The World, I'll Turn It Inside Out

A couple extra calculations and a clean shot is really all Five needs. He was a shitty father anyway.

OR;

Five figures out that the best way to stop the apocalypse is to kill his father. This comes with fringe benefits, like his siblings' happiness.
fic title from the song "don't stop me now" by queen

chapter 1 title from the song "istanbul" by they might be giants (the tua soundtrack SLAPS)

this is the entirely self-indulgent au fic we wrote where five realizes that to stop the apocalypse, he just has to kill one man: reginald hargreeves. this way, everyone gets to grow up relatively normal, at least for them.

featuring a transgender five, a modern dave, a luther that isn't a complete tool, a nancy drew-esque aspiring teenage detective eudora, and hugs for everyone!

See the end of the work for more notes
After the life that he’s had, Five likes to think that he knows a lot. It’s been a relatively eventful, satisfying life, he thinks, even after growing up alone in a post-apocalyptic wasteland where the only entertainment was his sister’s autobiography on how fucked up his family is, with an entire chapter specifically dedicated to telling the world what a know-it-all he is. Eh. He’s had forty-five years to get over it, and he doesn’t hold Vanya’s words against her anymore. No. He just misses her. Misses them all.

“Am I crazy, Dolores?” he asks the mannequin, who sits in her armchair in their little apartment, staring at him. His lips twitch upward in the mockery of a smile. “Don’t answer that.” He loosens his tie around his neck and undoes a couple of the buttons on his dress shirt as he sits across from her, rolling his left ankle to soothe the aching joint. He’s fifty-eight now. And he hates to admit it, but he’s getting far too old for this kind of shit. Really, he wasn’t looking for a fight, but the Commission wasn’t particularly interested in letting him leave with the file he wanted, so he did what he had to do.

Sighing, he takes the file he’s stolen out of his suit jacket and sets it down in his lap, flipping it open and starting to read. Because he knows what the future holds for his siblings, for Mom, for Pogo. He knows their fates. But he doesn’t know how the apocalypse happens. And this file—it contains all of the answers he needs before he can fix it.

He has to hurry, of course. He knows the Commission will send people after him, and although he isn’t all that concerned about himself—he does have family to think about.

So he speeds through the apocalypse file, eyes widening more and more with every word he reads. Quickly, he realizes what he has to do. “I’ll see you in the past, Dolores,” he says a soft, sad farewell, his heart aching in his chest. “You’ll be safer this way. I promise,” Five tells her, gently touching her arm. “I promise I’ll come for you,” he says, “and we’ll get to meet again. Well. You’ll meet me. I’ll already love you. And we’ll start over. And we’ll get another lifetime together. I promise.”

Taking a deep breath, Five tucks the file into his suit jacket, and he focuses.

Hopefully, he thinks, as he feels the space-time continuum tear open for him to jump, his calculations were correct.

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He lands in the past, in a dark alleyway in the middle of the night. His hands are scraped and dirty from where he’d fallen to the ground, but he wipes them off on the back of his pants and takes stock of his situation. “Shit,” Five swears to himself, looking down at his thirteen year-old body. His thirteen year-old pre-transition body. “Shit,” he repeats, clenching his fists against the wave of dysphoria that washes over him like ice. Arms crossed tight against his chest, which he notices, to his despair, is not flat anymore, he walks out of the alley and looks at the newspaper stand, where the man working there gives him an odd look, but says nothing. The date is February 4th, 2006, and his siblings should be sixteen now. He’s about three years later than he wanted to be, but this should still work out alright. He pats his now too-big suit jacket, and finds that the file is still there. That’s one good thing, he thinks, scrunching his nose up at the killer headache he currently has. The man at the newspaper stand furrows his eyes at Five, who glares back at him until he looks away.

Five sighs. He needs coffee to deal with this shit.
So he walks and he walks, until he finds the little donut shop that he and his siblings used to sneak out to in the middle of the night, where they would eat donuts until they puked. He smiles at the memory, and walks inside.

After sitting at the counter, the tow truck driver graciously offers to pay for his coffee. The woman working the counter misgenders him, and he takes a deep breath as he remembers that particular sting, familiar but distant after years of hormone therapy granted to him by the Commission. But he says nothing, and waits quietly for his coffee. Idly, he comments to the tow truck driver, “Don’t remember this place being such a shithole.”

Later, after the tow truck driver has left, and the men with guns converge on him, he sighs again, and sets down his coffee, preparing for another fight. “I thought I’d have more time,” he says. Ironically, he never has quite enough time.

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In the aftermath, Five digs through the pockets of the hired guns and takes their wallets. Nothing interesting, but cash never hurts to have on hand.

The bigger rifles were not going to be much help in this body, but one of the other guys has a handgun, light and well balanced. He doesn’t have gloves to hold it yet, but the diner has napkins printed with pink smiling donuts with sprinkles, so he makes do.

He leaves the premises quickly. After all, he has a mission, and he wouldn’t want to get caught before he can complete it.

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Five, as much as he doesn’t like to admit it, can be a sentimental bastard sometimes.

After all, what else could explain him standing in a locked department store, in front of the mannequins?

“Hey, Dolores,” he says softly. “It’s good to see you again. How’s the twenty-first century treating you?” He chuckles. “Yeah. You might not know who I am now, but I know who you are. I’ve missed you, this past day.” Five shakes his head, hands in his pockets. “I made you a promise, in the future. And I’m here to tell you that I’m going to make good on that promise.” He sighs. “Yeah, yeah, I know. Look, I’ve got just one more job left, and then I’ll explain everything. You won’t have to work anymore, we can retire quietly, no one will even question it. Just give me another month—”

The sound of bullets breaks through the stillness of the store, and Five shouts, “Dolores! It’s okay, I’ve got you,” and pulls her down from the display, cursing the Commission underneath his breath. “I would have appreciated at least another goddamn hour. Where’s a bureaucratic nightmare when you need one?”

He doesn’t want to take the gun out from where it’s tucked neatly into his waistband just yet—he only has so much ammunition. But if there was one thing the old man was good for, it was teaching him that he could be deadly even without it.

He knows how people like these two work—hell, he’d been one of them for long enough. The unexpected is expected; it’s just part of the job. So he does the expected.

He can teleport, after all. So he reaches out and steals a pair of gloves off the accessories rack, holds Dolores tight in his arms, and he just fucking leaves. He’s got things to do, terrible fathers to kill. No
time to waste.

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“Hello, old man,” Five greets as he teleports into Sir Reginald Hargreeves’ office, gloved hands wrapped around the gun he’s pointing at his father. He’s been in the past for a mere two days, and it astounds him how much has stayed the same since he left. “Did you miss me?”

“Number Five,” Dad breathes out, eyes wide. “You’ve returned.”

Five laughs, a bit hysterically. “You know what’s funny, old man? I spent a lot of time in the future, and even more time working for this organization that works to keep the timeline intact, and you know what I realized? You were a shitty father in every single possible timeline. And trust me, I checked.”

“So what, Number Five?” Dad says, looking mildly disappointed. “You’ve come to kill me because I didn’t hug you enough as a child? How boring.”

The corner of Five’s lips twitch upward into a humorless smile. “You know the apocalypse that’s going to happen in the future? The one you’re trying so hard to stop?” Five revels in the way Dad’s eyes widen, even if it’s just a fraction. The last time he’d managed to surprise Dad like this was when he came out as trans, he thinks. “I crunched the numbers, and you know what I found? The reason the apocalypse happens? It’s you.”

Dad’s mouth opens, and the man swallows once, face carefully blank. “You know, Number Five,” he says, staring down the barrel of the gun, “if it’s any consolation, you always were my favorite.”

The gun doesn’t have a silencer, so they will hear the shot and find the body quickly. He dies instantly anyway—suffering might have been enjoyable, but the mission required there be no chance of him being caught.

So Five has to move fast. He takes Dad’s red notebook off his desk, and carefully places the gun in his father’s hand, making it look like a suicide.

“Master Hargreeves?” he hears Pogo call worriedly from outside the office. “Dad?” That must be Luther, Five realizes.

But he can’t stay. Swallowing hard, Five swiftly teleports out of the office. Mission complete.

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The thing is about the Commission is, they really don’t know when to give up. Hazel and Cha-Cha were decent, sure, but they knew he was better. After all his time, he would have thought they knew better.

The motel was dingy and somewhat of an eyesore. “The Commission’s really bad about remembering the inflation rate, aren’t they?” Five muses, the gun in his hand trained almost lazily at Cha-Cha.

“Just like cutting corners where they can,” Hazel mumbles.

Five chuckles. “Yes, I remember. I’m glad I got out when I did.”

“You didn’t get out of shit, Five,” Cha-Cha grinds out, jaw clenched. But she knows better than to try anything.
“Ah, but I think I did. You know, your briefcase isn’t going to be very much help anymore. Who knew getting run over by a bus could do it so much damage?” He glances over to the open, clearly empty vent where they’d so sloppily hidden it. “Some professionals you guys turned out to be. Breaking protocol, left and right. Shame on you.”

Cha-Cha scoffs, and Hazel’s face pales.

“Goddamnit, Hazel, if you’d just held onto it—”

“I told you, my wrist—”

“Who gives a shit about your wrist, you big baby—”

“Why didn’t they make it a fucking backpack—”

“God, shut up,” Five cuts in smoothly. “I really don’t have the time to listen to you two idiots bicker like an old married couple.” Both agents immediately start to object, but Five holds up one hand, and they stop. “Oh, I’m so sorry. I forgot. You know how old age addles the brain—Hazel, you’re actually seeing that woman at Griddy’s Donuts, aren’t you?” Five watches Hazel’s face pale again, and he grins.

“You’re doing what?” Cha-Cha hisses at him, and Hazel swallows nervously.

“I love her,” he defends.

Five smiles softly. “That’s sweet and all, but it’s not why I’m here. The thing is, you two,” he says, leaning forward and gesturing at them with the gun, “you failed your mission. I’ve already killed Sir Reginald Hargreeves.”

Hazel starts to sweat, and Cha-Cha scowls.

“But, in doing so, I’ve stopped the apocalypse. It was simple math. Dear old Dad was the biggest factor in this whole equation. And,” he continues, “I’ve destroyed your briefcase. What if the apocalypse had happened?”

He pauses to look the two of them in the eyes. “You really think the Commission would have saved you? You know it as well as I do, hell, you said it yourself—they’re cutting corners. They don’t care about you, they’ve got twenty more where you came from. You would’ve died along with the rest of humanity. And poor, sweet Agnes,” he says looking at Hazel, who looks like he’s having a heart attack. “She would have gone up into flames too. And for what? The timeline?” He scoffs. “We make our own destiny,” he says. “At least, I want to. What about you?”

Hazel and Cha-Cha look at each other, both breathing heavily. Cha-Cha turns back to Five. “What do you want?” she asks.

Five smiles. “I want to make a truce.”

“A truce?” Hazel repeats, incredulous.

“Yes. I have what I want. The two of you can make lives of your own, away from the Commission now that the briefcase is gone, and thanks to me, the apocalypse is now a non-issue. You don’t come after me or mine, and I won’t kill the two of you.”

“And what if the Commission decides to send people after us? What then?” Cha-Cha asks.
“As if you’re important enough,” Five scoffs. “But if they do, I’ll keep them off your backs. Pinky swear,” he tells them, smirking.

Hazel nods then, suddenly and decisively. “Alright. Truce. I just want Agnes to be safe.”

Cha-Cha rolls her eyes, and lets out a long-suffering sigh. “Do we have any other choice?”

Five grins like that cat that caught the canary. “Pleasure doing business with you two.”

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The compound is even weirder than he’d remembered, from the outside. The old man had this much property in the city just lying around? And why did no one protest the strange crumbling roof of the the old fashioned observatory peeking about the walls into their shiny city? He really did have far too much money.

He sets Dolores down on the steps, ignoring the fresh wave of stares from passing pedestrians.

The thing is, whatever Five used to rationalize his choices, it all really boils down to one fact: he misses his family, dysfunctional as they might be. He hasn’t seen them in forty-five years. He’s waited long enough.

After taking in a deep breath, he raises one hand to knock at the door. And then he waits just a little bit longer for someone to answer. Who will it be? he wonders. Allison? Ben? He’s not even sure who he’s hoping for.

There’s a young voice, muffled through the door, and words sounding vaguely like, “I’ll get it!”

Then the door is open, and he sees her like he remembers her from that day so long ago—uniform on, hair long, bangs across her forehead. Dad’s words from the journal rise, unbidden, to the front of his mind, but he shuts them out and he smiles at her, a real smile.

“Hello, Vanya. It’s good to be home.”
there doesn't seem to be anyone around

Chapter Summary

The gang has some questions. Also, Vanya can't sleep.

Chapter Notes

ah! we just want to thank all of you for the comments and kudos on the last chapter :o we're so happy people like this !!! thanks for reading

chapter title from "i think we're alone now" by tiffany (yes we're just using titles from the songs in the soundtrack but that soundtrack is so good and we regret nothing)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hello, Vanya. It’s good to be home.”

Vanya stares at him, unblinking. Five. Five is here, looking exactly the same as the day he disappeared. She tries to speak, but the words won’t come out—just a soft noise like a sob, from the back of her throat.

“Hey, hey, Vanya it’s okay, don’t—” he starts to say, looking mildly uncomfortable with her emotional state, but she just cuts him off with a hug, because it’s Five, he’s alive and he’s okay and she needs to hold him, make sure he’s real and not some cruel joke the universe is playing on her. She squeezes him tight. Her brother. She can hardly believe it.

But then, he awkwardly tries to give her a pat on the back that is meant to be consoling, and it’s so obviously him that she lets out a teary laugh.

There’s a sound in the hall behind her, but she doesn’t move to release him even after her siblings’ confused exclamations.

Her thoughts are overcome with the knowledge that he’s really here, really home. Her brother is home.

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“It’s been three years,” Luther says indignantly, crossing his arms over his chest. “Where were you?”

Five looks up from the peanut butter and marshmallow sandwich he is currently making, and shrugs nonchalantly. “It’s been a lot longer than that. And I was in the future. It’s shit, by the way.”

“Called it!” That’s Klaus, Five notes, curled up on top of the table, peering curiously at him.

“And… what, you just figured out how to get back?” Ben asks, and Five gives them all a wry grin, taking a vicious bite from his sandwich.
“Yup. I had to project my consciousness forward into a suspended quantum state version of myself that exists across every possible instance of time,” Five explains.

There’s a silence.

“What the fuck,” Diego mutters. “This is fucking insane. What the fuck does that even mean?”

Five rolls his eyes. “You know, I really haven’t missed being the only one in a ten-mile radius with working brain cells.”

“Not true,” Klaus interjects, mock-offended. “Ben and I share one.” Ben calmly reaches over and shoves Klaus off the table with one hand. He lands on the ground with a squawk, and Diego snickers under his breath.

Allison shakes her head, cutting in as Klaus rolls around on the floor. “Okay, hold on, how long were you in the future?”

“Forty-five years.”

“So, what,” Vanya murmurs quietly, still clearly shocked by the reappearance of her missing brother, “you’re fifty-eight years-old?”

“No,” Five says, trying his best to be patient and failing miserably, “My consciousness is fifty-eight, but my body is apparently thirteen again.” He chuckles to himself. “Guess Dolores was right. She did say my calculations were off.”

All six of Five’s siblings raise their eyes at him. “Is. Is that,” Diego gestures vaguely in Dolores’ general direction where she is perched on top of the kitchen counter, “Is that Dolores?” Diego asks, voice oddly strained.

Five narrows his eyes at them. “Yeah. What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Buddy, I don’t know how to tell you this, but that’s a fucking mannequin,” Klaus says as delicately as he can manage, which is to say, not delicately at all. “You sure you’re alright? Don’t have any screws loose, or anything?” He reaches towards Five’s head like he’s going to shake him to check.

Ben, because he’s the best out of all of them, elbows Klaus in the stomach. Klaus topples over again.

“You’re my favorite,” Five tells Ben, and Ben beams. The rest of them roll their eyes.

Klaus groans from his position on the floor. “No, no one help me up. I’m perfectly fine here. This is where I live now.”

Five hums thoughtfully, picking up the newspaper on the table. “February 20th,” he reads the date on the paper, frowning. “Guess I missed the funeral.”

“Wait, how’d you know about that?” Luther, again.

If Five rolls his eyes any harder, he swears he’s going to give himself a migraine. “What part of the future do you not understand?” He shakes his head, taking another irritated bite out of his sandwich. “Suicide, huh?”

“Yeah,” Diego says.

“No,” Luther bites back, glaring over at his brother. Diego, rolling his eyes like this was all too common, pulls out a knife like he’s about to throw it at Luther. Instead, he stabs it into the table,
clearly annoyed. Luther’s mouth opens like he’s about to say something disapproving, but luckily enough, Five cuts in.

“Glad to see nothing’s changed,” Five comments, vaguely amused. But as he watches his siblings interact, he can’t help but feel a warmth spread through his chest at his own statement. His siblings are still his siblings; they haven’t changed since he left. God, he really did miss these idiots.

Allison sighs. “Come on, Luther. He just got back, we can discuss your little conspiracy theory later.”

Diego purses his lips, eyebrows knitted together as he forcefully yanks his knife out of the table to point it at Luther. “This asshole thinks one of us killed him.”

Five bursts out laughing and ignores the faint pang of guilt from lying to his siblings in his chest. Luther frowns disapprovingly. All he ever does is frown disapprovingly. Five wonders if his face is stuck like that. “Really? One of you? Or do you mean just you?” he asks Diego. “Because somehow I doubt he suspects Ben.”

“It’s true,” Ben says solemnly, face carefully blank. “I would never.”

“You’ve never done anything wrong in your entire life, and we love you,” Klaus nearly trips over himself to reassure his brother, and Ben beams again, clearly trying not to laugh as the corner of his mouth twitches upward.

Vanya giggles into her hand, and some of the tension in the room is alleviated.

Luther still frowns disapprovingly, but at this point, that doesn’t really mean much. Five thinks it’s rather disappointing that out of all the things that have changed since he got back, one thing that’s stayed the same is Luther and that stick up his ass.

Ah, well. There’s always hope for the new, apocalypse-free future.

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Leaving the lights on for Five, leaving food out, it had become a kind of nighttime ritual for Vanya. It made her feel like she was helping, somehow, like something she could do might save some part of this family. She was ordinary compared to her siblings—but this? This she could do.

Now, she’s not sure what she’s supposed to do.

So she’s awake at two in the morning, walking downstairs in their too-still house, automatically skipping the third and seventeenth steps because they’re the most likely to creak.

She goes to the kitchen almost on autopilot, with some vague notion of tea, an idea that comes to her in an inner voice that sounds suspiciously like Pogo.

She freezes when she sees Five sitting in the living room with that mannequin by his side—and really, why didn’t they follow that line of questioning further? His back faces her, and he's so perfectly still that she isn’t entirely sure he’s actually awake.

She starts to back out quietly, not wanting to disturb him, but he turns, catching sight of her before she can slip away.

“Hello, Vanya,” he says, sipping at a cup of coffee. “Couldn’t sleep?”
She shakes her head. “You know,” she begins, not quite cognizant of what she’s doing, “I used to leave the lights on for you. I kind of thought—” she breaks off, laughing a little. “It feels weird to say this out loud.”

Five watches her quietly and patiently, his eyes softening at the look on her face. “It’s okay. I tried,” he says, swallowing hard, “everything I could think of to get back to you guys. And when—when I first went into the future and got stuck. It was you. You were the first person I called for,” he confesses, looking down into his mug. He barks out a short, bitter laugh. “I think it’s safe to say this is fucked up for the both of us.”

Vanya sighs. “I was scared that if everything looked empty, or like we’d all left somehow, that you’d just—leave again. I couldn’t let that happen.” She thinks back to what he’d eaten earlier, and smiles softly. “I even left those disgusting sandwiches you like out for you to find.”

He snorts. “You ate them with me.”

“Because you’re my brother,” she blurts out, swallowing down the lump in her throat. Hesitantly, she walks over to him and sits on the couch at his side, bumping her knee against his. “I really missed you,” she says, her eyes watering. Damn, she thinks. She told herself she wasn’t going to cry.

“Yeah,” Five murmurs, reaching over with one warm, solid hand and holding hers. “You’re my sister. I missed you, too.”

She’s really, really glad he’s home.

Chapter End Notes

sorry this chapter is so short, you guys, but we promise that the next chapter is going to be longer and things will get fun! ;)


dancin' to the rhythm in our heart and soul

Chapter Summary

“Why does it matter when we get up anymore? I mean, Dad’s dead.” Luther looks suddenly and righteously furious, and opens his mouth to speak, but Five barrels on before he can say anything. “Oh, I’m sorry, were you six actually planning to wake up at the asscrack of dawn for the rest of your lives?”

Chapter Notes

it's been a couple weeks since we posted last, but this chapter was super long and a lot for us to get done. it's longer than the last two chapters combined, so hopefully that makes up for the kind of late posting even though we never actually said we had a schedule :/

chapter title from "saturday night" by bay city rollers

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The best thing about the apocalypse was the utter lack of alarm clocks.

Reginald, in his quest to create his merry little band of perfectly obedient child soldiers, had their entire morning routine down to a military style of efficiency.

The alarm would go off at five in the morning, every morning, on the dot, allowed to ring no more that twice before being turned off. They were all expected to be in the shower exactly seven minutes after the first chime, the water allowed to run for no more than ten minutes. Then it was in uniform and down to breakfast, held in silence while they all listened to one of those insane records dear old Dad had decided were enriching their minds.

But that routine hasn’t been in his muscles since Five was actually thirteen years old.

The alarms still go off, two sharp rings that make Five groan and shift in bed, then silence. Then, the scuffling of movement muffled by doors, the sound of the pipes with water. Five rolls over in bed and falls back asleep.

Five gets up at seven, because he wants to, takes a long shower because the apocalypse didn’t exactly have good water pressure, tugs a binder over his chest, and wears the uniform because he has no other clothes in the house.

He teleports himself to the breakfast table, because, well, he can teleport. Why would he not teleport everywhere?

He’s greeted with food on the table and all six of his siblings sat around the table, eating. All of them startle when he suddenly shows up.
“You’re late,” Luther finally says, frowning and narrowing his eyes. Five pauses in the middle of lifting a fork to his face to roll his eyes.

“Leave him alone, Luther,” Allison says, scowling. “Five just got back yesterday. He’s probably exhausted.”

Five snorts. “Thanks, Allison, but more importantly, why does it matter when we get up anymore? I mean, Dad’s dead.” Luther looks suddenly and righteously furious, and opens his mouth to speak, but Five barrels on before he can say anything. “Oh, I’m sorry, were you six actually planning to wake up at the asscrack of dawn for the rest of your lives?”

Klaus leans back in his chair, letting out a cackle. “I think I like you better now than I did when you were actually thirteen.”

“Well,” Ben says, almost timidly, “What are we supposed to do, then?”

“Up to you,” Five says, shrugging nonchalantly.

There is silence in the room, save for the sound of that goddamn record still playing. Five had seen a lot of dictators throughout his time with the Commission, all of whom had their own ideas about indoctrination. Reginald’s methods would have blown them all away.

“We could…” Allison says hesitantly, as if afraid to show her enthusiasm, “go to the mall?”

“Allison!” Luther protests, and all six of them simultaneously roll their eyes at him.

“Ooh,” Klaus ignores Luther, “I could use some new skirts.”

Allison raises one eyebrow at Klaus. “You mean, you’ve decided to stop stealing mine.”

“Who said anything about that?” Klaus grins wickedly.

“I want a Gameboy,” Ben confesses quietly, then considers. “Also, I should probably make sure Klaus stays out of trouble.”

“Hey!” Klaus interjects. “I resent that remark.”

“What about you, Vanya?” Five asks. “You should go with them.”

“Uh. Yeah, sure,” she says quietly.

“Great,” Five says. “I’ll be with Mom if you need me. Please, don’t need me.” He disappears with a flash of blue, leaving an uncomfortable silence in his wake.

Allison glances down at her uniform. “I’m not wearing this if we’re going out. Give me like, five minutes.”

“Wait, we’re going now?” Vanya asks, voice nervous.

Luther stands up. “I’m not going anywhere.” He glares disapprovingly at his siblings. “Neither should you.”

“Oh, shove it Luther.” Diego rolls his eyes. “Let them do whatever they want.”

Luther raises an eyebrow. “Are you going, too, then?”
Diego shakes his head, and Luther looks relieved for a split second until he says, “I have better shit to do. Besides, I already have clothes.”

“You don’t have clothes, you have fetish wear,” Klaus shoots back, and Diego twitches, scowling, but he leaves without another word.

Ben snickers under his breath. “It is fetish wear!” he giggles, and Luther just sighs, settling back into his chair, arms crossed, brooding silently.

Allison returns in a cute new outfit, and the four of them leave.

“You know, I still don’t think you guys should—” Luther starts to say, looking up. “Guys? Guys? They—They’re already gone, aren’t they?”

“It would appear that way, Master Luther,” Pogo replies dryly.

Luther sighs. Then he blinks, the silence awkward and palpable.

“So, uh. Pogo. How have you been?”

Pogo almost rolls his eyes.

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Allison glances nervously at her sister. She hasn’t spoken to her directly in a long, long time. A year, maybe? God.

Of course, she’s never really been close with any of her siblings, Luther excluded, but shame fills her stomach when she realizes how little she knows about Vanya. Ben and Klaus had always been a duo, she had Luther with her, and Diego had Mom, but who did Vanya have? Especially after Five disappeared. She shakes her head, and resolves to get to know her sister on this trip.

“So,” Allison begins, and Vanya seems to startle a little bit, her hands curling into fists like she’s trying not to fidget. Her eyes are wide, like she can’t believe Allison is actually talking to her, but then she smiles a bit, soft and sweet. “What did you want to get?”

“Um,” Vanya murmurs, “maybe some shirts?”

Out of the corner of her eye, she notices Ben and Klaus have suddenly disappeared from their side, but she thinks they can take care of each other, and doesn’t worry about it too much.

“Okay!” Allison says, glad to have a specific task to focus on. She scanned the mall for a place to start.

“And—um—” Vanya broke off again, still looking nervous. “We could get something to eat? Later?” she says, hesitant.

Allison grins. “Great!” she says, a little too cheerful, but it’s fine. They walk into one of the big departments stores, and Allison immediately walks over to a pretty, floral blouse. “This is cute, isn’t it?” she asks, but gets no response. Confused, she looks around until she sees Vanya, staring over at the button-ups in the men’s section. “Hey,” she says, getting her sister’s attention, “do you want to get some of those?”

Vanya looks at her nervously, and then nods. “Is that okay?”

Allison lets out a short laugh. “Of course it is. If Klaus gets to wear our skirts all the time, I don’t see
the problem with you wearing men’s button-ups. Come on,” she says, reaching out to take Vanya’s hand and lead her over to the shirts. “Pick out a few you like, and then we’ll go get some ice cream or something,” she orders, and Vanya gives her a grateful smile and goes to do as Allison said.

As Allison and her sister walk around a bit, she suddenly starts to feel like there are eyes on her, and she looks around. When she looks behind her, she sees a teenage boy staring, surprisingly enough, at Vanya. She shakes her head and ignores it.

After shopping around a bit, the two girls carry their bags stuffed with their new clothes and run out of the store, giggling. Allison doesn’t remember the last time she heard her sister so happy. “Hey,” Allison says as they walk into the food court, “if you go buy the ice cream, I’ll get us seats. You know what flavor I like.”

“All right,” Vanya replies, and runs off to the mall’s ice cream stand. Allison finds a seat nearby and sets all of their things down before taking a seat. As she sits there, waiting, she sees the same teenage boy staring at Vanya again, and frowns. Had he followed them through the mall? There’s something scarily intense in his eyes that Allison doesn’t like, so she gets up quickly and makes her way over toward him. He suddenly sees Allison, and the two make eye contact as she gets closer to him.

“Why are you staring at my sister?” she asks, frowning, arms crossed across her chest. The boy’s mouth opens to speak, but he is cut off by Vanya stopping at her side. “Allison,” Vanya says, smiling, “What’s up? I got the ice cream, strawberry, your favorite.” The boy just stares at her. “Um, hi,” she greets, scratching the back of her neck awkwardly.

“Hello,” he replies, still staring at Allison’s sister.

Allison narrows her eyes at him. “Why have you been following us? Why were you staring at my sister like that?”

He swallows, looking a bit nervous. “My name is… Leonard. I—I’m just a fan.” Vanya raises her eyebrows in shock.

Allison frowns, and then she says, “Of Vanya? But she’s ordinary.” As soon as she says it, she knows it’s the wrong thing to say. Vanya rears back, hurt. Allison sighs, “Vanya, that’s not what I —”

“Whatever, Allison,” Vanya says quietly, sullen. Then she looks at this Leonard, who Allison really Does Not Like, and back at her sister, something akin to fierce determination burning in her eyes. “You know what? I think I’m gonna hang out with Leonard. You can have my ice cream. It’s at our table,” she says. “Let’s go,” Vanya says to him, walking away, and Leonard follows after a quick moment of shock.

Allison just stands there, shaking her head. She has a bad feeling about this. She sighs, wondering if she should follow them, but ultimately decides to head back to the table.

Vanya will be fine, right?

***

Ben quietly listens to Allison chat with Vanya, their conversation a little stilted given that they aren’t exactly close. But Vanya is smiling in a way he hasn’t seen in a while, and it makes him happy.

Suddenly, he realizes that Klaus has disappeared, and his stomach drops as he looks around, frantic. “Bro?” he calls out, glancing around wildly, and finally, he spots the bro in question, standing near
the big fountain. Ben runs up to him. “Klaus, what the—” he begins, and Klaus hisses and yanks him by the arm to hide behind one of the big, fake trees. Ben wrinkles his nose. This tree smells like old cooking grease, leather, and piss. You know, like the mall.

“Shut up,” Klaus whispers.

“Why are we whispering?” Ben asks, furrowing his eyebrows.

“Look over there,” Klaus says, pointing past the tree toward the pretzel stand, where a tall blonde boy sits nearby, munching on a giant, soft pretzel. “He’s the love of my life.”

Ben squints at the blonde. “He looks like he does CrossFit.”

Klaus swats him in the arm.

“How do you even know he likes guys?” Ben asks. “He looks like any other average, generic, straight, white boy—hey, why do you think he’s cute, again?”

Klaus swats him again. “I have good taste! As if I would fall for a hetero,” he says, clearly offended, but not necessarily denying the rest of Ben’s points. Ben just raises one serene eyebrow.

“As a true bro, I have to warn you. That boy does not look even remotely bi-curious.”

“Shut up,” Klaus mutters grumpily.

“He looks like he could break open a log with his bare hands.”

“You’re the fucking worst.” Klaus shoves Ben, and Ben shoves him back. It quickly devolves into a small fight, the two of them pushing one another like the children they are.

“Hey, are you guys alright?” a sudden voice asks, and both boys yelp and grab one another in a hug, like they would when Dad caught them fighting, playful or otherwise. Some ingrained fears never do go away. Just another thing to talk about in therapy, Klaus always says. Speaking of Klaus, he trips over his feet again, grasping onto Ben’s shirt to try and stay upright. Ben shrugs and lets him fall.

“Whoa,” the guy says, and Ben realizes now that it’s the blonde that Klaus was staring at. “Here, let me help,” he offers, reaching down with one buff arm to haul Klaus up to his feet. Klaus looks at him, dumbfounded, clearly lost in the blonde’s eyes. Ben snickers, and the sound breaks Klaus out of his reverie.

“You little asshole,” Klaus hisses at Ben, and Ben throws his head back and cackles. “You little asshole,” he says to the blonde, who is watching them, clearly amused. Klaus tries to straighten his uniform.

“Dave,” the blonde says, grinning. “Hey, do I know you two? I feel like I’ve seen you before.”

Shit. Ben does not like being recognized. His nickname is “The Horror”—it tends to scare people off. Even Klaus frowns, a little bit.

“Yeah, you guys are those kids from the Umbrella Academy, right? You’re Seance?” Dave asks Klaus, and Ben sucks in a breath through his teeth.

“Yeah,” Klaus says, leering. “You a fan of me?”

“Well, actually,” Dave says, scratching the back of his head, “I was mostly a fan of him.” The blonde looks at Ben, who just raises an eyebrow, a bit flattered and a lot confused; after all, he was never the favorite. Klaus pouts.
“Oh? Do tell,” Ben says coyly, and Klaus looks like he wants to shove him again. Ben doesn’t care. He has fans. Suck it, Luther.

Surprisingly, however, Dave’s face turns bright red. “I just thought. I just thought, uh.”

“Yes?” Klaus says, leaning in suspiciously.

“I thought the tentacles were hot,” Dave blurts out in a rush, and suddenly, Klaus is cackling, in stitches, tears streaming out of the corners of his eyes as he almost topples over again. Really, Ben thinks, the boy has no balance whatsoever.

Ben’s ears get all warm, and he just sighs and looks at his wrist, which doesn’t even have a watch. “Right, well, look at the time. Suddenly I have to go.”

As he walks away, he hears Klaus giggle as he says to Dave, “Well, I don’t have tentacles, but could I have a date?” Ben rolls his eyes. He was wrong, after all. It looks like those two idiots are perfect for each other.

***

While his siblings are at the mall wasting their time, Diego wants to do something productive. Therefore, he decides to go out to a two-week old crime scene.

Okay, so maybe his thought process is a little flawed, but he’s doing his best, isn’t he? Dad fucked them all up. This, at least, is more productive than just listening to his police scanner, right?

Sighing, he ducks his head under the police tape and walks inside, carefully closing the door behind him. Immediately, he notices the pool of dried blood at the entryway of the house, and crouches down to inspect it. “Poor bastard,” he mutters, stepping carefully over it and the little numbered evidence markers the police left. “Who did this to you, Mr. Jenkins?”

Suddenly, he hears a loud creak and turns toward the sound, knife already out. Unfortunately, someone small barrels into him, and the two wrestle around on the floor of the living room for a bit. Diego easily gets the upper hand, and pins his assailant to the floor, knife to their throat.

Then, he gets a better look. “What the fuck? Who are you?” he says, eloquent as ever.

The girl glares up at him. “Fuck you.”

Diego rolls his eyes. “What are you doing in here?” he asks, getting off the girl and standing up, dusting himself off and offering her a hand to help her up.

She refuses to take it and whacks him hard in the leg with her own flashlight. “Ow, hey!” Diego hisses, knee buckling. She lifts her flashlight to bash him over the head but he catches her wrist in his hand. “I’m not going to hurt you, alright? Calm down,” he says, scowling.

She looks at him like he’s batshit crazy. “You literally have like, twenty knives on you right now.”

“More like fifteen, but whatever,” he says petulantly, rubbing the sore spot in his leg. He doesn’t want to admit it, but he’ll probably have bruises tomorrow. “Fuck. I’m not gonna hurt you. I mean, what, did you kill this guy or something? Jesus.”

“No, you dipshit,” the girl shoots back, yanking her arm away from him. “Did you?”

“No,” Diego says. “What the hell? I came here to see if I could find any more evidence that the cops
missed."

She purses her lips, clearly unhappy. “Well, I looked everywhere, and there’s nothing here. So you can go now. You’re not supposed to be here, anyway.”

“And what?” Diego snorts, “you are? I didn’t know they just let twelve year-olds join the Police Academy now.”

“I’m sixteen, asshole,” she says, “now, move. I have a case to solve.”

He gives her a shit-eating grin and moves so that she can walk past him. “Lead the way, Nancy Drew.”

She turns back and eyes him, poking him hard in the chest. “Are you making fun of me, knife boy?”

“I would never,” he says solemnly, and she pokes him again.

“You better not,” she mutters, pushing past him.

He snickers and trails behind her, following her up the stairs of the old house.

Halfway up, she turns back to face him. “Listen, if you’re going to be hanging around you might as well help me out. Check the other rooms upstairs.”

Diego shrugs. He was going to end up doing that anyways, might as well get help with it.

“Take that one over there.” She points, still sullen. She pauses, then says, “My name’s Eudora. Patch.”

He smiles. “I’m Diego Har…dy,” he says, a little awkward. He really, really hates being recognized.

“Hardy?” she repeats, incredulous. He nods. She raises her eyebrows at him, and smirks a little bit. “You’re—” she snorts. “You’re. You’re literally a Hardy boy, and you have the audacity to call me Nancy Drew?”

“Shut up,” he hisses, his lips twitching as they curve upward in an unbidden smile. She giggles, and something in his chest feels warm.

Shaking his head, he heads in the direction of the room she pointed out, which looks like a spare bedroom. Nothing seems out of the ordinary, just another simple room with white walls, a near empty closet, and a still made bed. The police clearly hadn’t found it interesting, and neither does Diego.

“What the hell?” comes Patch’s voice, sounding concerned, and slightly amused. Diego abandons his room to head to where she is, which seems to be much more interesting.

The first thing he sees is Luther’s face, stupid domino mask on, hung up above the bed. Diego remembers that photoshoot. It was some fucking bullshit, to be honest. Those photographers were patronizing as hell.

“Uh…” Diego says, eloquent as ever. There are pictures of them everywhere. All over the walls and everything. “Wow.”

He really hopes she doesn’t call him out on the fact that his face, albeit hidden by that mask, is on the wall next to her.
“Right?” She says, sounding kind of excited. “This kid was clearly obsessed with the super morons.”

“What?” He pauses, caught off guard.

“You know,” she gestures at the room. “The ‘Umbrella Academy.’ They were all fucking idiots!”

Diego chokes. “Oh?” He says, trying to clear his throat. “I didn’t really pay much attention to them. Why, uh, why don’t you like them?”

“Ugh,” Patch says, rolling her eyes. “Don’t even get me started. First of all, why were children just running around killing people? Who let them do that? Where the hell was child protective services? The cops didn’t follow up on that, like, at all.” She shakes her head. “But what really grinds my gears is that if you watched any of their fights, it was clear they had no fucking plan at all.”

A part of Diego wants to laugh. Maybe propose, even. She’s absolutely right. Luther always did suck at strategy.

“The kid here clearly idolized them though.”

“Kid,” Diego says, frowning. “Jenkins had a kid?”

“Harold. He’s supposed to be sixteen. Missing after his dad was murdered.”

“Wait, how the hell do you know all that?”

“My dad’s a cop,” she says, smirking. “I just, you know, accidentally took a little glance at the file when I visited him at work the other day.”

Is this love? Is he in love? He thinks this must be love.

“Maybe whoever did this kidnapped him,” Patch hypothesizes, but Diego frowns, shaking his head. Something about that theory doesn’t seem quite right. “What? You have a better idea?”

Diego tilts his head to the left, thinking hard. He reaches over and grabs the flashlight from her, clicking it on as he walks downstairs and looks around at the living room. “I didn’t realize Jenkins had a kid,” he says.

Eudora frowns. “Well, it’s in the file,” she says, and he shakes his head again.

“No, I mean that when I walked in, I didn’t see any pictures of the kid,” he explains, and she raises an eyebrow. “None at all. I don’t know, isn’t that some shit good parents do, they put up pictures of their kid? It just seems weird.” He’s kind of guessing, and kind of thinking that portrait of Five somehow still hanging above the mantle. “This place doesn’t look like a teenager lived here at all, if you don’t go upstairs to the kid’s room. I mean, just look at all those beer bottles on the floor,” he says. “This is not a happy home.”

Eudora’s eyes widen. “What, you think the kid killed his dad?”

Diego shrugs. “All I’m saying is maybe Harold’s not really missing. Maybe he’s on the run.”

“This is all circumstantial,” she says, narrowing her eyes at him, but something in her voice makes her sound unconvinced of her own words. “But it does make some sense.” She gives Diego an intense, discerning look, like he’s a puzzle she can’t quite figure out. “Not bad, knife boy.”

He gives her a crooked grin. “Thanks, Nancy Drew.”
When his siblings return from wherever they had decided to go all day—except for Luther, who
stayed home sulking—Five is sitting at the bar, a little bit tipsy, if he’s being honest. It had been a
pretty good day, though; Mom had helped him get on hormone blockers. Either way, Diego is the
first to walk in through the door, and he has this soft little smile on his face that makes Five’s eyes
narrow in suspicion. Before he can say anything, however, Allison comes back with Ben and Klaus
following her, all three of them carrying several large shopping bags, and—no Vanya? What the fuck?

“Where’s Vanya?” he asks, frowning.

Allison just sighs. “We got into a fight and she left with this guy,” she says flippantly, and Five
stands up immediately.

“What guy? What do you mean?” he interrogates her, and she rolls her eyes.

“She met some weird kid named Leonard,” she says, and Five almost chokes.

“So you just left her with this stranger?” Five hisses, and Allison scowls.

“Look, she wanted to leave with the guy. What did you want me to do, rumor her?”

Five grits his teeth. That would have been preferable, he thinks. “Do you know where they went?”

Allison shrugs. “Does it matter? She could use friends. Or a boyfriend, even.”

Klaus lets out a choked laugh. Right, a boyfriend, he thinks to himself. Because Vanya’s such a
heterosexual.

“That doesn’t change the fact that you left her with a literal stranger!” Five snaps, irritated. Suddenly,
the door clicks open, and Vanya walks in to all of her siblings staring at her.

“Um,” she says. “Is something wrong?”

Five pinches the bridge of his nose. “Let’s talk somewhere else,” he says, grabbing her by the arm
and teleporting them both to the kitchen, away from the ears of their siblings.

She lets out a startled shriek, and looks at him, wide-eyed. “What was that for?”

Five makes a face. “Look, I don’t know about this guy. We don’t know anything about him or what
he wants.”

Vanya rolls her eyes. “Oh, so he has to have some sort of ulterior, evil motive? Because there’s no
way someone might want to be friends with little ordinary Number Seven, is that it?”
Five lets out an impatient huff. “I didn’t say that—”

“But it’s what you meant, isn’t it?” she interjects bitterly.

“Vanya—”

“I just don’t want to talk about it, alright?” she says, pushing past him. He watches her walk out of the kitchen and storm up the stairs to her own room, lips pulled into a deep frown.

Glancing back into the living room, he scowls at the sight of Luther, still sitting alone on one of the couches, moping. “What are you still doing here?” Luther flinches a bit at his tone, and then narrows his eyes at Five, who walks over to the bar and pulls out a big bottle of scotch, planning to get thoroughly wasted.

“You really shouldn’t be drinking,” Luther says, nose wrinkled.

Five turns around and gives the teen a wry look. “Luther, I don’t know if you realize this, but I really don’t give a shit what you think.” Luther rears back, clearly hurt, and Five sighs and tries to backtrack. “Shit. That’s not what I meant. Look, Luther,” he says, relishing the burn as he swallows down the gulp of alcohol, “I just mean that maybe you shouldn’t be so concerned about what the rest of us are doing, alright?”

“Dad made me Number One. It’s my responsibility,” Luther argues, arms crossed over his chest.

Five lets out an annoyed, impatient groan. God, these imbeciles. He really has to spoonfeed them every little thing, doesn’t he? “Dad is dead, Luther. He’s dead. It doesn’t matter what he wanted anymore.” Luther looks like he’s going to interject, but Five looks him dead in the eye. “The question now is, who are you without him?”

“I—” Luther starts to say, but he cuts himself off. “I don’t know,” he finally says.

Five sighs, picking up the bottle of scotch and starting to walk out of the living room. “Well, I hope you figure it out,” he says, leaving his brother to his imminent existential crisis as he heads toward the stairs to turn in for the night.

“Number Five—” he suddenly hears Pogo ask, voice tentative. The chimpanzee stands in Five’s way, and Five sighs again.

“Ah, shit. Not you, too,” Five can’t help but mutter, rubbing at the bridge of his nose tiredly. “What’s up, Pogo?”

Pogo gives him an appraising look, and then says carefully, “It didn’t escape my notice that a certain red notebook belonging to your father disappeared the night he… passed.”

Five snorts. “I’ll keep an eye out for it.”

“I’m sure you will,” Pogo says, eyes darkening.

Five tilts his head to the side, and steps in close to the chimpanzee. “What is it, Pogo? You have something to say?”

Pogo gives Five a bland look. “I just think that there may be some merit after all to Master Luther’s… conspiracy theory.”

“I wouldn’t mention that to the others, Pogo. It might upset them further.” Five gives him a sharp,
predatory smile. “And we wouldn’t want that, would we? Besides,” Five says, “it’s not like it isn’t for the better that the old man is dead.”

“Number Five—” Pogo begins.

“Look, Pogo, I spent a long time thinking about this. Forty-five years, if you want to get technical about it. And you know,” Five says, chuckling darkly, “when I was in the future, I happened to learn some things.” He leans in close, staring at Pogo directly in the eyes. “You’ve known the whole time, haven’t you? You’re not the innocent you let us all think you are.”

“Number Five—” Pogo tries for the final time, but Five interrupts again.

“I would do anything to keep my siblings safe, Pogo,” Five says, voice hard. “I hope you can understand that. I would hate it if you got in the way of that mission.” Five pushes past the chimpanzee, clapping Pogo on the back once as he heads up the stairs to his room. “Good talk.”

Five grits his teeth as he slams the door to his room shut. Things are not working out as he’d planned. But what ever did with this family?

Chapter End Notes

thanks for all your comments, everybody! please enjoy
i walk to the sound of my own drum

Chapter Summary

“We wouldn’t be the Umbrella Academy if things didn’t go pear-shaped all the time,” Diego says, leaning back in his chair. “So whatever Five wants to talk about, I’m sure it’ll be just another Tuesday.”

Chapter Notes

so it's been a long time whoops. we're sorry about that but anyway here you go pls enjoy

chapter title from the walker by fitz and the tantrum

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Family meeting in ten. Hurry up.” Five’s voice is curt the next morning over breakfast, and everyone seems to understand something implicitly dangerous in his tone. He dramatically downs his cup of coffee in one quick, fluid motion, slams the ceramic mug down on the table, and stands up to teleport out of the dining room.

Luther narrows his eyes. “Wait, what is this about—” He sighs. “I really did not miss that.” Allison swats him on the arm.

“I assume he’s about to reveal something else absolutely fucking insane,” Diego drawls, leaning back in his chair and putting his feet up on the dining table.

“You’re gross,” Allison’s nose scrunches up in distaste. “But you’re probably right. Any ideas what this could be?”

“Maybe he has a clone,” Ben offers. They all turn to stare at him, eyebrows raised. Ben shrugs. “He’s a time traveler. I’ve seen movies!”

“Why do we live in a world where that sounds plausible?” Luther mutters, sighing.

“Would any of you fuck your clone?” Klaus asks absentmindedly. Ben pinches his arm, and he winces. “Sorry, I’m sorry!” Klaus hisses, shoving Ben’s hand away. “But anyway, if we’re making wild guesses, I think he fathered a child in the future and his past has come back to haunt him.” He blinks, eyes narrowed in confusion. “Wait. His past. His future? His future past has come to haunt him? Ben,” Klaus says, blindly reaching over and grabbing his brother’s arm. “Ben, how do I explain something that happened in his past but also in the future?”

Ben rolls his eyes at Klaus. “You’re an idiot.”

“Fuck you, Ben Tentacle.”

Everyone else ignores the shoving match that follows.
“Maybe it’s nothing bad,” Vanya says hopefully, over the sounds of the two boys wrestling on the dining room floor, ever the optimist. They all just give her a flat look—even Ben and Klaus pause where they’re grappling with one another to stare at her. She sighs. “Yeah, I know. I was just trying it to see how it sounded, for once,” she admits, wistful.

“We wouldn’t be the Umbrella Academy if things didn’t go pear-shaped all the time,” Diego says, leaning back in his chair. “So whatever Five wants to talk about, I’m sure it’ll be just another Tuesday.”

***

They find Five pacing in the living room, stopping when they come in and staring back at the six of them. There’s an open bottle of gin on the bar counter, so Five’s clearly been day drinking again.

“So?” Luther prompts.

Five sighs, gesturing for them to sit on the couch.

All of them shuffle onto the couch, and after a short scuffle about who should scoot over and not take up so much space (Luther), they’re as comfortably ensconced in the couch as they can be.

Five also lowers himself into an armchair, almost reluctantly. “I—found something. When I was going through the old man’s things yesterday while you were all out having lives—well, most of you,” he adds, glancing at Luther, whose ears turn pink in indignation, “I found this.” He pulls out Reginald’s red notebook.

Pogo, standing over in a dark corner, lets out a strangled cough and frowns at Five disapprovingly. While his siblings are distracted by the notebook, Five surreptitiously flips the chimpanzee off. Pogo’s frown deepens, and Five sneers at him.

“You went through Dad’s things?” Luther unsurprisingly says, sounding righteously furious. Naturally, everyone ignores him.

“What’s in it?” Klaus asks, voice kind of quiet as he picks it up. “Was Dad secretly into some weird shit or something?” he asks, trying to joke, but the severe look on Five’s face makes his voice fall flat. He remembers other red notebooks like this one, one for each of them, where Dad would write down all of the data he had collected on them.

“So you’ve got one of our journals,” Diego says, eyes narrowed in confusion. “Whose is it?”

Five sighs, and finally drops the bomb on them: “It’s Vanya’s.”

There’s a long pause. “I—I had a notebook?”

“Yes,” Five says. “You have powers.”

“What?” Luther asks, voice skeptical. “How is that even possible? We would have known. He would have told us.”

Diego rolled his eyes. “I hate to agree, but if she has powers he wouldn’t have let her just—sit out.”

Five doesn’t respond to either of them. He just looks at Vanya, who is staring at the notebook with something utterly heartbroken in her eyes, waiting for her response.

“But I’m—ordinary,” Vanya finally says, quiet and timid and utterly, deeply resigned. Five wishes
he could go back again and make their father suffer more than he had.

“He really, really wanted you to believe that. Think about it, Vanya. How long did he push Klaus for his power? How hard did he train us? But he didn’t even try with you.” Five says bitterly, voice insistent. “You scared him. You were too powerful for him to control like he controlled us.”

Suddenly, Allison takes in one harsh, gasping breath, and everyone stops to look at her as her eyes well up with tears. “No. No, no, no, it can’t—”

Luther moves closer to her, placing a hand gingerly on her back. “What’s wrong? Allison—”

“It’s true.” Allison gasps out, voice thick with tears. “I didn’t know—I didn’t understand—I did this.”

“Excuse me?” Five looks more taken aback than any of them had ever seen him.

“He asked me to. When we were—three? Four maybe? He told me to tell Vanya that… that she was ordinary. With my, um, with my rumor thing.” The story is halting and slow, and Allison looks miserable. “Vanya, I’m so sorry. I—I didn’t know! I didn’t understand what it meant, I was just doing what he said, I didn’t know!”

Allison walks over to Vanya, who won’t look at her from where she sits on the couch in quiet silence. “Vanya, please—”

“How could you?” Vanya interrupts, voice cold as she trembles in her own bitterness.

“Vanya—” Allison reaches over to grab her hand, but Vanya jerks away.

“Don’t touch me. What the fuck?” she seethes.

“Vanya,” Five says, voice low, warning. “Be reasonable.”

“Actually, this kind of feels like a proportionate response to the situation at hand,” Klaus says, sounding vaguely panicked.

“He locked her up,” Ben interjects quietly, looking down at the pages of the notebook in horror, having flipped it open to read. Klaus’ eyes widen, turning suspiciously wet. “The ‘anxiety pills’ she takes are what suppresses her powers—she can manipulate sound, turn it into energy.”

“No. We would have known,” Luther insists again, but it’s weak. “He wouldn’t do that. He wouldn’t.” Silence answers him. Five meets Pogo’s eyes in the background, wide and wet and immeasurably sad.

“Who are you trying to convince, Number One?” Diego says, voice hollow. “He was a monster.”

“He was our father!” Luther bites back, moving over as if he’s about to shove Diego. The two of them stand in each other’s faces, chests heaving with anger.

Five takes this moment to interject before they can start beating the shit out of each other like cavemen. “Guys, shut the fuck up,” he spits out viciously. “This isn’t about you.” He walks over to Vanya, who is still sitting on the couch, staring at the bottle of pills, one hand over her mouth and tears filling her eyes. The two boys quiet down, suitably chastened.

“Vanya?” she says tentatively.

“How could he do this to me?” she asks, breath hitching, her voice so shredded with pain that it
breaks his goddamn heart.

“You were too powerful for him to control,” Five says again, shaking his head. “The important thing now, Vanya, is that we’re all here for you, alright?” He kneels down by her feet, and takes one of her hands. She lets out a sob, and suddenly she’s angry again. She throws the pills at the wall, and the cap of the bottle breaks off, the white pills clatter to the floor, impossibly loud in the achingly quiet room. They seemed to echo, have a weight to them, like they were lead and not little capsules of poison.

“What, now you’re here for me?” She asks, her voice low and dangerous. “None of you have ever even taken the chance to know me. And you!”

She whirs around to Five, whose expression hasn’t changed. “You left me! You left me all alone in this house, and now you come back and tell me—you tell me—” another sob is ripped from her throat. “Fuck you, Five. You don’t just get to pick and choose when you care about me. Fuck all of you.”

“I know,” Five says, voice hoarse with emotion, “I’m sorry, Vanya. I’m so sorry.”

She just stares at him, open-mouthed and shaking. She sinks to the ground, the fight draining out of her, her knees giving out.

Allison slowly eases herself to the ground next to her, tentatively reaching an arm around her. When Vanya doesn’t throw her off, she relaxes, pulling her sister closer to her.

Vanya leans her head against Allison’s shoulder, eyes squeezed tightly shut, tears streaming down her cheeks. Allison whispers softly into her hair, *I’m sorry, I’m sorry* over and over as she fights back tears of her own.

Five rests one hand on Vanya’s shoulder. Klaus practically collapses onto Vanya, long arms squeezing her tight. Ben manages to worm his way in between Klaus and Vanya, just holding her, like she used to hold him after particularly bad days. Diego and Luther both stand there awkwardly for a moment, and then both simultaneously shrug and join in.

Klaus looks up at Five, who stares back. Klaus raises an eyebrow uncharacteristically. Five sighs, meets Pogo’s calculating eyes, and joins them on the floor.

It’s not perfect, but something about it feels like healing.

***

They don’t bother getting up from the floor.

Though they disentangled themselves from Vanya and Allison eventually, the entire family was just sprawled on the floor in various states of laziness.

Klaus had suggested a movie night, and then suggested that they watch *Back to the Future*, snickering the entire time. Five, naturally, tackled him to the ground and threatened to murder him in increasingly inventive ways. Unfortunately for Five, the rest all agreed, so they’re sitting here on the floor watching it.

Klaus and Ben keep up a running commentary on the movie like they’re on *Mystery Science Theatre 3000*, but it makes Vanya giggle, so no one complains about how they’re interrupting the movie.

Diego is curled up on the carpet like a cat, bent around his phone with a soft grin on his face that
makes Allison suspicious.

from: nancy drew
to: knife boy
hey asshole i think i have a lead meet me at griddy’s tmr

from: knife boy
to: nancy drew
as you wish

from: nancy drew
to: knife boy
did you just quote the princess bride at me you fucking nerd

Diego buries his face in a blanket to hide his blush.

from: knife boy
to: nancy drew
maybeso.gif

Allison and Five watch him with varying degrees of confusion. “What’s that all about?” Allison asks Five, and Five shrugs.

“Diego?” She calls over to him. “Who are you texting?”

Diego immediately sits up and pulls the blanket over his head. “Nobody. Fuck off,” he says immediately, so unnecessarily defensive that Allison and Five look at one other, eyes narrowing in suspicion. Five raises one eyebrow in silent question, a mischievous smirk spreading across his face.

“So you want to do it, or should I?” Allison asks, and Five smiles in such a menacing way that Diego shivers.

“I’ve got it,” Five says, and teleports over to Diego, snatching the phone from his hand and then teleporting back before Diego can so much as squawk in protest, delivering the device to Allison’s waiting hand.

“Oh, who’s Nancy Drew?” Allison laughs, scrolling through a ridiculously long string of texts.


“You have a crush,” Allison says, snickering. Five gives Diego a shit-eating grin.

“Give it back,” Diego hisses, moving over to take his phone back angrily.

“Touchy,” Five comments, and Diego just growls and yanks the blanket back over his head.

Klaus is very glad that his sibling’s attentions are on Diego, because it means they don’t notice him texting whenever there is a lull in the movie.

from: spooktacular
to: monster fucker
bro. i think. im love you
from: monster fucker
to: spooktacular
bro. i think i'm love you too uwu

If Klaus was on the couch, he would have fallen off of it.

“Is that Dave?” Ben whispers in his ear. “Tell him I said hi.”

from: spooktacular
to: monster fucker
benjamin tentacle says hello

Ben reads the text, and then shoves him on principle. Klaus snickers.

from: monster fucker
to: spooktacular
(づ。◕‿‿◕。)づ

from: spooktacular
to: monster fucker
that is the worst thing i have ever seen. i want a divorce

from: monster fucker
to: spooktacular
(_triggered)
i feel like i need to meet ur fam before we get divorced if they like me more than you i could get more of your absurd amount of money

from: spooktacular
to: monster fucker
u only want me for my money?

from: monster fucker
to: spooktacular
that and ur body

from: spooktacular
to: monster fucker
i always wanted to be a sugar daddy

from: monster fucker
to: spooktacular
divorce. immediately

from: spooktacular
to: monster fucker
(╥_╥)

from: monster fucker
to: spooktacular
(●´ω´●)

from: monster fucker
to: spooktacular
(●´ω´●)
Luther is the only one paying attention to the movie anymore. After a while, he notices that Vanya has fallen asleep with her head on his shoulder, and he gently moves her so that her neck won’t be too sore when she wakes up. He looks at her sleeping face, and he looks around at his other siblings, and he thinks that maybe he wants to be more than just Number One.

If you pull the camera back, and squinted, and ignored Five teleporting, well—they looked more like a family, like a regular, normal family, than they ever had before. Maybe things were changing.

Maybe things will be alright, Five dares to think.

Unfortunately, life has a habit of proving him wrong.

Chapter End Notes

@frankiesin we’re still laughing our asses off at "dave 'monster fucker' katz" so thank you for that

enjoy!

End Notes

if there are plot holes please do not tell us it will make us sad

please enjoy!

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