flowey and his opponents are shown, though most are blurry with the heavy action being filmed, only a cameraman and a news reporter present to record them. You see the flower -- now a beast -- strike vine after vine, giving his challengers no time to recover from each blow they take. His strikes are incessant, and you can feel your heart clench when you catch a glimpse of familiar faces: Undyne giving it her best, throwing spear after spear at his main grabbing points, attempting to keep him pinned yet failing every try; Toriel trying her hardest not to show sorrow as she tries to talk with the flower in the very middle of battle; the brown bear protecting people nearby by warning them to leave; his wife doing the same; and a stubborn Temmie -- the one who’d fallen for you at the elevator -- distracting the flower by being as disruptive as she best could.

While she’s not in battle, you can tell Alphys is present when a decoy camera points directly at the flower, shooting a net at him in an attempt at getting him to stay still and listen. It doesn’t last, how sharp his leaves are making the would-be tough fabric snap like twigs. Muffet is another that shows her abilities through means aside from physical confrontation. Spiders of all shapes, colours, and kinds swarm Flowey’s vines and roots, nibbling at him from all directions.

“Enough!”

He lashes a vine on par with his shout, sending Toriel and Undyne flying with the mere strength of the wind it produces. The bear and the bunny keep civilians safe by the town plaza, trying to convince the officers present not to cross any lines for the sake of their own lives, and to help the pair take people to safety instead. The Temmie aids Undyne, handing her some armor and helping her get back to her feet, tending to Toriel next.

The camera cuts as another sound takes over -- deafening, violent, and powerful. There’s no other way you can place it, the silence that follows after sending a chill down your spine.

“You really know how to disappoint your creator, don’t you? I bet ol’ W.D.’s rolling in his grave or wherever he is with how pathetic you’ve become.” It’s Flowey’s voice, some struggle to his words despite the general tone of them. “If there’s anyone weaker than you, I pity them. I thought (Y/N) was the weakest at first, but at least they knew how to manipulate you into being a big softie! Who ever told you monsters and humans were ever meant to be friends? Isn’t what they did to you enough proof it’s not meant to be?”

The same noise sounds again -- stronger, and followed by a louder one barely seconds later. Film returns afterwards, depicting a confident flower and a tired skeleton, both facing each other as the rest try to recover in the background.
“Don’t tell me you’re keeping them locked away? Are you really that scared of losing them, or are you just worried you’ll have to do this all over again? I’m surprised you’re even letting anyone else help you with this with how paranoid you are.”

“Shut up for one second, punk,” Undyne calls, shielded by Temmie armor. The owner stands next to her, controlled shaking hinting at her eagerness to take action. Toriel joins in, Muffet and a spider-cupcake appearing behind them, giant enough to tower over everyone present besides Flowey -- kept higher by nature he rips off from the community gardens around him. “Can’t you see we’re trying to talk with you here? You’re way more stubborn than I ever was, and that’s saying a lot.”

“I didn’t ask any of you idiots to be my therapist,” Flowey snaps, baring his teeth at the fish woman. “Try to kill me if you want to end this. Your Mercy’s more than useless against me -- Either kill me, or I’ll kill you!”

He aims a vine at Undyne, though Toriel stops him, using a small blast of fire rather than a ball of it -- catching him off guard. “Stop this nonsense, child. Frisk has been looking after you ever since we left the Underground. Have you not learned anything still?”

Flowey laughs, loud and wild. “I’m not a ‘child’ anymore, old hag. And it’s too late for me to learn anything useful. I would’ve acted way sooner had I been strong enough -- Listening to Frisk was my only choice until then.”

He makes sure to silence each and every comment that crosses him, a distraction Sans tries to take advantage of, only to be stopped by the flower turning back to him, now wearing your face instead of his. Weren’t you a far-away spectator, you would’ve felt sick with shock -- the thought of seeing an eerily identical replica of your facial features face-to-face making your insides churn. Your soul tries to warn you over danger, yet that comes with repercussions, a sharp pain sending you to your knees, unrelenting even as you try to stare at the television screen, in dire need of seeing the rest of it.

Smaller vines and roots begin to take the shape of your body, stopping when they become a near pristine copy of you, minus the colour scheme composed by nature. Flowey places himself on top of the body’s neck, keeping the copy of your face intact.

He approaches Sans with slow, careful steps, grabbing his cheekbones with two hands made up of thick roots, spikes scratching him. “Fear,” he comments, grinning. “I can see it -- You can’t hide it from me anymore.”
You gather strength to stand, hearing your voice instead of Flowey’s now.

“Can’t you see what I’ve done to you? A few years back, you would’ve never been like this. I’ve made you weak, Sans. Our marriage will only consolidate that statement. You’ll be the talk of the town when everyone finds out you’ve been toyed with; fooled by a human to far ends.”

The second you see sorrow glint in Sans’s sockets, you turn off the television and gain strength to stand. You hurry off to the dresser, grabbing your bearings with you as you rush down the stairs, avoiding the shopkeeper bunny, Frisk, and Faust’s questions along the way. Soon enough, you reach your car, finally repaired and ready to ride. You get in without second thoughts, kissing Faust’s forehead before leaving, and telling the shopkeeper you would only be there to help -- not confront anyone directly.

Harsh gusts of wind only intensify your adrenaline as you step on the gas, tires screeching and the pungent smell of burnt gasoline reaching your nose.

Battle cries can be heard when you make it to the town plaza, already reduced to dust, debris, and rubble. The bear, bunny, and civilians are nowhere to be seen. Everyone else, on the other hand, is present, a few new faces joining in on the confrontation -- Asgore, Papyrus, and a large crew of policemen and women being the ones you can spot at a first glance.

Sans is at the same spot you last saw him in. He looks dazed and disoriented, though you intervene when you make it to his side, trying to shake him off his trance. You give it two tries, pulling him with you to a safer corner when you note he’s too shocked to respond, body stiff as he continues to stare blankly at the flower impersonating you in both voice and appearance.

“Sans, please,” you call out, huffing. “Look away -- He’s trying to confuse you.”

You dodge a leaf when it comes flying at you, sharp blade sticking to the tree behind you, a grim reminder of how you could’ve ended hadn’t you taken cover from it. Your presence doesn’t last unnoticed for long, Flowey’s gaze crossing with yours when he turns to see where the leaf landed at.
"If it isn't the *deputy* mayor!" he calls, keeping his impersonation of you intact even as he walks closer to your side, stopping when he arrives face-to-face with you. "You sure are good at manipulating others -- Never in my life would've I imagined Smiley would turn into such a big softie. He's a pile of mush and regret now thanks to you!"

Your entire body and soul warn you over danger when he aims a vine at your waist, taking you firm in his hold and pulling you forward, facing you. "He's allowing himself more freedom in displaying emotions -- expression in that form is just as meaningful as trying not to let them show. It's not a weakness, and I'm not manipulating him into acting that way."

"He still has you as a main influence -- Don't try to hide from that fact, Deputy." Your waist aches when it's squeezed tighter. You hold back the pain, bracing yourself for more. "He's become nothing but a lovestruck idiot ever since you-"

A row of attacks are directed at the flower, each from a different person. He lets go of you, sending you falling -- something Undyne prevents by sliding herself across the ground like a baseball player would, numbing your drop. You continue to hear the voices of those going against Flowey, shutting your eyes as you try to recover from the fall, dizzied by the height thrown from -- taller than the mayor's office and Flowey himself, currently of much shorter height as he continues to imitate your shape. Sans returns to battle, sending attack after attack and dodging every threat directed at him.

You plan to join the others, yet Undyne catches on quickly. She holds you back when you try to stand up, stern gaze making you focus on her. "Trust us, punk, when we say you need to stay back. We've got a plan -- a tough one, but it's working out. Just watch him if you don't believe me."

Reluctant to agree, you still choose to stare where she points with her gaze at. You observe Sans closely, the strength of his attacks similar to the ones the former mayor -- now deceased -- had mentioned in court. There's effort and dedication visible in everyone's attacks, assisting each other out whenever someone required rest or healing. On a closer look, you see Sans keeps his own injuries hidden, yet there's almost no stopping him as he continues going after the flower, falling back when he fails to dodge the latest hit.

You rush to him without second thoughts, pulling him with you out of danger again, and staring into his irises when you're certain the others are keeping Flowey at a safe distance. His jacket stains bright red along with his shirt. You take the former, circle it around his waist, and tighten it around him, hoping to cut off whatever circulation he had making him lose life. You remember the medic's words from your day at court almost three weeks ago, more aware of his low HP and how that put him in higher stakes towards danger.
"Help him instead, pal," Sans comments, pulling away when you finish tightening the jacket. His gaze points at Muffet's spider-cupcake, wincing at the gash left by one of Flowey's thorned roots. "I can take this -- You gotta believe in that. This ain't nothin' yet." He then carries his gaze to the ongoing battle; you look towards that place, spotting a few new faces in the confrontation: civilians, more officers, the two judges, your attorney, the bailiff, the policewoman, and Solana all present, aiding the battle by both physical confrontation and getting the wounded to safety. "See all those people? We can do this -- I'm tryna believe in that, and in myself, too. You don't have to be part of every battle, 'cuz you've already been in many already. Let me do this -- Let me try to protect you like you've done for me many times already."

The monster pecks your lips before leaving, giving you no chance to say anything back to him. He returns with the others, how weak the flower looks now strengthening his words as to this being over soon. You make it to the spider-cupcake's side next, kneeling beside him as you try reach for his wound, gash open and oozing a neon magenta rather than red, fitting for his outer colour scheme made up of pinks and purples. He flinches, yet you ease him with shushes and whispers for him to calm down more.

You look away from him when you feel a tap on your shoulder along with two figures standing behind you. Your aunt and cousin are present, seemingly ready to help you based on the first aid kit in your aunt's hands and the injured bunny monster guarded by your cousin's hold. He sits her down next to the spider-cupcake while your aunt prepares the kit, a focused look in her eyes. You kneel next to the first aid and begin preparing materials to help them both, no words exchanged between you and your aunt as she helps you with the bandages. Only your cousin speaks, helping soothe the injured and getting them to stay still.

The smile on your aunt's face when making eye contact with you ends all tension built into the silence, the once skeptical look in her eyes still questioning over your chosen path in life now replaced with pride and encouragement, the same present in your cousin's gaze.

There's a strong sense of deja vu present when your home fills with guests. There's Muffet, Grillby and Papyrus at the kitchen, busy preparing dinner as a celebration for the victory, remnants of it present in those injured and the television broadcasting a busy scene composed of a reporter and a camerawoman filming the remains of the battle. There's police officers talking in the background, occasionally being interrupted by politicians discussing what the future of the town would be, and whether the eldest judge of the two you were acquaintanced with was going to continue serving the town as its temporary mayor.

Asgore, Undyne, and the shopkeeper bunny are all outside, looking after Frisk, Faust, and MK as
they play by the pool set up by the strongest of the three monsters, another gift made by Papyrus as
a result of him doing well in his job. Solana and the group of law workers -- minus the eldest of the
judges -- mingle with every other monster left unoccupied, Toriel, Alphys, and Mettaton busy
helping you with taking care of the wounded.

When you finish redoing the spider-cupcake's gash, Toriel hands you another set, a knowing look
in her eyes. "You should go take care of Sans now. I am sure he would appreciate seeing you
again," she suggests, a smile on her face. "You did well out there, helping heal others. I am glad
you chose to trust us with the battle."

Nodding, you thank her and pull her in for a quick hug, standing up when you have all the
necessary first aid items with you. Then, you make it to your bedroom, where Sans lays,
recovering.

He has his eye sockets closed, driving out the immediate assumption that he's sleeping. As soon as
you close the door behind you, however, they open. Waken, he sits in bed, some struggle in his
actions as he holds onto his ribcage, bandages restraining movement.

"Hey," you call out, a smile on your face. "I'm, uh. . . I'll be your nurse for today." You hold back a
wider smile after those words, wanting to play off as serious -- ruined when he chuckles at your
reluctancy to enter the room.

"Dunno if you've noticed, but we live together now, (Y/N). Ya don't need to be shy about it."

Grinning, you give in with a laugh and approach him in bed, sitting beside him as you reach for his
ribs, careful with removing the bandages around it. "I'm just worried about you -- What you did
back there. . . It was. . . It was something else."

"Sayin' that like you haven't freed me outta jail twice," Sans remarks, tensing when it's time to rub
gauze against his bones. "You've done enough, cupcake."

You breathe in, closing your eyes as you take in the moment: the silence of the room, and the
monster's calming presence. There's plenty of things you want to bring up with him -- from
Gerson's death to your future -- yet you keep yourself from bringing any of them up currently,
wanting to give him more time to recover before throwing anything else at him. "Does it hurt? I
don't know if I made them too tight."
He holds your hand, speaking up. "It's just fine. Was gonna tighten up the old ones 'cuz they were gettin' loose, so this should be more than fine."

"Did you hit your head in battle?" you ask, teasing him. "Nobody stays that calm when being treated over wounds."

"I'm just happy to be here," he states, grinning. "It... It feels nice knowin' this's over, and that we'll get to focus on other things now." He lets go of your hand, shifting to give you more space in bed. "Wanna stay with me here for a while? I'll be going down there soon, but I gotta wait 'till those meds I had take effect -- Least that's what Paps suggests."

"Figured you'd say that. If it were up to you, I bet you'd already be down there by now."

He chuckles again, airy. "Know me too well, (Y/N)."

"Well -- We live together, don't we?"
It’s hard to be a spectator when the channel broadcasts breaking news. Flashes of battle between Flowey and his opponents are shown, though most are blurry with the heavy action being filmed, only a cameraman and a news reporter present to record them. You see the flower -- now a beast -- strike vine after vine, giving his challengers no time to recover from each blow they take. His strikes are incessant, and you can feel your heart clench when you catch a glimpse of familiar faces: Undyne giving it her best, throwing spear after spear at his main grabbing points, attempting to keep him pinned yet failing every try; Toriel trying her hardest not to show sorrow as she tries to talk with the flower in the very middle of battle; the brown bear protecting people nearby by warning them to leave; his wife doing the same; and a stubborn Temmie -- the one who’d fallen for you at the elevator -- distracting the flower by being as disruptive as she best could.

While she’s not in battle, you can tell Alphys is present when a decoy camera points directly at the flower, shooting a net at him in an attempt at getting him to stay still and listen. It doesn’t last, how sharp his leaves are making the would-be tough fabric snap like twigs. Muffet is another that shows her abilities through means aside from physical confrontation. Spiders of all shapes, colours, and kinds swarm Flowey’s vines and roots, nibbling at him from all directions.

“Enough!”

He lashes a vine on par with his shout, sending Toriel and Undyne flying with the mere strength of the wind it produces. The bear and the bunny keep civilians safe by the town plaza, trying to convince the officers present not to cross any lines for the sake of their own lives, and to help the pair take people to safety instead. The Temmie aids Undyne, handing her some armor and helping her get back to her feet, tending to Toriel next.

The camera cuts as another sound takes over -- deafening, violent, and powerful. There’s no other way you can place it, the silence that follows after sending a chill down your spine.

“You really know how to disappoint your creator, don’t you? I bet ol’ W.D.’s rolling in his grave or wherever he is with how pathetic you’ve become.” It’s Flowey’s voice, some struggle to his words despite the general tone of them. “If there’s anyone weaker than you, I pity them. I thought (Y/N) was the weakest at first, but at least they knew how to manipulate you into being a big softie! Who ever told you monsters and humans were ever meant to be friends? Isn’t what they did to you enough proof it’s not meant to be?”

The same noise sounds again -- stronger, and followed by a louder one barely seconds later. Film returns afterwards, depicting a confident flower and a tired skeleton, both facing each other as the rest try to recover in the background.
“Don’t tell me you’re keeping them locked away? Are you really that scared of losing them, or are you just worried you’ll have to do this all over again? I’m surprised you’re even letting anyone else help you with this with how paranoid you are.”

“Shut up for one second, punk,” Undyne calls, shielded by Temmie armor. The owner stands next to her, controlled shaking hinting at her eagerness to take action. Toriel joins in, Muffet and a spider-cupcake appearing behind them, giant enough to tower over everyone present besides Flowey -- kept higher by nature he rips off from the community gardens around him. “Can’t you see we’re trying to talk with you here? You’re way more stubborn than I ever was, and that’s saying a lot.”

“I didn’t ask any of you idiots to be my therapist,” Flowey snaps, baring his teeth at the fish woman. “Try to kill me if you want to end this. Your Mercy’s more than useless against me -- Either kill me, or I’ll kill you!”

He aims a vine at Undyne, though Toriel stops him, using a small blast of fire rather than a ball of it -- catching him off guard. “Stop this nonsense, child. Frisk has been looking after you ever since we left the Underground. Have you not learned anything still?”

Flowey laughs, loud and wild. “I’m not a ‘child’ anymore, old hag. And it’s too late for me to learn anything useful. I would’ve acted way sooner had I been strong enough -- Listening to Frisk was my only choice until then.”

He makes sure to silence each and every comment that crosses him, a distraction Sans tries to take advantage of, only to be stopped by the flower turning back to him, now wearing your face instead of his. Weren’t you a far-away spectator, you would’ve felt sick with shock -- the thought of seeing an eerily identical replica of your facial features face-to-face making your insides churn. Your soul tries to warn you over danger, yet that comes with repercussions, a sharp pain sending you to your knees, unrelenting even as you try to stare at the television screen, in dire need of seeing the rest of it.

Smaller vines and roots begin to take the shape of your body, stopping when they become a near pristine copy of you, minus the colour scheme composed by nature. Flowey places himself on top of the body’s neck, keeping the copy of your face intact.

He approaches Sans with slow, careful steps, grabbing his cheekbones with two hands made up of thick roots, spikes scratching him. “Fear,” he comments, grinning. “I can see it -- You can’t hide it from me anymore.”
You gather strength to stand, hearing your voice instead of Flowey’s now.

“You gather strength to stand, hearing your voice instead of Flowey’s now.

“Can’t you see what I’ve done to you? A few years back, you would’ve never been like this. I’ve made you weak, Sans. Our marriage will only consolidate that statement. You’ll be the talk of the town when everyone finds out you’ve been toyed with; fooled by a human to far ends.”

The second you see sorrow glint in Sans’s sockets, you turn off the television and gain strength to stand. You hurry off to the dresser, grabbing your bearings with you as you rush down the stairs, avoiding the shopkeeper bunny, Frisk, and Faust’s questions along the way. Soon enough, you reach your car, finally repaired and ready to ride. You get in without second thoughts, kissing Faust’s forehead before leaving, and telling the shopkeeper you would only be there to help -- not confront anyone directly.

Harsh gusts of wind only intensify your adrenaline as you step on the gas, tires screeching and the pungent smell of burnt gasoline reaching your nose.

Battle cries can be heard when you make it to the town plaza, already reduced to dust, debri, and rubble. The bear, bunny, and civilians are nowhere to be seen. Everyone else, on the other hand, is present, a few new faces joining in on the confrontation -- Asgore, Papyrus, and a large crew of policemen and women being the ones you can spot at a first glance.

Sans is at the same spot you last saw him in. He looks dazed and disoriented, though you intervene when you make it to his side, trying to shake him off his trance. You give it two tries, pulling him with you to a safer corner when you note he’s too shocked to respond, body stiff as he continues to stare blankly at the flower impersonating you in both voice and appearance.

“Sans, please,” you call out, huffing. “Look away -- He’s trying to confuse you.”

You dodge a leaf when it comes flying at you, sharp blade sticking to the tree behind you, a grim reminder of how you could’ve ended hadn’t you taken cover from it. Your presence doesn’t last unnoticed for long, Flowey’s gaze crossing with yours when he turns to see where the leaf landed at.
"If it isn’t the deputy mayor!” he calls, keeping his impersonation of you intact even as he walks closer to your side, stopping when he arrives face-to-face with you. “You sure are good at manipulating others -- Never in my life would've I imagined Smiley would turn into such a big softie. He’s a pile of mush and regret now thanks to you!”

Your entire body and soul warn you over danger when he aims a vine at your waist, taking you firm in his hold and pulling you forward, facing you. “He's allowing himself more freedom in displaying emotions -- expression in that form is just as meaningful as trying not to let them show. It’s not a weakness, and I'm not manipulating him into acting that way.”

"He still has you as a main influence -- Don't try to hide from that fact, Deputy." Your waist aches when it's squeezed tighter. You hold back the pain, bracing yourself for more. "He's become nothing but a lovestruck idiot ever since you-"

A row of attacks are directed at the flower, each from a different person. He lets go of you, sending you falling -- something Undyne prevents by sliding herself across the ground like a baseball player would, numbing your drop. You continue to hear the voices of those going against Flowey, shutting your eyes as you try to recover from the fall, dizzied by the height thrown from -- taller than the mayor's office and Flowey himself, currently of much shorter height as he continues to imitate your shape. Sans returns to battle, sending attack after attack and dodging every threat directed at him.

You plan to join the others, yet Undyne catches on quickly. She holds you back when you try to stand up, stern gaze making you focus on her. "Trust us, punk, when we say you need to stay back. We've got a plan -- a tough one, but it's working out. Just watch him if you don't believe me."

Reluctant to agree, you still choose to stare where she points with her gaze at. You observe Sans closely, the strength of his attacks similar to the ones the former mayor -- now deceased -- had mentioned in court. There's effort and dedication visible in everyone's attacks, assisting each other out whenever someone required rest or healing. On a closer look, you see Sans keeps his own injuries hidden, yet there's almost no stopping him as he continues going after the flower, falling back when he fails to dodge the latest hit.

You rush to him without second thoughts, pulling him with you out of danger again, and staring into his irises when you're certain the others are keeping Flowey at a safe distance. His jacket stains bright red along with his shirt. You take the former, circle it around his waist, and tighten it around him, hoping to cut off whatever circulation he had making him lose life. You remember the medic's words from your day at court almost three weeks ago, more aware of his low HP and how that put him in higher stakes towards danger.
"Help him instead, pal," Sans comments, pulling away when you finish tightening the jacket. His gaze points at Muffet's spider-cupcake, wincing at the gash left by one of Flowey's thorned roots. "I can take this -- You gotta believe in that. This ain't nothin' yet." He then carries his gaze to the ongoing battle; you look towards that place, spotting a few new faces in the confrontation: civilians, more officers, the two judges, your attorney, the bailiff, the policewoman, and Solana all present, aiding the battle by both physical confrontation and getting the wounded to safety. "See all those people? We can do this -- I'm tryna believe in that, and in myself, too. You don't have to be part of every battle, 'cuz you've already been in many already. Let me do this -- Let me try to protect you like you've done for me many times already."

Yet, you can’t bring yourself to believe in him, them, or their success. You feel anxious, worried things will crumble apart, all the effort put into it made to waste. The choice of joining the fight stays; you charge right in, stopped almost instantly by the flower, who grins wide at you, the spiked root he snakes around your neck sending you to the ground, surroundings going dark.

You wake up tied to a chair, dressed in more formal clothing and sitting in front of a familiar desk - - too familiar for your liking. It’s a view similar to the mayor’s office, though there’s a few things that separate this one from it. There’s an additional, bigger desk and chair set by the back of the room, yours standing in the middle of it all. In addition, there’s nature covering almost every wall, the same pattern of roots, vines, and leaves overpowering your sight, no bud or flower in bloom present among those threats.

“Feeling better now, Deputy?”

The chair’s spun around, setting you face-to-face with Flowey, who now wears the mayor’s coat over his body, now smaller given there’s no roots under him. Everything else is the same, keeping him overpowered.

“I thought you were sacrificing yourself for those poor friends of yours, but I realize by your missing ring you’re not anymore,” he exclaims, a toothy grin sending a chill down your spine. “Glad you finally see my way! Those people are too soft for their own good -- I let them go, though, since what could we possibly rule if we take away everyone's lives? I’d love to see the look on your old friends when you rule over them! Betrayal’s the best look someone can have on their face.”

“What are you saying?” you snap, narrowing your gaze at him. “The ring's right he-“ An even
colder chill reaches your body when you feel for your ring, finding nothing at all. “Where did you put it? I swear if you destroyed it, I’ll-“

“Calm down, Deputy -- I don’t know where it went, and I don’t think you need it anymore, anyway. With your position, you can ask for anything. It’s all at the tip of your fingers as long as you consult me first over it!”

Fearing to be stuck in a nightmare, you panic. Your mind aches for an escape just as much as your heart does, yet you can do nothing about it, thick roots hurting you with their thorns whenever you try to escape from your chair, the name plaque before you haunting your thoughts. You try to stay determined, but fail, nausea coming over in ripples when you see two taxidermies -- the mayor and Jessie’s -- nailed to the wall and hung like trophies. All windows and doors are shut down by even thicker walls of leaves, their sharpness warning over a messy escape were you to try it.

Just as you’re about to lose hope, an explosion occurs, sending Flowey flying while you stay in place, the desk chair’s legs appearing to be stuck to the floor with how little you budge with the force of the winds. You cover yourself, some debris flying close and cutting your arms in the process.

When you see a smaller group of familiar faces arrive, you feel your chest lighten with relief -- A different, tenser feeling remains, however; you’re reminded of your lack of trust and lack of belief in their success. What if’s begin to form in your mind as you think back on how rash your last decision had been, allowing no one to cross you and intervening in their plans, charging in without second thoughts.

They come rescue you, yet that’s all they can do, obligated to flee rather than fight, their previous confrontation having weakened them enough not to fight for months. They let the flower have his way, though not entirely, given you’re not in his grasp anymore.

It’s a temporary solution -- one you’re certain will come back to bite at you soon enough.
It's important to clarify this epilogue was straight-up ripped out of the original version of this fanfic.

If you've seen it around Wattpad before, chances are, you've found that version along with my old account. I began writing it in 2016 and finished the epilogue a year later. The only difference is I had to go through some very (very) rigorous editing to make this one more readable, lol.

So, that's all, folks! This fanfic's pretty much completed now. The few extras left are mainly just to provide more information about other matters -- like what happened after Flowey's attack, Gerson's funeral, your engagement, among other things!

Fireworks go off, illuminating the sky with their vibrant colours; the noise by itself is enough for everyone to turn around and stare at the scenery in awe, made more prevalent by how high the balcony is in its height. The night's starry, cold, and humid, something you counter by wearing a jacket.

Faust -- now a bit older -- stands by your side, excitement visible over his features. The others are standing by the railings of the balcony, not bothering to break their gazes away from the sky.

Soft chatter and murmurs can be heard all around, everyone present wishing themselves a Happy New Year. Some hug their loved ones tightly, while others kiss each other -- couples on the lips and friends and family on the cheek. As you gaze at the scenery unfolding itself before you, your senses grow more aware and you take a more distinct notice over just how far you'd gone with them.

Here you were -- two years after the havoc initiated by Jessie, continued by the Mayor, and finalized by Flowey -- surrounded by a considerably large group of monsters and humans who were once strangers to your weary self. In contrast to when you used to live at your old town, a carefree smile's painted over your face and your eyes're bright with joy.

Toriel, Asgore, Muffet, Grillby, Undyne, Alphys, and Papyrus were just a few of the many, many monsters you'd gotten to know along your journey, while Solana and almost the entire justice system of your town were ones you'd become close with in terms of your own kind. You'd practically lost count of how many of them you befriended and grew acquaintanced with along the way of it all, though you still appreciated each and every one of them -- both monster and human -- just the same.
You continue to stare at the sky, fireworks already reaching their end. The only light source left to illuminate the area're the plentiful stars visible above your heads, along with various cylinder-shaped lanterns Toriel crafted with Frisk in hopes to brighten up the New Year even more. Faust kisses your cheek and leaves, noticing you aren't planning on moving away from your spot any time soon.

Your observation of the sky's interrupted by Napstablook tuning in a jazzy beat, accompanied by his cousin, who helps settle and turn on the gear necessary for it to be heard all across the balcony. Then, the two smile bright at each other as they part ways, the ghost being offered a dance by Solana and Mettaton offering a hand out to Papyrus. Followed by them is your lawyer and the policewoman, who encourage more people to join in. The main six of them continue to dance along with the music, whereas the rest of the crowd stare with curious eyes.

Frisk -- who's now occupied spending some time with your son -- excuse themselves from the conversation, rushing off towards Toriel and offering her to dance. The goat lady giggles at the sight as she takes her child's hand in hers, beginning to follow the rhythm of the music. Next, MK offers to share some time with Faust, letting him place his hands over their shoulders to begin their moves.

Looking towards another direction, you witness Grillby and Muffet talking rather than dancing, discussing over the future of their businesses and how they planned on expanding their market in another year. A bucket-shaped turtle and a yellow duckling are the ones to continue the chain of dancers instead, mimicking Toriel and Frisk's steps.

Undyne and Alphys are hesitant to begin their dance at first, though the two eventually warm up to each other, a careful distance kept between them regardless of how long it had been since they first confirmed their relationship. They begin to move across the balcony, bright smiles present on their faces.

Various Temmies vibrate intensely, growing pumped with the energy surrounding them. They offer to dance with each other shortly after, though a pair of them grow reds spots over their faces -- apparently being allergic to themselves. Despite that obstacle, they carry on dancing without a care, causing for a pair of formal Royal Guards to be influenced by their movements, quirky and vibrant. Sheepish, the two take time to hold onto each other's hands, the rabbit-eared one blushing at that gesture. They start to move around, steps slow and eyes locked onto each other's faces.

Noticing Asgore standing all by himself and Sans staring at the stars a few feet farther away from the gathering, you offer your hand out to the goat gentleman and wait, wanting to become involved in the odd session everyone seemed to be getting carried into.
He smiles at you and holds both of your hands, leading you to the middle of the dance floor. The both of you follow the tune already midway through, though it lasts long enough to evoke some small talk between you. "You have grown quite a lot, (Y/N)," Asgore comments, eyes centering on your face. "In a few months, it will be your second year anniversary, will it not? I am proud of you."

You grin at his comment, grasp over his hand tightening as you soon find yourself lost in your thoughts. "I'm... I'm happy to hear that, sir." you reply, keeping eye contact despite your embarrassment. "I'm proud of where we are, too."

Asgore chuckles, stopping the dance when another song begins playing. This one's more upbeat, obliging for everyone's steps to change their pace. The two of you carry on with the second dance until its very end, with the addition of other small talk regarding how your aunt and cousin were doing -- these the main two in favour of your new life and marriage partner -- as well as Toriel's most recent plans to build a second school for the older students around.

Once the second song reaches its end, everyone decides to take a short break by talking with one another again. You, on the other hand, decide to make your spouse company, aware you'd yet to greet him after the New Year countdown.

With slow steps, you eventually arrive in front of him, and -- on a closer look -- you notice he hasn't yet broken his gaze away from the sky, an assumption proved by how startled he is by your presence. It’s hard for you to believe you were close to reaching your second year with him -- third, if you were to count the one when you were dating, and fourth, if you were to include in your time spent as friends. Four years ago -- if you counted the year before you met with your new path -- you would’ve never thought something like this to be possible, even less if you were told you were to mingle with monsters beyond that of what your old job at the police department required of you.

"Looks like you're growin' old with us, huh?" he comments, distracting you from those thoughts.

His hand reaches out for one of your (short/long) strands of hair, which he uses to inspect a white lock that'd managed to grow over your scalp.

"You already have a grey hair." He chuckles, his face leaning closer to your neck. His hand finds its way to your cheek, while your own's placed on top of his. You both remain silent for a moment, until he decides to speak up again. "Soon 'uff, your skin's gonna get all wrinkly."

"I've only just reached my mid twenties, though." You chuckle at his words, closing off the little space left between him and you.
His eye sockets close in response to your proximity while his hand reaches for the back of your head. He pulls you close to him, making you lean lower to meet with his height. Your lips press rough against his teeth, signaling over the clumsy action you both take. The kiss eventually softens up, though there's still remains an awkward air surrounding the both of you. Sans's cold breaths provoke a shiver down your spine, causing for you to involuntarily deepen your contact over his teeth.

After what looks to be an eternity, you both let go, with your cheeks warm and his white irises bouncing from your gaze to everyone that surrounds you.

"Can't believe it's been almost three years since the day we started datin'." Sans lets out a laugh, rubbing the back of his skull. "Figured I'd both suck at this whole marriage thing if I'm still gettin' flustered over little things."

A grin shows on your face, made brighter when you cup his cheekbone with your hand, making his face tint a light shade of red. "I'd say it's all worth it, though." You take a pause, passing a hand across your hair afterwards, growing conscious over the grey lock he'd commented over. " Experienced or not, I still love you, Sans. It's okay if you're still getting used to this, 'cuz in all honesty... I am, too."

After that statement, an idea reaches your mind. You reach out for your outfit's back pocket and pull your wallet out. From its contents, you retrieve a picture of the day of your vows.

There were many changes, yet at the same time, some things had stayed the same. Your outer appearances had grown older and matured a bit more along those two years, yet some of the relationships shared with everyone had stayed the same. You were still Faust's (mother/father), though there were mentions and subtle hints made about him wanting a sibling; you were still a big group, yet Gerson's absence could be felt every so often; and although you were more at peace, it didn’t erase the remnants of your and everyone’s fight, both in the sense of Flowey’s destructive actions and the imprints you had left on court, both implanting changes soon to go unforgotten.

Slowly, yet consistently, the town you once used to be a part of -- as well as other locations -- were growing more tolerant of the two races now sharing one same place. Things were continuously changing -- sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worst, though the latter could be felt more often with the new laws established, and you'd remained through those changes until the very end.

From what it seemed, you were just beginning to live and chase after that possible 'happily ever after' many fairy tales often talked about.
Extra: And They Were Roommates

Chapter Notes

Note that the following extra features the five days spent in Sans's house before plot and chaos stood in the way of everything (or basically what happened after moving in/before Chapter 50), lol.

Day 1: The Kitchen

“So,” you begin, losing your train of thought. The grand display of colours deems it difficult for you to say anything else, distracted by each new thing you come across with. “I take it Papyrus didn’t bring his... recipe items with him?”

Confused at first, it only takes a glance at the open pantry for Sans to grin, a chuckle escaping his teeth. “He left them for you,” he explains, approaching your side. “Said it’s a house-warming gift to celebrate you guys movin’ in.”

“This is too much, though. I... I don’t even know how to thank him!” You scan the items, varying from staple ingredients like all-purpose flour, boxed milk, and baking powder, and growing more complex with a wide variety of spices, nuts, and herbs for both savoury and sweet foods.

“Just him knowin’ you received the gift’s enough. The promotion also came with a heftier raise, so it ain’t a sacrifice, if that’s what yer worryin’ about.”

You hum, crossing your arms as you try to search your mind for anything that might be useful -- a hint over Papyrus’s interests beyond that of cooking. The red scarf he almost always seemed to wear rises among your thoughts, urging you to bring that up. “What about finding him a scarf?”

“If that’ll make ya worry less about this, then sure.” Sans’s irises glint with amusement. You can feel him stand behind you, one arm grabbing your waist while his free hand goes to grab yours, keeping you from holding the pantry open any longer. “Would you believe me if I said he has multiple red scarfs? They all look the same at a first glance, but they’re each a different shade. Think he doesn’t have crimson yet, if you’re thinkin’ about givin’ ‘im one.”

Sans gives you some space to turn around, though he keeps you in place, between the kitchen isle
and himself, keeping his gaze focused on you. “Kind of like how you have more than one jacket?” you tease, grabbing his current one. “This one looks different from yesterday’s. A lot less dark, and with a fluffier hoodie.”

“We’d have to be livin’ together for you to notice that difference,” he retorts, snickering as his grip on your waist tightens. “It’s too subtle for a stranger like you to notice.”

Day 2: The Living Room

Your thighs grow numb, the weigh of Sans’s head obliging you to stay in place, against waking him up just yet. Faust is already sleeping, and with school being put on hold for the holidays, you figure it wouldn’t be bad staying up until late. When a commercial break airs, you begin staring down at Sans’s face, unguarded due to him being asleep -- a heavy slumber, you assume, based on how shaky his snores are, and how much he cozies up to you.

You boop the upper part of his nose cavity, chuckling when you remember the night at the beach and his sneeze. Then, you bring your hand over to his eye sockets, tracing the dark semicircles under them, long-imprinted there for hours of lost rest. He shifts, halting your observation as you instead wait for him to go back to sleep. Leaning in, you press a kiss against his cheekbone, grazing that spot with your knuckles when you pull away.

“I can feel every lil’ thing you’re doin’ to me, (Y/N),” the monster states, almost making you flinch when you see his sockets open again, white irises bright as he grins, holding the hand you’d placed over his cheekbone. “Wanna hit the bed now? Figure your lap must be gettin’ tired with how big-boned I am.”

“I. . .” You face the television again, seeing the movie back on air, a few parts seeming to have skipped past you during the time you were cuddling up to the monster. “Sure -- Let’s go,” you answer, nodding. “Sorry about that. I. . . I wasn’t trying anything weird, if you’re wondering.”

“I know you weren’t, pal. But ya did boop my snoot.” His irises flicker as he laughs, sitting up straight and allowing your thighs to lose some rigidity. “Hadda hold back another sneeze there, no joke.”
“Don’t peek,” you warn, taking your first step out of the shower. Sans is washing his face at the sink, the scent of soap prominent in the air.

“I won’t,” he assures you, flaring his nose cavity as a consequence of holding back a laugh. “Dunno why you’re bein’ shy, though. You’re wearin’ a towel.”

“You peeked!” You point a finger at him, though he doesn’t turn around. Instead, he keeps his eye sockets closed and scrubs some soap against his face.

“Nah-uh.”

“Then how did you know I’m wearing a towel?”

“‘Cuz the towel rack’s right beside the shower, cupcake. Top ones are brown, middle ones are yellow, and bottom ones are white. Know it ‘cuz Paps’s always insisted I keep ‘em that way.”

You look down at your towel, yellow, warm, and surprisingly soft to the touch despite it being humid. He was right -- You’d picked that one from the middle tier. “Oh,” you mutter, hugging the towel closer to you. “Well. . . You’re forgiven.” Quietly, you arrive behind him, being haste when you notice he’s about to wipe his face dry, already done rinsing the soap from before. “And this is my apology.” You kiss his forehead, a hint of the soap’s taste sticking to your taste buds.

He grins, opening his sockets to stare up at you. “Apology accepted, (Y/N).”
Day 4: The Bedroom

“You mean to tell me you didn’t tell anyone about this because you didn’t wanna bother anyone?”

You lean and reach for the bed’s comforter, fluffy and warm. Sans avoids your gaze, embarrassment made clear when he speaks up. “Pretty much,” he replies, nodding. “Didn’t wanna bother Mettaton, Tori, or anyone else. And then I didn’t wanna tell you either, ‘cuz I thought you’d think I rushed with my proposal.”

Grinning, you stop inspecting the bed and walk towards his side, slipping a hand around his waist as you rest your chin on his shoulder. “You can be a big dork sometimes, y’know that? Why would I even think that in the first place? Of course I wouldn’t expect you to be sleeping in a Queen-size bed if you’re single!”

“This one’s, uh, actually King-sized, though.”

His words make you stare at the bed with more intent, how much space it took giving off a feeling of grandeur despite the simplicity of the decor surrounding it. “No wonder it looks so big! Where and how did you even get it?”

“Paps helped with that,” the monster replies, reaching for the hand you’d place against him. “I don’t wanna take freebies from my bro now that he’s makin’ a bigger’n better life for himself, so I’m tryna pay back.”

“You don’t have to feel that way about your brother! With how he is, I doubt he’ll demand any of that to you as long as he’s doing it willingly.”

“He said the same thing.” Sans laughs, nervous and strained. “Thing is, I feel like I’ve held him back too much for too long. He needs to grow up some more, so I should be settin’ an example.”

You bring him down with you in bed, caressing his cheekbone as you stare into his irises, a smile on your lips. “You’re already doing that,” you state, retreating your hand for him to look at you more directly. “You’ve made yourself responsible of so many things, it’d be a shame if nobody noticed. If your tutoring lessons were as effective as the ones you gave Faust, and if you make others happy the same way you make me and Faust happy, why wouldn’t you be setting an example?”
Sans places two fingers over your mouth, rubbing your lips as he blinks, a fond glow to his irises. “Anyone ever told you the same? ‘Cuz those words you’re sayin’ can apply to ya, also.”

“About making you feel happy?”

“Yeah. You mean a lot to me, (Y/N).”

Day 5: The Balcony

The night is rainy and cold, clouds shielding the stars away from your sight. Faust is in Sans’s arms, using his ribcage as makeshift pillow for him to sleep with, jacket helping make the monster's bones softer. You smile, sitting on the chair next to him and bumping your leg with his as a way to get his attention. “Think you’d like to go visit the observatory a few cities away from this one? I bet Faust would like hearing you talk about space. He’s been holding back on asking ever since Papyrus told him you used to be a scientist.”

Sans grins, holding Faust closer as he faces your side. “Doubt I’m what people first think of when they hear the word ‘scientist’.”

“That shouldn't mean anything! What should matter’s the knowledge you have, not what other people think about that.”

“Frankly, I think opinions do matter sometimes -- as long as they're constructive.”

“But were any of the comments you received?”

The monster looks deep in thought, irises losing their focus on you as he furrows his gaze. “Papyrus’s only -- And maybe even Mettaton’s, too. I lost a lotta opportunities ‘cuz I gave up too easily. Either that, or I didn’t even bother trying. I think I even owe it to my bro for havin’ made
friends with you back then, ‘cuz I was fallin’ back to my old habits again of giving up. Gerson made sure I kept up to that promise, and then Grillby kinda pushed me into moving forward.”

He pauses, gaze returning to the present as he stares at you again, more confident and consistent in its glow. You smile, placing your hand over Faust’s head and moving it over to Sans’s arm afterwards.

“In all honesty, I’ve had so much support along the way, I don’t think I’ve really noticed until now. Talking like this with you. . . It really helps with that.”
Extra: Oh My God, They Were Roommates

Chapter Notes

Similar to Extra #14, the following extra also takes place after moving in with Sans/prior to Chapter 50's events!

POV #1: Papyrus

“Finally!” Papyrus exclaims, setting the frame down on the dining table. The picture in it displays his brother, his fiancé(e), and their son, all three pressed together as they smile for the camera. While Sans is stiff in posture, (Y/N) refuses to make eye contact, a sheepish look on their face. Faust is the only one who seems remotely relaxed about the situation, yet all three look happy in their own way. “I thought they’d never listen to me!”

Proud of the picture and its frame, Papyrus poses, an equally prideful ‘nyeh!’ leaving his teeth. He picks up his phone next, accessing Overnet, and searching for Sans’s profile among his friend list. He’s reluctant to see whether his brother truly updated his status or not, though he’s much more relieved when he sees ‘single’ changed for ‘engaged’. Perhaps it was a trivial subject, but he still felt happy knowing his brother acknowledged the relationship to the extent of sharing the news with others.

He nods, confident. “About time he changed it! Though, I wonder. . .” He searches for (Y/N)’s profile next, an even greater joy taking over when he sees their background picture changed for the very same one he had framed at his dining table. Next, he saves the picture, wanting a digital copy all for himself.

Finally, after years of convincing, he felt his brother seemed happier -- in more ways than one. Even with the stiffness of his posture, it was more than apparent he was comfortable with the people around him, though the same couldn’t be said about the situation of having his picture taken that way.

POV #2: Undyne & Alphys (& Mettaton)
“S- So, what do you think?” Alphys asks, meeting Undyne’s gaze. There’s a sharpness to her stare despite her usual stuttering, her expertise on the subject helping her be that way.

Undyne hums, tapping her lips as she considers the situation, brows furrowing in the process. “I think (Y/N),” she states, nodding. “Sure, they look way meeker than Smiley, but unlike him, they have experience. It’d be unusual for him to be top if he’s never been in a relationship before.”

The lizard woman gasps, eyes lighting up as her hands turn to fists. “You’re right! I- I bet he knows nothing about taking initiative -- At least, th- that’s what I think!”

“Then again. . .” The fish woman crosses her arms, looking more concentrated over the discussion as she chews on her lip. “He’s around two to three years older than (Y/N), right? And then there’s been a few people that either liked him or he liked before he got to know them, so he’s not a total newbie in this.”

A frustrated Mettaton interrupts the two’s conversation as he steps into the kitchen, sighing when he sees neither of them have advanced in helped him with the next catering. “What are you gals even talking about, honestly? I swear I told you to be finished with this an hour ago!”

“We’re discussing who’s the experienced one -- In, um, (Y/N)’s relationship, I mean!”

The robot’s gaze shifts from annoyed to excited as he cheers, joining the pair in their discussion without any permission asked in the first place. “Oh, sweetheart, do I have theory for you! Sit down, you two -- We’ve got serious topics to discuss.”

POV #3: Gerson & Toriel

“It’s nice to see the boy’s finally breaking outta that stubborn shell of his! I swear, even if he really was an experiment, he’s been far too guarded -- Being careful’s one thing, but restricting yourself to the point of being unhappy shouldn’t be called living. Think he could still use a lil’ more pushing to get there, though. Can you believe he came to me for advice when it was time to write
(Y/N) a letter?"

"Are you referring to the one where he confessed he liked them back?" Toriel asks, a smile on her face. She pours Gerson some tea and takes a serving for herself, sitting across from him. "Did he not message you about it?"

"That, he did," the turtle replies, chuckling. "And then he message me about it right after -- said it was an emergency and all, and that he had to give the letter to (Y/N) before they left back home."

The goat woman giggles, containing it with a hand over her mouth. "Had it been through messages, I would have asked you to show them to me."

Gerson beams, retrieving his phone amongst his semester-old graded papers and documents, mischief in his eyes. "Ya think I didn’t record the whole thing, lass? Just listen to how jittery he sounded -- He tried to hide it, but I bet he must’ve been shaking behind that line!"

He enters the gallery and searches for the recording, a grin rising on his face when he finds it. It’s barely five minutes long, the emergency of the situation being the main cause for it to last that much. Next, he presses play, holding back his amusement the second it starts playing, memories from that day rushing into his mind.

The second the skeleton behind the line tries to hide a stutter, they both laugh, how uncharacteristic it was of him adding to his reasons for the call being an emergency.

Even at that day, the turtle knew what was to come.

POV #4: Faust

While it was difficult explaining to other children he had a human for a (mom/dad) and a skeleton monster for a (dad/second dad), Faust was happy just the same. There was still the absence of his other parent, however, though he tried not to let those thoughts run when he was alone; he
preferred talking about it with his school therapist more than anything, the last time he had allowed himself to think about Jessie all on his own enough for him not to try it again. He preferred not saying he was adopted, the questions that followed ones he had a hard time answering.

“What about your real second parent? A monster can't be your real one!”

Usually, his answer was followed up with another question.

“Why was Jessie sent to jail, then?”

And then after that, another.

“Do you hate Jessie?”

Feeling trapped, he shakes his head and covers his face, a whimper alerting the closest person present in his home.

“You okay there, buddy?”

Faust doesn’t look up, though he recognizes the voice clearly. When he gives no reply, he can feel Sans place a hand over his head and crouch next to him. “You feelin’ sad? Ya don’t have to tell me right away, but c’mere for a minute.”

Still keeping his face covered, he bumps into the monster, hiccuping again when he’s taken into a hug. “Dad?”

He can sense the monster tense -- like he often saw him do whenever he called him that name. Though he hadn’t thought much of it before, today’s a different story.

“What’s up?”

Faust’s the one to tense next, sniffling. “Do you hate Jessie?” He pauses, taking his hands off his face to stare directly at the monster. “And do you really love (mom/dad)? The last time Jessie said
it... I don’t think it was true.”

POV #5: Sans

For what has the be the first time in years, Sans has to sit someone down for a talk -- the last time being with his six year-old brother for breaking a porcelain plate. Now, it's a graver situation, Faust’s puffy, teary eyes making his soul ache, uncertainty crossing with him. “I’m not really sure if I hate them or not -- Maybe dislike’s a better word for that now. Not because they used to be with (Y/N), but ‘cuz of what they did to you guys,” he replies, answering the first question. “They crossed quite a few lines, and they hurt (Y/N) ‘till the end. But if you’re lookin’ to base your judgment on mine, don’t. You’ve got your own feelings, reasons, and experiences for either liking or disliking your parent. Mine shouldn’t be used for you to determine if you wanna forgive ‘em or not.”

“What about (mom/dad)?” Faust presses, bringing up the second question again. “And- And why do you always look weird when I call you ‘dad’?”

Given no break after answering his first question, Sans breathes in deep, searching his thoughts for calm. “I love (Y/N), and I’m serious when I say it. I know I have to show it ‘stead of just outright sayin’ it, but I hope I’ve been doin’ that more now that we’re all livin’ together.” He stops, the third question making him grow tense again. “And I look weird ‘cuz I am weird. Hearing you call me ‘dad’ kinda just makes me feel overwhelmed — Like I gotta be the best dad there is, else you won’t call me that anymore.”

To his surprise, Faust smiles. He wipes his tears with the help of the jacket the monster takes off and hands over, a brighter look in his eyes. "But you're a great dad! Is that really why you act weird when I call you dad?"

"I still feel weird when I remember I proposed to (Y/N), believe it or not."

Faust stands up next, a more confident posture showing through. "You're not weird -- You're just a dork!"
"Better watch what you're sayin' there, bud."
"It's not easy to change the world. Instead, we created a whole new planet." – Min-soo, Two Weddings and a Funeral

“I now declare you partners.”

Nervous, you wait for Alphys and Undyne to kiss first, leaning down to match Sans’s height next. Cheers sound across the chapel, a few whistles and hoots hyping up the crowd.

You stand hand-in-hand with him, the white of your (dress/suit) closely matching with his own wedding attire. His hand feels cold to the touch, though it changes when you meet with his irises and smile.

Again, you wait for the two to step down the podium first, keeping your hold on Sans’s hand when it’s your turn to leave. People huddle around, most of them congratulating you while others hand you notes and envelopes -- these you try to turn back, only to have them insist it was necessary despite this not being a ‘real’ wedding per se. Your new spouse already has Faust hiked up in his arms by the time you manage to track him down again, helping him stray away from the growing havoc surrounding you.

Bit by bit, people’s well-wishes reach their end and things begin to settle down, allowing you to strike up conversation with the two brides while Sans and Faust head over to Papyrus and Solana, both who’re waiting for them two, excitement made clear in their gazes.

While the place you’re in isn’t an official chapel, it tries its best to look like one, that sheer observation making it feel odd when you see there’s tables around with drinks and snacks, along with a band playing their own tunes instead of a single person playing piano, as most chapels often did. Weren’t these two differences present, you would mistake it with a real one.

You stop gazing around to focus on finding conversation, facing the brides.
“Should I really ask him today?” you question, swiping a cup of punch from a passing tray, lips meeting the brim of the liquid to take a sip. “Wouldn’t it just make him feel uncomfortable?”

The fish woman’s the first to react, chuckling as she takes a glass of water for herself and brings it all down with one gulp, how warm the weather was turning affecting her endurance. While she didn’t like the cold, the growing heat didn’t help her, either.

“With how dorky he looks right now, I doubt it,” Undyne comments, laughing. “Can’t you see he’s just about glowing? This is your chance to take him and Faust there -- Keep the old guy updated, and make him get over his fear of saying goodbye.” She takes another glass, drinking it down as fast as the first one. “Let me know if you’re going,” she adds, fanning herself with the emptied tray. “As much as I love this dress, I gotta get out of it. The fabric’s suffocating me!”

You focus on her dress at the mention of it: mermaid cut, closely tailored to accentuate her figure, sleeveless to show off her muscle, and wine-coloured to match with her hair. Alphys’s dress is much more classic, resorting to a simpler cut and a lighter colour: grey to contrast with the yellow tone of her skin. It was safe to say Sans and you were the ones to dress the simplest, ‘fitting’ -- as your robot friend called it -- despite you being a human and Sans being a monster.

Where Mettaton saw normal in that view was beyond you, and it didn’t help the cause in trying to blend in with Faust being your son, him being adopted causing for his appearance to barely match up with yours. Despite that, however -- you don’t regret it. You were happy, and your new family was, too.

“You really should go today,” Alphys chimes in, pulling you away from those thoughts. “It’s probably not in any way scientific -- o- or reasonable, even -- but I bet he’d be happy to know you guys got married.”

Nodding, you toy with the locket resting on your chest, opening it to see the same photo from almost two years ago. You wanted to update it more than ever now, how lacking it felt recently helping you grow awareness over just how much things had changed. Three school semesters ago, you were just getting to know the monster. To so much as think you were now planning out a honeymoon with him’s beyond overwhelming.

“Excited about your getaway?” The lizard woman calls your attention again, joy glistening in her eyes. “Is it true your aunt’s going to be looking after Faust while you’re back?”

“She insisted to,” you reply, chuckling. “And. . . I guess I kinda am -- A little nervous, too.”
Alphys grins, nodding afterwards. “I- I understand that feeling. They’re pretty big steps, b- but I’d say they’re worth it.”

Nodding, you exchange a few more words with the pair and dismiss yourself from them, late hour prompting you to fetch Faust and Sans out of the chapel. With the hour being close to six and the cemetery closing at eight, leaving immediately was your only option -- Later, you could ease down and take in today’s happenings, awareness yet to fall in its entirety over you. There still remained the feeling of it all being a dream, how airy your steps felt and how fast your pulse went the main factors contributing to that sensation.

With that in mind, you chug down the rest of the punch, throw the cup away, and breathe in deep, determined to look for him.

With Sans’s face buried against your torso, you can only face down at him and let Faust join in by hugging him. Though the monster tries his best not to cry or budge, he eventually does, a simple, single question over his well-being leading him to break down.

The three of you sit by the back seat, Undyne and Alphys at the front. Another car’s parked close to yours, Papyrus stepping down from it. You gesture for your companions to go on ahead while you stay with Sans, against him leaving off to the cemetery without having a talk first.

“Why’s everythin’ gotta be so difficult, (Y/N)?” he asks, resting the back of his head against your lap next, allowing for you to place a hand over his ribcage, feeling for his soul. You encourage Faust to join Papyrus and the brides at the entrance up ahead, though he persists, remaining by your side. “I know we had that ceremony today, but knowing it ain’t official kinda keeps me on edge. Can’t stop thinkin’ they’ll try takin’ away Faust again, and that they’ll find another way to bring this stuff back into court.“

You smile, shuddering when you take a breath, emotions yet to be resolved to their fullest. “Whatever happens, we can deal with it, Sans. If I got you out of that restraining order and you got me out of Flowey’s grasp, then who says we can’t fight for this together?” You halt on your words, rubbing the bridge of his nose cavity, pressing a kiss on it later. “And don’t you think Gerson would be happy just knowing we had our ceremony today? We. . . We can leave a picture, if you want.”
He shifts left and back, standing up when Faust helps him to. "That'd be nice," he answers, life returning to his irises. "Guess I do kinda owe him after I brushed 'im off every time he tried hintin' at us being together -- Never took 'im serious whenever he said stuff like that."

"You really did that?" you ask, holding his arm as you scoot closer to him. "Bet he must've thought you were just too stubborn to admit it, if that’s the case." You nudge his shoulder, gaining a chuckle from him and a nudge back.

He gets out of the car, helping you afterwards.

“I ain’t stubborn, just realistic. Didn’t wanna get my hopes up thinkin’ about us bein’ friends -- even less a couple.”

Faust follows beside you, keeping quiet as he tries to sneak in more on the conversation, only to be interrupted by Papyrus, who waves him over, allowing you privacy to continue talking with his brother. “There’s a fine line between realism and pessimism, Sans. Do you. . . still feel that way about it all, or do you feel like you’ve made new friends now?”

Sans holds your hand, squeezing it as he looks up at you, serenity in his gaze. “Can’t say I ain’t strayed over to that side every once in a while, pal,” he replies, continuing the walk. “But I ain’t lettin’ those thoughts control me as much as they did back then. I know I fought hard for what I have now, and I know I deserve a ‘lil more nicer treatment towards myself. Self-realization was at the bottom of my list, but I’m tryna be less grim and focus more on the present, ‘cuz I know I gotta do that if I wanna keep what I have now.”

You kneel in front of Gerson’s memorial, placing the picture on the ground and keeping it from flying away by sinking a border deeper in. Sans is beside you while Faust stands behind you, not a word uttered amongst yourselves. Alphys and Papyrus stay farther back, comforting Undyne until she’s ready to say her farewells, the strength and confidence she had maintained on the way crumbling the second she stepped foot inside the cemetery.

Faust shifts and kneels by your other side, keeping you between him and Sans as you prepare yourself to speak up, words caught in your throat. Faust lays his head against your shoulder while
you grab Sans’s back, closing your eyes when you finally gain courage to say what’s on your mind. “Thank you for everything,” you begin, sighing. “For guiding Sans -- And for guiding me. I can’t. I can’t thank you enough for that, and it would be difficult to explain just how much that helped us grow.”

“. . .We’re married now,” Sans adds, a lighter tone to his voice. “(Y- (Y/N)’s my (wife/husband) now, and Faust, he. . . He accepted me as a parent.”

It’s strange to hear him stutter, though the comfort in his tone eases your worries down. You pull him closer, encouraging him on.

“Thank you, mister.” Faust’s own words are clear and finite. There’s not a hint of reluctance in his words, only happiness’s present. “I hope you rest now. Heroes deserve it!”

Happiness.

That’s the last thing you wish for Gerson, Faust, Sans, and every other person your mind can possibly think of, ready to stand and leave the cemetery, wanting to give the turtle monster some peace and quiet.
Extra: Mother's Day

Chapter Notes

Due to the author's note on Quotev dating allll the way back to Chapter Twenty-Seven (technically part 38 here on Ao3 with how the site labels each new story part), the following extra takes place shortly after Sans was sentenced with a restraining order!

It's your fourth year celebrating Mother's Day with Faust.

While it's hard for you to believe it had been that long since the adoption, it's even harder for you to believe the face call your phone notifies you over's real -- the name shown on it, more specifically. With Sans still under vigilance with his restraining order, having him call you today's the least of your expectations.

You answer still, incapable of passing up an opportunity to talk with him again.

As soon as you pick up, you're greeted with his face, a 'hey', and an equally casual 'Happy Mother's Day, (Y/N)', his attire the most to catch your attention out of everything surrounding him.

He's wearing a tux.

Why?

You don't even want to question over that subject yet. Rather than that, you lock the door of your room -- wary over Faust finding you out -- and find a place to sit on in bed, smiling at the monster when you make eye contact with him. "Thank you," you speak up, propping a leg over the other and resting a hand over your knee. You start to feel self-conscious about your pose, your outfit, and pretty much everything else your mind can possibly think of, how sharp he looks making you feel underdressed with your tank top and shorts.

And that's another thing you grow self-conscious of.

Had you realized how revealing your clothes were currently -- these pajamas you had thrown on even after showering -- you wouldn't've answered the call. You think about taking a throw pillow and using it to cover up a bit more, though you stop yourself when you realize you don't have any decent way of doing that while being discreet.

"Can I ask you somethin', (Y/N)?"

Disregarding the idea of being discreet, you nod, hesitate, and -- finally -- take the throw pillow closest to you, hugging it against your chest and covering your clothing away from his sight. Him calling your name makes for the attraction you had towards him to take a leap, stomach forming a knot. You gulp tension away and ignore those feelings, answering him next. "Sure -- What's up?"

"I, uh, have somethin' I wanna give you. I know the school's making an activity for that today, but. . . . What I wanna give ya's kinda separate from that. Can I mail it to you soon, or should I leave it at Tori's office for you to pick up later?"

"E- Either way's fine," you reply, reprimanding yourself for stuttering. Looking like a lovestruck
idiot was the last thing you wanted now with how difficult things had turned out at court. You manage a smile and hug the pillow closer, still self-conscious over your attire. In his camera view, your legs were still bare. Never in your life had you been aware of your clothing as much as you were today -- and in front of him, no less. "Can you hold for a minute? I'm, well... I'm feeling a little bit underdressed currently."

Your comment makes him focus on you first -- a noticeable trace of embarrassment crossing his irises -- and stare down at his own clothing next, chuckling when he gets the meaning behind your words. "Sure," he replies, mirth in his voice. "Could've said that earlier 'stead of wrestlin' that pillow, though."

"Wh- Hold on a second! I'm not-"

"Bye."

Hung up on, you glare at the call history and huff, taking in some air before standing up and heading towards your dresser. There, you take out more decent clothing: a button-up shirt, a pencil skirt, and the black dress shoes you were planning to wear later tonight, your plans with Solana requiring clothes just as decent. You attempt being haste while dressing up, not wanting to make the monster wait more than necessary. You were regretting having brought up the fact you were in pajamas, yet you regretted the idea of not changing also. It had been difficult choosing between those two knowing the consequences behind each.

Hadn't you brought it up, would've Sans thought you were hitting on him?

You didn't want to make it seem that way with his current state: barely allowed to step an inch away from the city, his restraining order keeping him under careful watch twenty-four seven.

Once you're done dressing up, you stand in front of the mirror and check over your state -- once, then twice for good measure, against dressing up too much for fear of the same result.

Though... He wasn't that type of guy, was he?

Then again... He did say he had something for you, didn't he?

Why would he call you for all that, otherwise?

...Or were you overthinking his intentions as a friend?

Better put: Were you overthinking every little thing happening to you currently?

You set your thoughts aside, walking back to bed and taking your phone, unlocking it and pressing on the monster's name afterwards. It rings twice, call answered before the third.

"Yo."

Awkward.
That's all you feel when you sit back down, gaze lingering back on his tux.

"Sans?" you call out, curiosity taking over.

"Yeah?" he asks, how that single word leaves his teeth making you imagine he would be quirking an eyebrow if he had any.

"Why are you so... well-dressed?"

"Sayin' I dress bad most of the time?"

You narrow your eyes at him, crossing your arms firm. "No," you state, lips forming a straight line. "I'm just... curious. If I go to that activity at school today, would I need to dress similar? I wasn't really... told there'd be a dress code for it."

He chuckles, the heartiness to his tone making your feelings take a leap once more, heart racing and hands growing cold with nerves. "Not as far as I know," he replies, facing you. "I'm just dressin' this way 'cuz I'll be helpin' out with the food, drinks, and all that."

"Wouldn't it affect you if I went to there, then? I... I can explain that to Faust -- He'll understand."

"Don't worry 'bout that kinda stuff. Already got that settled, pal." While his words are reassuring, you can't bring yourself to feel at complete ease, the thought of him being affected for the sake of a get-together making you stay that way. "It's our job to make sure things go well, so just sit back, relax, and have fun. It's your day, (Y/N). You should try and enjoy it as best you can -- You've raised Faust to be a good kid, and it shows."

"We still plan to celebrate the next one if things fix themselves up by then -- And Father's Day, too. If we get through all this, it would be nice celebratin' every holiday we can get our hands on."

A knock on the door along with Faust asking if you're awake interrupts your conversation.
Startled, the phone almost ends up on the floor, yet you catch it before it happens, ending up face-to-face with Sans by the time you gain composure.

"Didn't have to take 'face call' so literally, pal," he comments, chuckling. "Ain't complainin', though -- It's a pretty nice view."

"T- Talk to you later."

You hear another laugh right before hanging up, honest, airy and light-hearted. Hadn't his words made your heart go wild, you would get back at him for it.

It's unfortunate you chickened out instead.

"I'm awake, Faust," you call out, hiding the stutter in your voice. "Be there in a minute!"
Extra: Father's Day

Chapter Notes

Same as the Mother's Day extra:

Due to the author's note on Quotev dating alllll the way back to Chapter Twenty-Seven (technically part 38 here on Ao3 with how the site labels each new story part), the following extra takes place shortly after Sans was sentenced with a restraining order!

It’s not until Faust wakes you up with a gift shoved right on your face that you realize it’s Father’s Day.

Still tired, it takes a few tries for you to sit up straight in bed, thanking Faust when the gift is in your hands. He follows it up by handing you your phone, a guilty smile showing when you face him.

“What were you doing with my phone?” you ask, narrowing your gaze at him.

“Someone was calling you!” he replies, almost stuttering in his words. “I picked up, and it was, um. . . the person I’m not supposed to see anymore.” The remaining part of that sentence is whispered, sadness present in his eyes. “We still talked a little bit, though.”

“How little, exactly?”

He tenses, facing elsewhere -- far, far away from your line of sight. His fingers twirl with each other as he pouts, huffing. “. . .Half an hour, I think? I . . . I just wanted to know how he was doing. It’s not fair we can’t hang out together anymore! He’s- He’s still a friendly person!”

“It’s the law, Faust,” you remark, booping his nose in hopes of getting him to face you. “We just have to wait those years, and we’ll be back to normal.”

“Five years is way too long!” he exclaims, crossing his arms. “Wh- What if they add more years? And. . . And what if we have to move out again?”

“That won’t happen,” you offer him to sit down next to you, holding him close and letting him rest his head on your shoulder. You wipe some of his tears away, these already making way down his face. “Trust me on that, will you? We’ve been doing well up until now -- Those five years will be over before we know it.”

He pulls away, facing you with a frown. “But don’t you miss him, too?”

You freeze in place, sighing. “I do, but I have to be patient.”

Faust stands up from bed, hands balled up and frown unwavering. His gaze centers on your phone, still waiting for your use. He points at it, furrowed eyebrows and straight lips forming a more determined expression on his face. No words have to be spoken for you to understand him.

“Alright,” you speak up, smiling. “I’ll call him back, but don’t go looking through my calls next time, okay? You should listen to what the judge said back there.”
He nods, once and slow -- clearly unconvinced by your last statement. “. . .Okay.”

Though he barely smiles, he still assents. He steps away from bed, gives his back to you, and leaves, allowing you space to make the call. You still wait until he shuts the door behind him, taking the phone when you’re sure he’s not about to interrupt again.

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Sans picks up within the third ring, voice sounding breathless from the other line. There’s no other noise besides it, his background near completely silent. “Hey,” he greets, taking a long pause and following it up with a ‘Happy Father’s Day’.

“Thank you.” You chuckle, how long each pause is prompting you to ask over his state. “Are you doing alright over there, though? You sound like you’ve run a marathon.”

“Not far off the truth.” He laughs, another long pause taking over. “Some parents saw your name when you were callin’, and they immediately recognized who you were. Excused myself for a minute, but I didn’t want ya to hang up, so I went off to the first place I could think of.”

“A really far place?”

“No, but one with a lotta stairs.”

“You know you could’ve just. . . called back, right?”

There’s another stop, to which you can hear him stifle a chuckle. “Can’t think straight when it’s about you.”

Caught off guard, it takes a good while for your brain to process his sentence. You grin afterwards, shaking your head. “. . .Was that a pun?”

“Might’ve been,” he remarks, tone sheepish. “No homo, though.”

You lay back down in bed, rolling to the side and keeping your phone safe between your shoulder and ear. Concern reigns over the calm left by your banter, a frown replacing your smile as you debate whether to bring up your question or not.

“. . .Sans?”

“What’s up?”

You press the phone closer to your ear, trying your best not to let your worries worsen. “Did that get you in trouble? Those parents seeing my name on your phone, I mean.”

“Excused myself ‘fore they could comment anything about it, but it’s fine, pal,” he replies, the sound of him sitting down on something soft continuing after. “We’ll be holding up that get-together in a coupla hours, so I have that as an excuse -- And if it comes to it, I can just change ‘(Y/N)’ to ‘babe’ and nobody’ll suspect a thing.”
“Twice in one call, huh? Thought the judge said we couldn’t do this kinda stuff anymore.”

You roll back to the other side, trying to ignore the effect of his words on you. Instead, you close our eyes and breathe in deep, trying to forget both occasions of him joking around with you. Once you open them again, you sigh -- as quiet as his background. “Got me there,” he replies, laughing. “Guess you’re gonna have to turn me in, then.”

“I just might,” you retort, resting an arm against the back of your head, lifting yourself up slightly. “Better keep an eye out, ‘cuz they’ll be at your door before you can hang up.”

You don’t notice you’ve lost track of time until you hear a school bell ring from Sans’s line. At that, you force yourself to shake out of your relaxation and verify your phone call’s ongoing info, seeing fifteen minutes and counting on screen. You sit back firm in bed, awareness falling back over you when you hear Faust knock on the door and see ten o’clock marked on your phone.

“The event’s at noon if you’re feelin’ up for it, (Y/N),” Sans comments, interrupting your thoughts. “Gotta go get ready now.” He pauses, though you call tell it’s not due to fatigue this time around. “Talk to ya later? Forgot to tell ya what I originally called you for.”

“That’s what you get for flirting,” you reply, smiling.

“Can’t help it, pal.”

With one last exchange between you, the call reaches its end. You each say your goodbyes and hang up, his words and banter remaining in your thoughts even as you head to the bathroom to get ready for the day, contemplating the idea of going to the after-school activity while you shower, thoughts straying over to his flirting every so often and dismissing them the second you start to take them seriously.

Right now -- with his restraining order and Jessie in jail -- there wasn’t much space for that kind of thinking at the moment. Making sure things stayed the way they were currently was your main objective; allowing things to worsen after all that hard work was something you proposed yourself to fight against, even if the task involved not letting your wants be fulfilled.

Perhaps, for the next Father’s Day, it would be a different story -- one where it wouldn’t involve secretive calls and constant watch over your surroundings, or Faust snooping around just to stay in touch with the monster.
Extra: Honeymoon

When the sun goes down, you figure it's time to bring up what's on your mind. The sky's already a dull blue, a few stars making themselves known. The wind's grown cooler, piercing your body until you choose to wear a jacket and zip it closed. You take one last look at the changes around you, tap Sans's shoulder when you're done, and make him face you, phone in hand.

"Want to take a picture together? The new locket you gave me still has space for another one."

He stops staring at the Echo flowers from afar, these glowing brighter with the nightfall. Plenty more have grown since your last visit, these serving as the main and sole lighting source for Toriel's garden.

"Sure," he answers, grinning. "Don't really need to ask me twice, though -- We're married, and we're even on our first honeymoon right now, (Y/N), ya don't need to ask over lil' stuff like that."

Surprised to hear him use that term, you hold back a smile, lock arms with him, and lead the way towards the lake. Countless streaks of moonlight seep through the flora surrounding the water, welcoming you in. "You know what that means?" you ask, tugging at his arm for him to sit down.

He replies with a 'yup' and lays on the grass after you do, shoulder brushing with yours as he shifts to get a better look at the lake. "My kind doesn't really call it that, but we have somethin' similar to this -- Soul bonding, if I remember right. It's what happens when you find what some call your 'soulmate'. But it ain't like that person's set in stone or anythin' like that. It all just depends on the path you take and how you grow."

You close your eyes and bask under the presence of the moonlight along with the ruffling of trees. Serenity washes over you, increasing as you keep on listening to the monster, asking more over his own traditions and how they differed from yours. "I...I remember reading about it in that book you gave me. Isn't that something way more rare and complex? Both souls have to be in harmony for that to happen, don't they?"

Sans laughs as he jabs your side, winking afterwards. "Still remember, huh? I'm flattered, pal."

"I learned a lot from it -- Like how I can do this now!" You follow up to those words by placing a hand over his ribcage, magic sparking between it and your fingers. Your eyes close as you try to channel your idea, smiling when you both see and feel it work. "Did you feel that? Tell me what, if you did."

He looks undoubtedly humoured with your question, though he doesn't comment on it. The monster avoids your gaze while embarrassment replaces his posture, made more stiff the longer he stays that way. "It felt nice," he replies, placing a hand over his chest. "Toasty and light -- Kinda like when ya drink somethin' hot and it just warms you up."

"...Is that similar to what you said? Soul bonding, I mean."

"Pretty close. Only we'd both have to do it at the same time."

The moment ends, leaving you be with more questions than answers. You try not to let them cloud your mind, instead hoping to enjoy tonight by observing the lake and how much your surroundings had changed since you last visited Toriel’s garden. There’s a lot more flowers now; not to mention, there’s more trees covering the sky, along with more butterflies and hummingbirds flying about.
“Remember the first time we made it here?” you ask, leaning your head against his. "You invited Faust and me over -- Frisk and Undyne were there, too."

His gaze breaks away from the lake and flickers to your side, recognition flashing on his irises. “I remember,” he states, facing back to his previous point of interest. “We went to see the Echo flowers, and then we went to see that sunflower field. Time flies on moments like that -- I swear I still remember how surreal everything felt, tutorin' Faust, getting to know ya, and then ending up like this after all that."

A drop of water lands on your nose, cold and thin. Sans looks up at the sky at the same time you do, a wall of clouds blanketing the stars. More of them continue to fall -- until it becomes a light drizzle, refreshing to the touch. You both stand up and seek shelter under one of the nearby trees, surroundings growing calmer than before.

“Wanna bring another sunflower home? They’re blooming lots this year.”

You think his question over twice before answering, not wanting to disrupt Toriel’s garden, yet not wanting to turn down his offer, either. There’s a hint of hope present in his tone, though he tries to cover it up with his usual demeanor. “You’re not just using that as an excuse, are you?” you tease, grinning at him. “Bet you’re just a lot more interested in coming up with bad flower puns again. You even flirted with me way back then!”

“I did?” he retorts, letting out a laugh. “Thought I was just being friendly with ya, pal -- Totally didn’t think of it as a date at one point.”

“You’re so corny.” You hold back a smile, hoping to make your comment seem more stern.

“So call me what ya want, but I would’ve gone with sappy.”

As rain continues to fall, you stay close to his side and take a second to look at your phone, time already marking eight.

While it wasn't the most typical way to celebrate after the makeshift wedding, it was the only idea you could come up with. Traveling far just to have your honeymoon was far from a plan at the moment, not only in the sense that you were barely just getting used to your new life, but that the idea of planning big felt overwhelming.

One of the numerous things you liked about your new life, partner, and family was how simple everything was. There wasn't any need for drama or grandeur -- Simply having Mettaton as your boss and having confronted various antagonists to get where you were now was enough for a lifetime. Maybe later, you could think about a bigger way to celebrate, but -- for now -- simply cuddling with the monster next to you while watching rain fall on the lake was enough. Seeing Sans content by your side and Faust grow up healthier and happier was enough, and you feeling the same was enough.

At that thought, you hold the monster closer, a toothy smile showing when he looks at you, confusion in his.

"What's up?"

You try to hold back your urge, yet to now avail.

"The sky," you answer, a laugh interrupting it when he breaks away from your hold.

"Think you can get back at me, huh?” he retorts, snickering. "Remind me to visit those sunflowers
before we go."

You grab his arm and pull him back with you, smile remaining even when he tries not to budge with your actions. "Kidding, kidding." You hold back another laugh, seeing him stop you with the use of his magic, blue surrounding the hand you placed over his arm. "I'm just really happy," you add, keeping your hold on him. "Now let go so I can."

Sans pulls you instead, bringing you into his hold as he rests his face against your neck. Then, he kisses your ear lobe, hugging you tighter afterwards.

"I'm... I'm really happy, too, (Y/N)."
The Mayor

He could not understand as to what made (Y/N) want this life.

Struggles and hardships; suffering and disappointment.

And all for what?

Fixing his tie, he gets a look at himself in the mirror, taking in every little thing that composed him. As he tugs his shirt's collar down to see the marks from his past, he notices he was once like that human, however strange they seemed. He had fought long and hard for this position and done unspeakable things just to maintain it -- both good and bad, the latter most often and prominent. Many like (Y/N) saw hatred in him simply for choosing to keep humans and monsters separate. He had a reason for it, one people like them tended to brush off quickly and declare it as negative. Then again, there were times when his actions got out of hand; that, he was well-aware of.

His original purpose had been to avoid conflict between the two species, yet that plan fell short the moment humans started to befriend monsters, and vice versa. It was foolish to think that would not happen soon, and even foolisher still to expect no opposition from either side -- his side, the most demanding. But to have a human fall for a monster? That was unheard of! Not even the most elden tales and folklore spoke about such a phenomenon. Not that he would care to search every nook and cranny to prove that, but that he trusted that had never happened before -- way before his kind sealed the other away underground.
He dusts his outfit as soon as he's done with his tie, ignoring the door creak and close, most likely the wind messing around with it. Then, he carries on to the mirror, picking up a hair brush and going back to his thoughts.

(Y/N) was headed towards that same path he'd been fearing, and -- at first -- he wanted nothing more than to help them. Yet, the more arguments he had with them, the more that statement changed. He simply could not tolerate their determined -- if not stubborn -- nature. He could also not tolerate how mellow their partner was and how he seemed to have fallen head over heels for them, despite his strong and generally level-headed nature.

It made less sense the more he thought about it!

Feeling something wrap around his neck, panic settles over him. Breathing turns difficult almost as instantly as he sees his own and trusted deputy mayor stand behind him, reflected by the mirror now blurry due to his weakening eyesight.

His thoughts begin to change the more he struggles to break free, for -- as he feels his last bit of breath drawn out from his body -- flashes of green and yellow only remind him of them, himself, and what had led him to agree with a being so soulless, it could not be considered either human or monster any longer. He gasps for air, only making the flower tighten its grip on him, sharp teeth bared tight as it grabs him from all angles, restraining movement as its hold on his neck grows even stronger.

"Even that little goody-two-shoes's smarter than you!" the flower exclaims, laughing when the mayor so much as tries to fight back. "Sleep tight, mayor."

In the end, as everything goes blank, he realizes that -- no matter what path he chose -- he always did had to fight for it. Every step he'd taken to become a mayor had been met with opposition left and right. Even what he'd chosen to study for in college -- way back in his younger years -- met him with conflict, long hours of study and countless, sleepless nights being needed for him to pass, graduate, and become what he was now, and he was soon close to losing.

In the end, his own system of thought didn't make much sense, either -- as so did (Y/N)'s.

Had he realized earlier, he would've made the human's life a little easier.

Heaven knows, it would've done them well.
Jessie

What had they done to make (Y/N) hate them as much as they did?

Better asked, why could they not settle with that life: one with (Y/N) as their spouse, Faust as their son, and two stable jobs to keep their house strong and standing? What made them want more, and what made them so reticent towards seeing monsters at the Surface -- enough to strike conflict between them and (Y/N)?

Their spouse was doing the right thing in helping those monsters out, weren't they? So why did they feel so off-put and fearful by that thought?

Were they scared of them treating their spouse better?

They'd seen the cases their spouse had dealt with, and how kind some of the monsters often were. Even those with sketchy backgrounds seemed to treat (Y/N) with open arms, aiding them at times, even when it was their job as an officer to work for the monsters' benefit instead.

And then that skeleton came along.

Not only had he a younger brother who could cook and treat (Y/N) with as much respect as when they themselves had asked them to move in, but they could also see the same spark in their spouse's eyes and the subtle pep in their step whenever they met with that monster. That monster -- Sam, from what they could recall -- was level-headed yet stern when it came to it; he was everything they wish they could've been, be it to end their relationship with (Y/N) earlier without damaging either of the two parties involved or to try to understand their lifestyle, a more traditional and calm one composed of family and cuddles rather than casual dating and wild nights out. He had been afraid of commitment, yet had learned how to engage in it, something they had failed to. He had been distant and guarded, yet learned to be vulnerable when necessary. They -- on the other hand -- had taken blatant advantage of (Y/N)'s vulnerabilities for the very sake of keeping their own intact.
Divorcing their spouse only to see them move on with a monster had been enough to confirm their fears as true.

Jessie wasn't one for settling down, while (Y/N) was the complete opposite. They dreamt of having a family -- the main reason towards them having chosen to ask over adoption -- and dreamt of a stable home life. Jessie proposing that to them had been enough for their spouse to submit to their increasing wants and requests -- those related to their inability to settle down.

While they had once loved (Y/N), committing to one person for the rest of their life wasn't in them. They weren't polyamorous, but they simply could not stick to home life. Since they were eighteen and (Y/N) sixteen, they had come to enjoy a life of carefree flings and passing crushes, yet -- in part -- they had failed to remind themselves of that when asking their -- now ex -- spouse to move in with them.

Now, as a delirious little flower sucks their last breath, Jessie can only wonder what could've been had they let (Y/N) free earlier in their relationship -- had they let them go and run off with the monsters they feared could take their spouse away from their arms if they chose not to intervene. As the flower squeezes and stings, thorns slicing their skin, they can only take one last breath, regret barely beginning to bubble up, the fire in them dissipating much earlier -- enough for that rising regret to be lost along with their last attempt at breathing.

Finally, everything around them goes blank, the flower's faint, maniac laughs echoing in the background.

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**Flowey**

Two bodies lay on the ground, already cold and stiff. It's a hard process moving them around with only vines to help him, but getting these to the human is worth it. He's certain (Y/N) will agree to be their deputy mayor were they to see what he's done!

He took care over two of the main people responsible for tormenting their life! Now, he sits back for a moment and daydreams, knowing they would most likely feel long indebted to him, seemingly endless years of fear, caution, and hardship now to be made less for the human from today onwards.
Gathering strength, Flowey drags the two bodies with him to the court's parking lot, almost all of them occupied, their owners busy with watching the case unfold.

He stops when he reaches the entrance, debating on how to make it -- be it dramatic or discreet. He considers the human's preferences, yet is allured by the thought of letting everyone see what would now become of people who dared mess with his dear deputy mayor. With two dummies for him to have practiced on, he feels way more than prepared to take on more of (Y/N)'s enemies were these to ever show up.

What stops him is when he sees the scene from behind closed doors, the little slit between them allowing him to peek into the courtroom and see the human still fighting -- still standing and onset on delivering justice the way they saw fit.

If he wanted to convince them, he had to do something more than taking two of their main enemies out -- that, he was positive of. They were stubborn, a trait both good and bad, all depending on the circumstances present.

He could try shaking them up a little -- distracting them from their main goal.

But how could he do that?

The flower stops to think, shaking his head -- roughly -- when he begins to see the face of a friend in (Y/N).

What was he thinking, feeling that way? It wouldn't last long, considering his lack of a soul! Whatever bizarre idea crosses his mind, he scoffs and shakes it off completely. The mere idea he considered them a friend for just an instant makes his insides churn. His eyesight turns blurry, and he's forced to hold back a wave of nausea.

First Chara, then Frisk, and now them?

The first human he could understand having formed a friendship with, but Frisk and (Y/N)?

He wasn't supposed to feel this way anymore!
Frustrated, Flowey hisses and curls up into a ball, petals wilting as he closes his eyes and grits his teeth, enough for his jaw to hurt and snap him out of his overthinking. He breathes in deep and later out, regaining what little stability he has left to continue with his main and prior goal: make (Y/N) his deputy mayor, and nothing more.

Once that goal's marked as complete, he'll be the ruler of his own town -- *everyone* will be forced to obey him!

Looking towards the mayor's body, the flower grins wide, thankful for the chance he was given the second he was assigned that title.

Now, he was the mayor -- the mentor -- and (Y/N) would be his student.

All he needed now was to convince the human and make them see things his way, however difficult and plain impossible of a task it sounded.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, y'all!

Just letting you know the reason over my absence's been due to health-related issues. Here's a link to my Quotev newsfeed for more information: https://www.quotev.com/JuniperJoy101/journal (It should be in the 'Account Information' section of my Journal entries!)

Things should be back to normal now, though!

Take care, everybody, and remember to stay at home. :-}
Laying on the floor, lights off and with the fan set on high, you’re shaken off your daze by the feeling of something cold being placed against your forehead, the bottom of a can, from what you can sense when you shift and open your eyes. You’re met by Sans and a chilled can of soda, one he hands out to you along with a slice of watermelon, almost freezer cold to the touch. You sit up straight and take both items from him, setting the soda next to you and taking the first bite off the fruit.

“What about you?” you ask, watching him sit down next to you. “You’re not gonna eat anything?”

He answers that by blinking one eye socket, magic being summoned out for him to bring another soda into his hold. The sound of it opening resounds throughout the living room, how quiet everything is making even the tiniest noise boom across the area.

You take a second bite off the melon, a thought crossing your mind when you realize he doesn’t have a slice for himself. “Did you have some already?”

The monster turns to your side, taking a sip from his drink before answering, “I . . . haven’t really tried that much fruit, so I dunno how it tastes, actually.”

Your interest piques at his comment. Scooting closer to his side, you offer your slice out to him, smiling after. “I’m taking it was hard to grow fruit down at the Underground? Try some.”

His eye contact falters when you sit right in front of him, watermelon slice still waiting for him. “It’s fine.”
You move even closer to him, bringing the fruit right in front of his line of sight. “C’mon. It’s sweet and tasty.”

Sans tenses up at your encouragement, irises closing when he goes to take a bite off the melon. He keeps them closed until he downs the bite, the faint red on his cheekbones allowing you to understand as to why he’d been so hesitant before. His gaze faces away from yours, until you take his jaw in your hand, take one last bite from the melon, and bring your lips to his teeth, feeling him return the kiss when he loosens up in your hold, the fruit's remnants being left on the floor as you bring him closer. Summer heat becomes unbearable when you follow one kiss after the other, obliging you to break it up.

When you’re apart, his blush is gone, though his irises are bright and jumpy, posture even stiffer than when he went to take that bite. “. . .It tastes good,” he comments, words muttered as he faces the wall.

“Want me to get you a slice?” you ask, a grin shaping your lips. “I’ve gotta have some ready before Faust and his friends get here, anyway.”

He shakes his head, picking up his soda before standing up, face still looking away from yours. “I’ll do that,” he says, distracting himself with the drink. “You’re, uh, naturally hotter in temperature, so you should wait ‘till the heat passes off some more. Don’t wear yourself out.”

Considering the state he’s in, you don’t protest, holding back a laugh as you watch him leave, taking a peek from your sitting position to see him enter the kitchen, still looking as awkward as before. There, he does just as told: takes out the watermelon off the freezer, and pulls out a knife to slice it with. Before doing that though, he stands in front of the sink, opens it, and splashes some water onto his face, cheekbones burning red again. His fluster returns full force, and you hear him let out a huff, shaky and strained.

While he works at the kitchen, you take your soda and open it, chugging half of it down with four gulps, stopping when you hear MK, Frisk, and Faust’s giggling from outside the door, Toriel and Papyrus’s voices being heard from farther away.

You stand from the floor and switch on the light, fixing yourself before getting to open the door, the heat of summer and your earlier actions still burning your skin.

Before you can open the door, you feel someone embrace you from behind, looking in that direction to see the monster hugging you, embarrassment still showing on his face. “What’s wrong?” His hold on you grows stronger when you make that question, one followed up by you
turning around -- still in his hold -- and taking his cheekbone in your hand, looking down to meet with his gaze.

Sans doesn’t shake his hold off of you, a tremble to his voice when he responds, “Can I try that again?”

Confused, it takes you a second to understand what he means with that, a laugh bursting when you process it. “You don’t have to be so nervous, you dummy! Just say the word, or kiss me. I’ll let you know if I ever feel uncomfortable. But as of right now, I still love each and every moment I spend with you.”

“Was it that obvious?” There’s a hint of shame in his question, one he tries to mask off with humour. “I really meant what I said at first, though. I’m still a bit . . . skeptical towards tryin’ out new foods here at the Surface.”

“I know, honey.” You laugh, turning around to meet with him. “You don't have to explain yourself over stuff like this.”

You kiss him again, another chain taking over until you hear knocking at your door, reminding you of Faust and the others’ return.

“Just . . . Just let me know, alright? I know this is your first serious relationship, so you can tell me when you want to try new stuff -- That way, I can make it a better experience for you; for us.”

You spare a final, quick look at him to see his reaction, holding back a smile when you see embarrassment return over his face. “Thanks. . . (Y/N).”

At that, you open the door, Faust ambushing the both of you into a hug as soon as he enters.

While summer once used to be a dreaded, tense time considering how much more time off you had to be around a certain person, being with people you loved more deeply and closely helped make the hot and slow season become livelier, small and uneventful moments like these making it all the worthwhile.
Extra: Winter Vacation

Chapter Notes

Extra takes place after the Eros/Agape Ending!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You take care to look at every detail composing the home, fingers brushing with the couch, worn with time and age. A thin sheet of dust covers almost everything around, a testament to how much time had passed since his last visit. Surprisingly, the kitchen's the cleanest of them all, and there's police tape preventing you from going up the stairs, multiple doors present on the second floor.

"It's. . . the first time I've ever brought someone so close to me here. Hadda known we'd get married, I woulda fought harder to keep this place as mine."

His comment, while solemn, doesn't make you frown. Instead, anger seeps into your thoughts, the thought him and Papyrus had been left without their first home making you wonder over just what had been going on with the background checks you weren't assigned to. Had it been possible, you would've worked your very best to take more cases under your wing and prevent scenarios like these from becoming a frequent reality.

Determination strikes when you see Faust hug the monster -- his father and your husband, two things you were yet to process fully -- and encourage him, what he says next sending waves of uncertainty into your thoughts. "Can't we fight and get it back? You guys did all that just to get married!"

Sans blinks and stays quiet, looking dazed from your perspective. "It's different, bud. This's way harder than anything else we've done."

"Harder than fighting the mayor, a flower, and my ex?" you taunt, a smile showing on your lips. "It's been a year, Sans. I think we can try this out -- Technically, I qualify to work under that department again now that things are settling down."

The monster lets out a shaky breath, irises casting up at the second floor, first at the last door and then at the first one of them all. He closes his eye sockets and huffs, seeming troubled over the concept. "Don't think I'd be strong enough for it, in all honesty," he says, a waver in his tone. "I. . . I tried to do that alone before, and it didn't work out. All my notes, blueprints, and inventions got taken away. The only things I could keep were those books I wrote, and that's 'cuz I had a digital
copy of them on my phone."

Instinctively, you place a hand over your chest, feeling your soul warm up for two. The book he had gifted you had allowed for the two of you to have another child, one you'd been carrying on your soul for the past month. In contrast to human reproduction, spiritual intimacy was needed to form a new soul, said soul who'd take a whole year to form -- three more months compared to your kind. Not only that, but both male and female respectively could carry that soul in theirs. The major and primary requirement for it to be successful was that there had to be sufficient amount of Hope -- something Sans was still working with -- in one of the two souls engaged in the process, and that both had to be in agreement and affection with the other soul.

Long story short, you were carrying another soul in your soul -- as weird as that sounded, and you would have to wait eleven more months to see the new addition to your family. Smiling wider at that thought, you let go of your chest and approach Sans and Faust, hugging the former of the two. "Who says you're gonna do this alone, honey? I'm here, and from the looks of it, Faust and a bunch other people, too. Those things they took away from you were your hard work. As long as it didn't cause any harm to anyone, like . . . like Alphys's experiments did, then I think you should go for it. You're strong enough."

He hugs you back, Faust joining in on the embrace. "You really think so?"

"I do," you reply, kissing his cheekbone. Then, you bring your lips closer to his ear cavity, whispering your next words. "How about we break the law and cross that police tape? After Faust goes off to the inn next door, I mean."

"S'that a double meaning for you wantin' to see my room?" he mutters back, just as quiet as you.

You laugh and shove away from the hug, nudging his shoulder when you're free. "You dork -- You know what I mean with that!"

While Faust seems confused at the two of you engaging in banter, he looks just as happy to be witnessing the event all the same. Now free, he wanders off to the kitchen, where his eyes travel around to witness Papyrus's experiences in cooking. Despite how clean and tidy everything is, there's evidence of his amateurity spread around, from permanent burn marks to broken and chipped utensils. Clearly, he'd made plenty of progress considering he was a chef now.

"Wanna head over to the shop? Faust hasn't eaten anythin' in a while."
You turn back to Sans's side, nodding when you process his question. "Sure," you say, calling Faust back over. "Let's go."

"I'm not hungry yet!"

"Kitchen take away your appetite?" Sans comments, a laugh following after. "I understand, bud."

"It's not that," Faust says, hands on his hips. "I'm just not done exploring Snowdin yet!" His eyes spark as his mouth gapes, an idea appearing to cross with him. "There's also Hotland waiting for us, too -- A- And. . . And the Monster King's old home, too. I. . . I can't rest now!"

You both smile at his excitement, a chuckle being heard from the monster. "Ya ain't goin' nowhere 'till ya have somethin' to eat first. You can't adventure on an empty stomach -- Just ask Frisk and they'll tell ya all about it."

Another idea seems to arrive into Faust's mind at the mention of that name, hope shining on his face. "Can I bring them with me next time?"

"As long as you eat something, dear," you chime in, smile growing when you see Sans grin at your intervention.

"Smooth," he comments, winking.

Surely enough, Faust is convinced. He rushes off out of the house before either one of you can say anything about it, the sound of snow crunching growing fainter as he goes. When you're both left alone, Sans places his hand over where your soul would be, looking up at you afterwards. "How's it going? Hurt anywhere?"

His questions -- while silly, considering how little development the soul's had -- are understandable, how grave yours was a year ago enough for you to ease his worries down. "It's fine, honey," you answer, holding his hand. "Feels a little warmer now that I'm looking after two souls, but it's a different kind of warmth compared to that time I got hurt."

He nods, kissing your lips. "I'm glad." Those words are just as calid as your soul and the one still forming, the light in his irises matching with it.
The following extra was inspired by one of my readers here! She'd mentioned about wanting to see a scene where the reader and Sans would have a second child in the family, and seeing as following readers' suggestions was what made this rewrite happen, I figured I'd add that in here, haha!

To explain, one of my old readers in the 2015 version of this story said she wanted to see a marriage happen. It didn't happen in the first version, but here it did, aye. ;-)))

Take care and watch out for COVID! Make sure to follow safety precautions, both for your and everyone's benefit.

Stay safe, y'all!!
Final Extra: The Play

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Script: The Amalgamation (Or simply, a mashup of Shakespearean plays, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, werewolf movies, and the themes of Frankenstein by Mary Shelley.)

Act 3, Scene 7: Moonlit Dreaming

Scene: The green roof of a castle, red roses on the left, white irises on the right, and a picnic table at a corner.

Enter, Monster.

Enter, Human.

Music: Oh! One True Love

(The human, clad in a white (dress/suit), takes a moment to rest at the picnic table, exhausted from the post-wedding festivities. The monster, clad in a grey suit, watches them, stricken and muted by their beauty. Moonlighting shines over them, adding extra glow to their assets.)

Human: It is quite a lovely night, is it not? Come, sit with me, dearest.

Monster, remaining in place: I can't. I need to go.

Human: Why is it? I thought this was meant to be the night of our wedding! Why the rush?

Monster, looking at the time: It's almost midnight. If I stayed past that hour, then. . .

Human, laughing: Then, what? Your carriage will turn back into a pumpkin?
**Music: Chill**

**Monster:** Did you forget what day it is today?

**Human:** No. It... It could not possibly be!... Unless- (They gasp.) It is a full moon tonight, is it not? Oh, woe be our timing! Had I known our wedding night would have fallen on a full moon, I would have changed the date. (They stand up and approach him, taking his hand.) This will not do! I will make sure to control whatever changes the moonlight brings upon you. (They kiss him.) Tell me, dearest, did you feel anything strange just now?

**Monster, shaking his head:** No, only the jolt of my soul when feeling your warmth.

**Human, clasping their hands and smiling:** Then, thank the Heavens, you are fine! The moon is already on full display, and yet you- (They scream, falling to the ground.) Goodness! What has gotten into you, pushing me to the grou- (Stopping, they gasp, looking up to see ferocious irises staring down at them, a low growl leaving the monster's teeth. The eyes of a lover are overcome by ire and a desire to hurt, the monster they knew of gone.) Please, snap out of it, Sans! You are... You are scaring me!

*Enter, Monster King with two guards.*

**Monster King:** Halt, beast! Are you so shallow as to not remember who your precious (wife/husband) is? You have been together since years ago! Look into their eyes and see the love behind them, and you will be ashamed to see the fear you have caused in them.

**Guard 1, gripping his spear:** Shall I intervene, My King?

**Guard 2, joining him:** We can hold him back!

**Monster King, shaking his head:** Not yet. I wish to see to what extent he is capable of causing hurt. If he does not know how to control what his creator made him out to be, then I see no sense in letting him have free will to marry and have children.
Human, facing the Monster King: Are you implying Doctor W. D. did this? Why would he create a beastly side near incapable of taming? (They struggle, the Monster's weight growing heavier on them. He does not attack, however, uncertainty replacing the blind anger in his irises.) Heavens! Does he hate me that much? And here I thought Jessie, Flowey, and the Mayor had been enough of a handful for my life!

Monster, shaking: (Y/N). . . (He grumbles unintelligible words, booming into chuckles right after.) I'm not sure how I ended up with someone like you. (He regains clarity, removing some of his weight off the Human as he gazes longingly at them. Then, he cups their cheek and kisses their lips.) I'm eternally grateful for your existence. I'll work hard to control this side of mine and give the finger at my creator as payback. He may've given me this side, but I'll make sure to control it up until the point it'll stop existing for good. (He kisses them again, more passionate, and stands up, offering a hand out to the human.) Shall we go now? We still have time to enjoy our wedding night before Faust gets home.

Human, taking his hand: Certainly, my dearest. (They embrace him, holding on tight.) Where to? I have heard of the most splendid beach offering service to both humans and monsters alike. There is a hotel next to it, too.

Monster, blushing: The way you say such things makes it sound more than it is. (He looks away, embarrassed.) But it does sound good. Let's go then, cupcake.

Human: I thought you had forgotten that nickname already.

Monster: Anything related to you's hard to forget -- too amazing for it.

Human, laughing: You flatter me, dearest.

Monster, grinning: It's nothing but the truth, cupcake.

Exit, Human and Monster, hand-in-hand.

Monster King: Ah, to be young and in love! Let us hope their marriage turns fruitful. It is the first time I have ever seen such a lovestruck look in Sans's gaze.
Guard 1: Should we lock this place from now on? I am afraid he would have not dwelled over whether to hurt the human or not, had we not chosen to intervene.

Guard 2: Foolish man! Did you not see how the human managed to break him out of that spell? Their love for each other is strong. If it had not been that way, blood would have been surely spilled tonight.

Guard 1: Say what you wish, but I stand by my point of view.

Monster King, harrumphing: Now, now. Let us not be hasty. Just like Jessie proved who they really were to be, it is up to both (Y/N) and Sans to show to what extent their relationship has gone, and just how pure it has become. (He huffs, relieved.) Now, let us be going! We have a busy day ahead of us tomorrow, making the human co-ambassador of our kind and whatnot.

Exit, Monster King.

Guard 1: I hope to one day have as much faith as you do, My King, for I am still doubtful of these choices of yours.

Guard 2: While I agree it is good to be sceptical, cheer up a little, lad! I am sure the King would want to see his own employees happier.

Exit, Guard 1 and Guard 2.

Music: Error

Enter, Doctor W. D. Gaster.

End of Act 3, Scene 7: Moonlit Dreaming

Chapter End Notes
That's all for this story, folks -- Hope you enjoyed this lil' thing, haha!

Once again, thank you for reading until here. I hope you enjoyed this fanfic just as much as I enjoyed writing and sharing it with you.

Take care and stay safe, everyone!

Feel free to check my Quotev/Wattpad account if you're interested in other content related to this story. For now, the spinoff/prelude to Save Point along with some additional shorts are only on there, but I do plan to pass them here soon, as well. :-)

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