Candle
by asilverflame

Summary

Ebott City is not at peace. Monsters have not been widely accepted. Grillby has the one establishment where both Monsters and Humans can meet cordially.

Notes

This is completely different. I started this halfway in the writing of the Teacher, but stopped long enough to complete it. You might see few parallels to Radio, even an OC or two I introduced in The Teacher, but this is where they originated. Here monsters have been on the surface for a few years, but they do not live peacefully with humans. Enjoy!
Music Lover

Grillby Ignus was looking at the human playing the piano at the train station. She was a lovely girl. She had red hair and pale skin. She was playing without any conscious thought that someone might be looking at her. He smiled to himself. It was not often you found a concert pianist playing on a public piano. He remembered her having played for the Ebott City symphony about two years ago and was let go when the senior pianist grew jealous of her pure talent and artistry.

When she finished the Gershwin piece she stopped and frowned. She played a couple of the keys. Her frown deepened. She pulled out a piano tuners work kit and began to pull apart the upright piano. She took out a tuning fork and began to strike keys. She began to tighten some pins inside the piano. Her frown deepened more. She pulled out a flashlight and started to inspect the overall condition of the hammers and casters and the inner works of the piano.

Grillby smiled from where he was hiding. He knew a true artist like her would know how to tune and clean all the inner workings of a piano. That was one of the ways this particular pianist made a living after having been fired from the symphony. He had also seen her play demonstrations at the Steinway gallery. People bought pianos hoping to play like her. He shook his head, it was foolish for the people who bought those pianos. Artists like her were rare. Most of the pianos sold were more for showing off that they owned a STEINWAY. He decided to watch, he wanted to hear her play again when the piano was fully tuned.

It had been nine years since the barrier that kept the monsters in the Underground was shattered. He had lived here on the surface for the past eight. He had opened a new bar here immediately. He had a real eye and ear for pianos and pianists that was highly useful. He held Friday night piano mixers allowing humans and monsters to mingle in an environment that was both soothing and familiar to both humans and monsters. He himself had played for the mixed company in the early years. When new zoning laws regulated districts that monsters were allowed to live and work in, his bar was one of the few that had been granted an exception mostly because the city councilmen couldn’t stand to lose their favorite watering hole. It made him indispensable to the King and Queen as well as their Ambassador. Frisk herself, being only twenty, she could not drink legally yet. But her bodyguard Sans stopped by frequently for his favorite ketchup and any news Grillby himself might be able to pass on to his monarchs.

The human stood up and began to put the piano back together. She did a quick check to make sure her tunings were correct and sat on the piano bench. She quickly launched into The Flight of the Bumblebee. Grillby smiled, pulled out a business card and wrote on it. He placed it in her tools and quickly left the station heading back to his place of business. He needed to check the books and his inventories before Wednesday to ensure he had enough food and alcohol for the weekend. He smiled hearing her play, an artist like her was indeed rare and not heard publicly enough.

The human, whose name was Candace McLaren, finished off her piece with panache. People applauded her playing and afterwards she began to play Rondo a la Turca. She then closed off the piano keys and pulled a few of her business cards out of her pocket and placed them on the piano, hoping to attract business as a piano tuner. She was lucky when she attended Julliard that she had been part of a pilot program to learn piano tuning from Steinway themselves. When she was fired from the symphony and had no money to travel to auditions she went to the local Steinway gallery and was immediately hired as a tuner. It allowed her to pay the rent, even though it still did not pay well enough to afford her travel to auditions. She even did demonstrations for the gallery to show
people exactly how a Steinway sounded at the hands of a competent pianist.

She started to pack up her things and noticed the business card in her tools. The card read: Thank you for tuning my piano so well. If you come to the address up front I will pay you for tuning it. Show this card to the barman.

Candace hesitated. She needed the money having been recently fired as a tuner from Steinway. But it was too easy for someone to say that they owned what was thought of as a public piano and land her into trouble. She shook her head, she would not go, as much as she needed the money. She looked at the front of the card, it was only one of the more famous bars in town. Grillby’s. Huh, a place where humans and monsters mingled, even when humans where tightening the laws on monsters. Grillby himself was rumored to be a connoisseur of pianos and pianists. He would probably take one look at the card and laugh at her. She went home. She needed to tell her friends that she been fired.

Grillby was surprised, he had thought just his card would have been enough for the girl to come to his bar. He had patiently waited all night in hope of her coming for payment and had been surprised when his employees all told him that they had seen no one who fit her description. He left his home in the monster district and was heading to his business when he stopped at the train station.

Someone had vandalized his piano. Vulgar graffiti generically saying monsters should go back to hell was written on it. He saw two familiar faces. One was Undyne, who looked like she was going to raise hell herself at the vandalism. The other was the human, her eyes were filled with tears when she looked at the piano she had tuned just the day before.

Candace checked on the vandalism. The paint was still wet. Grillby saw her sigh and walk quickly to a hardware store across the street from the train station. She came back with cleaning cloths and a bottle of mineral oil. She immediately began to clean off the graffiti and pulled out the piano to take apart and check the overall condition after being vandalized. She began to swear. “Fucking animals.” She pulled out a caster and checking the model and serial on one of the boards she pulled out a phone and after she plugged in some numbers she smiled and reached into equipment and pulled out a box. She was lucky, this was a spare caster after someone had shipped the wrong part on another piano she had tuned and made a repair on.

Grillby gently touched Undyne to let her know he was there. Undyne smiled at Grillby. They had been friends since before they had both left the Underground eight years ago. “You’re a lucky dog, Grillby. Candace is a damn good piano tech as well as one of the best pianists I have ever met.”

“You know the girl?”

“Yeah, she lives in my building. When I was called about the vandalism I brought her here to take a look at it. I have been trying to get her to come and audition for you for a while.”

“Can you do me a favor?”

“Sure Grillbz, what is it?”

“Give her my card again. I saw her tune this piano yesterday and I wanted to pay her, but she never came to the bar.”

“She probably didn’t think the card was real. A couple of times she went to what she thought of as auditions and they were just a bunch of sleazes trying to take advantage of her.”

“Ahh...” was all Grillby said. That made sense.
Candace had installed the new caster and was checking the tuning again. She sighed in relief. The tuning was still good. Now the piano was in good working order again she began to play. This time she chose Hungarian Rhapsody No 2. Grillby smiled, this time he stayed and watched her play the song in its entirety. The piano was once again in perfect working order. He quickly exited the train station before she noticed him. People in the station were loudly applauding her. Undyne sat next to her on the bench and they began to play a duet both having played duets together just for the fun of it. When they were finished Undyne smiled at Candace and said, “Come on, I have someone to introduce you to.”

“How?”

“This piano’s owner. He said he gave you his business card yesterday, but you didn’t come and see him. I decided I would just take you to him. I know you didn’t go because you thought someone might take advantage of you again, but I know Grillby personally. I figured you would be more comfortable if I came along.”

Candace smiled at Undyne, “Thank you.” Undyne had been a good friend to her since she had come back to Ebott City. They had been neighbors and Undyne and her wife, Alphys, had come over frequently to play piano and cook dinner. Undyne was the Captain of the local police’s monster division and was highly respected. Alphys was a scientist and inventor, whose inventions Candace didn’t always understand, but she was sweet. They had met after Undyne heard her rehearse on her baby grand piano for a concert before she was laid off from the symphony. She still lived in the monster district finding the company of most monsters preferable to humans. The monsters were leery of the human who lived among them, but soon found her to be a sweet girl that treated them equally. One or two had told her she had a very subtle magic when she played the piano. Candace just shrugged, she didn’t think she had magic, after all she was human.

Undyne walked Candace to door that said: Grillby’s Employees Only. She knocked in what was obviously a code to whoever was inside. The door opened a fraction on an inch, seeing Undyne the door opened fully revealing a dog monster just inside the door.

“Undyne! How are you?” said the dog monster. It stood at about seven feet tall with the overall look of a feminine chocolate Labrador.

“I’m good Dogaressa. This is my friend Candace McLaren, Grillbz wants to see her.”

“Nice to meet you, Candace! Come in! Let me let the boss know you’re here.”

They were lead into a huge nightclub. It was mostly dim except for a center stage that was well lit. There was a ten foot concert piano center on the stage. There was a man playing the piano. Candace smiled at the tones of the piano. As a fully trained concert pianist she could tell immediately it was a Steinway. Dogaressa ushered them to a couple of seats at the bar as they listened to the piano. The man stopped playing.

“Boss! Undyne says she has someone you want to see?”

The man stood up immediately and quickly walked over to them. Candace saw that he was a flame monster almost as tall as Dogaressa. He held out his hand to Candace.

“Candace, allow me to introduce you to Grillby Ignus, the owner of the piano you fixed today,” said Undyne.

Candace held out her hand to the monster who quickly kissed it and said to her, “A pleasure to finally meet you, Ms McLaren. I cannot thank you enough for repairing my piano this afternoon and
for tuning it yesterday.”

Candace took a good look at the flame monster. He was certainly a handsome man with high cheekbones who wore a pair of square glasses. He had a sharp nose and sensual lips.

“The pleasure was all mine. I was just glad to be lucky enough to have had the right caster for your piano on hand.”

Grillby smiled at her. He always thought of her as a pretty girl when he saw her from a distance, but up close she was beautiful. Her red hair had just enough gold to shine like a flame in the light. He could see that she was wearing contact lenses in her eyes, so he thought their deep blue must be from the contacts. There was a light dusting of freckles on her otherwise flawless fair skin. Her fingers were very long and very delicate, perfect for a concert pianist.

“I remember you played for the symphony about two years ago. It’s a shame they let you go, you made Liz look like an amateur.”

Candace smiled at Grillby, few people remembered she played for the symphony. “Thank you, but when it comes to budget cuts, the player with the most seniority trumps the new girl.”

“The best player should trump all.”

“I wish someone could have explained that to the board.”

“Are you looking for work as a player? I am looking for a brilliant player, and you just might fit the bill perfectly.”

Candace smiled, a man with Grillby’s reputation as a lover of music might just be the opportunity she had been waiting for. Besides being out of work as a tuner meant that she needed a new job.

“Yes, actually I am. Heck, right now I’ll even take a job as a waitress.”

“Why, may I ask?”

“I was fired the day before yesterday.”

“I know you had been working for Steinway as a technician and demonstrator. What happened?”

“Well, to make a long story short, some people don’t want to listen about placing metal urns on their piano and then wonder why there is a vibration.”

“Please explain.”

“There was a client, whose husband had died. She had her husband’s urn on the piano. She called for a tuning so I went and tuned the piano. I had advised her not to put the urn on the piano because it will cause a vibration when the piano is played. She called back the next day saying I didn’t fix her problem so I went back and that urn was still on the piano. I double checked the tuning and saw my tuning was correct. I once again advised her the vibration was from the urn on the piano. This went on for four other calls. She calling to complain about noise and the only thing creating the noise was the urn. I tried to be kind, I bought a silicon pad to place underneath the urn to protect the piano and she pitched an absolute fit to my boss saying I was rude and insubordinate to her. My former boss went out and verified the tuning was correct and her noise was from the urn, since she threw away the pad for the urn. She called up to corporate and had me fired. Still, the store manager books the demonstrations so she couldn’t get me fired for that.”
“Some people aren’t fit to own a work of art like a Steinway.” Grillby shook his head. “Do you think you can audition for me right now?”

“Absolutely.”

Grillby lead her to his piano.

She made some adjustments to the bench and said, “Anything in particular?”

“Let’s start off easy, Hungarian Rhapsody No 2.”

Candace began to play letting the sound of the Steinway fill the club. After a minute she began to really lose herself to the technically challenging, but fun song. When she finished Grillby was smiling at her.

“La Campanella.”

Candace smiled and threw herself into La Campanella. It is known to be one of the hardest pieces of piano music ever written. She loved it. Her final performance with the symphony was performing La Campanella. Liszt was for no amateur on a piano and Grillby was right, Hungarian Rhapsody was a bit of a cakewalk next to La Campanella. When she finished Grillby was beaming at her, Undyne was shaking her head and the employees that were there were applauding.

“Lets mix up the pace, Clair de Lune.”

Candace shook out her fingers and began the tranquil piece. When she finished he said, “Part one of Les Gymnopedies.” Candace became even more tranquil as she played the Satie piece.

When she had finished Grillby smirked at Candace, “I think both you and my Steinway need a cigarette about now.”

Candace laughed, “I don’t know about the piano, but I could use a cigarette right now.”
“Are you even a smoker?” asked Grillby.

“Like a chimney,” she replied.

He smiled at her, “You can smoke in my office, let’s go and discuss your working for me. I had hoped you would have come to an audition I had a month after you were released from the symphony. I was in the audience when you played your last concert for them. I could tell you loved playing La Campanella as much as I loved hearing you play it. If I knew you were going to be released two days later, I would have offered you a job on the spot.”

Candace grabbed her pack of cigarettes and lighter from her purse and followed Grillby to his office.

“I was in the hospital when you had the audition. I didn’t even know about it until the day after.”

“What were you hospitalized for?”

“Appendicitis. I had the surgery the day of the audition.”

Grillby winced. Even though appendicitis was a common disease for humans, it still put people in the hospital for a week. He handed Candace an ashtray. She lit up while he examined her. He wondered if she could handle the Underground. Probably so, since she lived in the monster district of town. He made his decision. He picked up an envelope from a drawer in his desk and handed it to Candace.

“First, here is payment for tuning the piano yesterday and for repairing the piano today. Second, here is my offer, I am willing to guarantee you two hundred dollars every Friday you play at one of my mixers. In addition to the guarantee, you will receive additional amount of fifty cents of every drink sold during the night. I can offer that much because I raise drink prices that much on Fridays, so I can offer the best entertainment. I would also like you to come to my bar in the Underground on Saturdays and perform for the monsters and humans there. Payment in the Underground is a flat two hundred gold. The music in the Underground is much more subdued than humans usually like to listen to. There is a table at both worksites with a tip jar. All tips are yours to report, or not, the government. The guarantee is a regular payroll check that comes weekly on Thursdays. Pay for playing the mixers and in the Underground is settled after the bar closes and I get a final tally of all sales made that day. If you want to work as a waitress on the days you are not playing, I can always use waitresses. Do you have experience as wait staff?”

“Yes, I worked as a waitress at a couple of bars while I was attending Julliard. There are so many performing artists in New York it’s much harder to find a job as one than finding a simple waitress job.”

Grillby’s eyebrows raised, “Julliard trained? I’m surprised the auditions did not come en masse when you where released from the symphony.”

“I did receive quite a few. But since budget cuts were being made even as I worked for the symphony, I didn’t have the money I needed to go to auditions that were frequently cross country and offered no guarantees.”

“Not even as you worked as a piano technician?”

“Orchestra and symphony auditions are usually week long. If I took time out to audition, that meant even after I paid the expenses for travel, I would have lost income to pay for regular bills. Even with
the substantial scholarships I had, I still took out quite a bit in student loans for housing.” Candace took a long drag of her cigarette. She put it out in the ashtray he handed her.

Grillby shook his head. In the Kingdom of Monsters, a gem like her would have been showered in cash just for school. Asgore and Toriel appreciated artists deeply knowing that gifts like hers were rare. Eight years of living with humans and he still didn’t understand them. Too many thought that money was everything and forced people like Candace to give up their dreams just to survive. He hoped she hadn’t given up on hers yet. He didn’t think so though, the way she played just in the audition told him her dream was still alive, just waiting for the opportunity to be released.

Grillby smiled at Candace, “One final audition, I am going to give you five mixed drinks, if you can identify all and garnish them correctly you can start as a waitress tonight. I am always short handed on Wednesday.”

She smiled, “Alright.”

He took her back to the bar, he mixed a Whiskey Sour, a Cosmopolitan, a Tom Collins, a Mai Tai, and a Tequila Sunrise. She quickly added cherries and a slice of orange to the whiskey sour, a lime wedge to the Cosmopolitan, lemon wedge to the Tom Collins, pineapple for the Mai Tai and additional cherries for the Tequila Sunrise. He smiled at her, “Take your pick of a drink.”

Candace picked up the Tequila Sunrise. He picked up the Whiskey Sour. “Congratulations, Candace McLaren. Welcome to the Grillby’s family! Cheers!” They clinked glasses and took long drinks.

“Mmmm. That’s good tequila,” said Candace.

“Is it your favorite drink?”

“One of them. Don’t laugh, but my absolute favorite is the Flaming Dr. Pepper.”

“It’s too early for 151.”

“And should only be drunk if you are getting planning on getting drunk fast.”

Undyne, who had been watching the audition and was nursing a lager from the tap said, “What’s a Flaming Dr. Pepper?”

Grillby explained, “It’s more of a shooter style drink than a mixed drink, but in a shot glass you fill it ¾ full of amaretto liqueur, then you fill the rest with 151 rum. In a pint glass, you fill it halfway with a lager, like you are currently drinking. When you have both glasses you set the shot glass on fire and drop the whole thing in the beer and down the whole drink as fast as you can. It’s made for getting drunk fast but the pyrotechnics make it fun when you are drinking to get drunk. The rum itself is strong enough for that. If you have ever drunk a soda called Dr Pepper it will taste like a Dr Pepper.”

“I would like to try it someday, but I go on duty in a couple of hours.”

“Have you ever had Dr Pepper,” asked Grillby.

“No.”

He got Undyne a soda. “Try this, it’s a Dr Pepper. The flavor combination is what makes it such an interesting soda and drink. Now for you, Candace, here are the required tax documents as well as employee guide for when you are working as a waitress. On days you perform, dress as you would for a performance. There is a dress code for when you are working as a waitress.”
Candace read the employee guide and filled out all the tax documents. She pulled out her ID’s from the repair case she had on her all the time. Grillby made copies and handed them back to her. She looked at the dress code and realized she was missing a few things. Hopefully the money he paid her for the piano repairs would cover it.

“What time do I need to be back here by,” she asked.

“Six thirty.”

She looked at her watch, it was almost two. She finished her drink.

“Now, since you have four hours to sober up, pick another drink, I want to see how well you can handle your drink.”

Candace laughed, “Is this a hazing ritual? Getting drunk with the boss?”

The fire elemental smiled at Candace, “The boss doesn’t like wasting alcohol.”

Candace picked up the Cosmopolitan. Grillby picked up the Tom Collins. He handed Undyne the Mai Tai. “On the house for an old friend,” he told her. All three took a long drink. Undyne made a face.

“The pineapple isn’t really all that sweet.”

“If you wanted a sweet drink that would have been the Tequila Sunrise, the orange juice and good grenadine make it sweet. It helps round out the harshness of the tequila,” Grillby told her.

“Candace, how did you learn about drinks like this,” Undyne asked.

“I worked at bars when I was a student. After a while these are just things you learn.”

“You never told me where you went to school.”

“Julliard.”

“And you live in the monster district scrapping a living tuning pianos?”

“Auditions cost money, Undyne. I wasn’t with the symphony long enough to earn enough to go all over the place on auditions. I am just glad I had the sense to pick up a useful skill set while I was a student.”

Grillby shook his head, “They should never have let you go.”

“Well that’s all in the past. I can only go forward from wherever I am.”

Grillby looked at Candace and smiled, “Keep that attitude and nothing will hold you back for long.”

“Is it weird to want to send a thank you note to a vandal?”

Grillby laughed, “I was just thinking the same thing.”

Candace finished the Cosmopolitan. “I had better go. I need to pick up a few things to be ready for tonight.”

“When you come back use the same back door, I will meet you so I may show you around and introduce you to the rest of the staff for tonight.”
Grillby escorted Candace to the back door. He smiled at her and they shook hands professionally as Candace left.

Undyne was looking closely at Grillby when he returned to the bar.

“You’ve had your eyes on her for a while, haven’t you?”

“Yes, Undyne. I have. I have been keeping a lookout for her ever since I first saw her play in the symphony.”

“She’s a sweet girl, Grillbz. Do me a favor and don’t hurt her. I know your reputation. She is not a plaything. She is not like Muffet or any of the other women you have seen over the years. I want her to stay innocent a little while longer.”

“What makes you think my interest is more than professional?”

Undyne’s eye was hard and penetrating. Few people could look her dead in the eye. Sans and Frisk were the only two people who could. Their unspoiled honesty allowed them to without fear.

Grillby was not always as honest and had a bit of a reputation as a womanizer. Forget facts. Grillby had been on warm terms with many of the ladies of the Underground, but tired of the games. He himself had not even so much as graced Muffet with so much as a glance in more than a professional way in at least a year. Really since he first saw Candace play for the symphony. There was just something about her that appealed to him. A warmth.
At six-fifteen that evening Candace was approaching the back entrance to Grillby’s. He smiled as soon as he saw her and asked her to follow him.

Grillby was pleased by how she looked dressed for work. Not many of his waitresses wore skirts with the appropriate hosiery. They stuck to slacks although he always thought there was an elegance to skirts and hose. A lot of the ladies he hired thought that hose were out of style. Call him old fashioned, but there was something about how a lady looked in hose that was fascinating. Her makeup was tasteful and understated, bringing out her best features rather than looking like a mask. She had worn a sapphire blue bow tie that brought out her striking eye color. He once again wondered if the color was real or because of the contacts she wore.

He smiled at Candace, “I have a question,” he asked. “Is your eye color real or due to your contacts?”

Candace laughed, “Real. I’m pretty blind without either my contacts or my glasses but colored lenses mess with my ability to see at night.” She reached up into her eye and pulled out a lens. “See, these are clear.” She popped the lens back in. “I started to wear contacts as a teen as I grew as a pianist. I got tired of my glasses flying off my face as I played.”

Grillby chuckled as he adjusted his own glasses knowing all too well the sudden blindness of missing glasses. “Are you near sighted or do you have astigmatism?”

“Both. I am afraid I am stuck with corrective lenses the rest of my life.”

“Same here,” he smiled at Candace.

Grillby took Candace to a locker room. “You may put your things in here and stow them away for the night. I am going to use the master code to allow you to change your combination on the lock and you can set it however you like.” Grillby took her to an empty locker and dialed a combination for the lock. He then nodded to Candace to enter in a new combination. After she did so, she checked to make sure it worked and put her purse and other small personal items away.

Grillby smiled at Candace, “Please come to my office, I have something I wish to discuss with you.”

Grillby lead Candace to his office. “There has been a change, I need you to play in a private room. I will be there bartending, but I need you to play the piano. This is a bit of a sticky situation, I need you to play relaxing and peaceful music. I don’t know how long this will take but we will be there for as long as necessary. Don’t be afraid. No one will let anything happen. Stay quiet and keep your ears open.”

Candace nodded. Grillby straightened his own bow tie and gestured for her to follow him. The room he had lead her to looked like there was some sort of negotiation happening. There were both humans and monsters sitting on opposite sides of the table. Candace quickly went to the baby grand piano in the corner and started to play soft soothing music. One of the monsters was a short skeleton who looked at her with an eye glowing blue and yellow. Candace kept her head low and kept playing. It sounded like they were arguing over the rise of incidents of humans attacking monsters. Candice began to focus on peacefulness. The skeleton looked at her rather sharply and winked at her. Some sort of agreement was made. Next they were arguing about the number of humans that worked in the Underground.
“Surely, you don’t want to raise your unemployment figures by having the humans that work for monsters suddenly without jobs,” said a goat monster.

Candace kept her face still and continued to play. Surely, they wouldn’t close a bar as famous as Grillby’s. Would they? Candace cleared that thought out of her head and continued to play.

“Let’s ask the obvious person. You, girl at the piano. Do you feel comfortable working for these creatures? Or would you rather work for your own kind?” said a man at the table.

Candace decided to be clever. “What kind do you mean, sir. Womankind? Earthkind? Alienkind? Looneykind?... Oh I get it, am I supposed to pick humans over monsters or monsters over humans? The fairest answer is I don’t care as long as I get paid. This species-ism doesn’t pay my rent, it doesn’t put food on my table. I don’t care if I work for monsters, humans, aliens, or butterflies as long as I can pay my rent.”

The skeleton smiled at her and winked again.

Grillby spoke up, “Councilman, let me remind you that you are not to speak to my staff without my permission. You must ask me before you may address any of them in a way that is not in line with their job, for their safety. Continue playing, sweetie” Grillby winked at her.

Candace started to play again. Agitated she started playing Flight of the Bumblebees. Her annoyance at the question shone through as she played. The skeleton approached her.

“take a deep breath, kid.” He whispered. “Your magic is leaking a little because you're annoyed.”

“Gymnopedies, please sweetie. Second movement.” Grillby directed. He was looking at her closely.

Candace took a deep breath and began to play the soothing calm notes of Gymnopedies. Her annoyance left her. The skeleton smiled at her and nodded. When she was done she started to play some Yanni. She was left alone as she played light classical mixed in with smooth jazz and bossa nova.

Candace had no idea how much time passed before the meeting finally broke up. The humans left first. The tension left the room with the humans. Candace felt the unknown pressure inside her head release. She began to stretch her head, neck, and shoulders. The skeleton walked up to Grillby.

“she’s quite a little discovery, isn’t she Grillbz,” his voice was soft but deep. The kind of voice people listened for.

“Yes, she is.” Grillby answered.

“Can’t really blame her for getting mad at him.”

“Not at all. It was a stupid question to ask.”

Candace looked at her watch. It was almost two in the morning.

“Candace, go wait in the break room. You have worked all night without a break. I’m amazed your controls were strong enough to last until the end of the night,” said Grillby.

Candace stumbled a little as she stood up. “I think I need to remember how to walk again.”

“Stay in the staff area. I didn’t like some of the looks that one person gave you.”

“Looks?”
“Don’t worry, I’ll handle it.”

Candace left the room and found the employee break room. Undyne was standing by the door. She was dressed in a suit of armor.

“You okay, punk? She asked.

“Just a little tired.”

“Seven hours of nonstop playing will do you in. Go sit down. You did well for your first meeting. You only got annoyed once. I figured you would have knocked the lights out that guy.”

Candace sat down on a comfortable chair at a table feeling like she had run a marathon. She was so tired.

A plate was placed in front of her.

“Eat,” came Grillby’s voice. “You have burned up quite a bit of magic. You need to eat to restore your strength.”

Numbly, she began to eat what tasted like a chicken and vegetable dish. It was delicious. She started to feel her strength return. Tea was placed next to the dish.

“Drink all of the tea. It will help replenish the magic you have used.”

“What magic?”

“How you were playing, keeping things calm, letting that idiot know he pissed you off without words. That’s all a type of magic. An extremely rare sort. Probably the last bit of magic humans have managed to hang on to. Don’t tell me you live with monsters and no one had ever told you had magic.”

Candace drank the tea. It felt like what something empty inside her was filling back up.

“I had been told, but I didn’t believe them. I’m human. I thought we didn’t have any magic to speak of.”

“You’re right in a way. It is not the same kind that monsters use. It’s more subtle. More like you are emoting magically than physically manipulating something. Still, using this type of magic for as long as you have, it’s draining. You’re controls are very good. I didn’t expect you to be able to use your magic for as long as you did. Feeling better?” Grillby asked.

“Much.”

“Wait here, let me make sure everyone else is gone.” Grillby handed her more tea. Candace drank it feeling even better.

When Grillby came back, she was looking much better. Less like a wraith and much more herself. Her control was very fine. That was part of what was so draining on her. He smiled at her, “Okay, we can now go to the bar area. Some of the monsters who were at the meeting want to meet you.”

Grillby lead Candace back out into the bar area. The skeleton, Undyne and a goat monster who had been leading the talks were all there.

“Candace, let me introduce you. Undyne, of course, you know. The skeleton is Sans Serif, he is the personal bodyguard of Ambassador Frisk Dreemurr and is a member of the Royal Council of the
Kingdom of Monsters. The Lady is Toriel, Queen of the Kingdom of Monsters. Your Majesty, Sans, this is Candace McLaren my pianist.”

“It is a pleasure to meet you, Candace. The only other pianist I know who can play the way you did is Tuffet,” said Toriel.

Candace smiled, “She was my teacher for a couple of years before I went to Julliard. She was the one who taught me to play that way. I just never really thought it was magic.”

Both Sans and Grillby raised their eyebrows. “You know Tuffet,” asked Sans.

Grillby chuckled, “I should have guessed. Only Tuffet ever had such fine controls and had the endurance to play as long as you have tonight.”

Sans said skeptically, “Tuffet is an easy name to throw out there.”

Candace shrugged, “Give her a call if you don’t believe me, but you might have to sit through one of her tea parties.”

Grillby laughed and made a phone call. “Hey, Tuff. How about myself and a former pupil of yours meet up for a tea party tomorrow? Candace. Yes, Tuff, she is fine. Early tea at two? How about my bar? Of course you may bring the treats. My pleasure Tuff, it has been too long. Muffet? No, she is currently not speaking to me after I made it plain it’s over between us. Come on Tuff, you know it was never serious between us. She is just upset that I am on the surface. It’s not so easy for her to come and try her wiles on me when I am here and not in the Underground. We will talk more about it tomorrow, Tuff. Look forward to it. I’ll tell Candace.”

“Tuff wants me to tell you to bring the Earl Grey for the tea party.”

Candace smiled, “I will.”

“How did you meet Tuffet,” asked Toriel.

“I was fifteen, it was right after the barrier broke. I was giving a recital at Ebott Park. When I had finished, this spider lady riding a very large grub came to me and said I had real gifts that could be made better with the right teaching. She had just bought a house near the park. She asked me to come and visit her every day after school. She taught me a lot. I just didn’t know that some of what she taught was magic. It just flowed so naturally when I played. She was the one who encouraged me to apply to Julliard when I got older. She taught me all I knew about monsters at the time. I always thought of her a sweet lady who loved piano as much as I did. She even gave me one of her gloves if I ever ran into a tight spot.”

“What did your parents think of Miss Tuffet,” asked Grillby.

“My parents died in a car crash when I was little, so I was living with my grandfather, who was my first piano teacher. When he saw I was going to see Tuff, he came and observed what she was teaching me. He always said she was the right teacher at the right time for my gifts. He had no objections, in fact they would sometimes play duets when Tuff thought I needed a break,” Candace smiled.

“Did you ever meet her twin, Muffet?”

“No, Tuff said she didn’t get along with her sister, but I did hear about her.”

“Tuffet was always kinder than Muffet. Tuff came to the surface as soon as the barrier broke to get
away from her,” said Toriel. “I’m sure Tuff was as pleased as punch when she found an apt pupil right away. Tuff loved teaching kids, she taught both Undyne and Grillby.”

“When was the last time you saw Tuffet, Candace,” asked Grillby.

“Undyne and I had tea with her about two weeks ago. In fact, It was Tuff who introduced us when I came back to play for the symphony. She put in a good word for me with my apartment manager which is why I live in the monster district. She knew as poorly as they were paying me that I would wind up living in much rougher human districts.”

Sans laughed, “no wonder you are as comfortable with us as you are. You have been among us since the barrier broke.”

Candace’s eyes started to ache, “Let me go get my purse. These contacts are starting to bother my eyes, I’ve worn them too long today.” Candace got up and got her purse. She ducked into the bathroom and cleaned her glasses and took out the contacts. She put some eye drops in her eyes and put on her glasses. Much better.

She went back to her seat. Grillby smiled at her seeing her wear her glasses. He thought she looked cute in them. There was a pint glass half full of beer and a shot glass waiting for her.

“Come on, girly,” said Undyne. “It’s time to get drunk.”

“Are we going to be cooking breakfast drunk at five in the morning again?”

“You bet, its gets Alphys off to a good start. Plus we have to polish off that bottle of vodka.”

Candace laughed, “Don’t forget that bottle of sparkling wine.”

Undyne’s eye gleamed, “After a night like tonight getting drunk sounds good.”
"Ready Candace? Show the good folks how to drink a Flaming Dr Pepper," smirked Grillby.

He touched the shot glass with a lick of his own fire. She promptly picked it up and dropped into the beer. She did not hesitate to pick up the pint glass and chug the whole drink. She belched a little and laughed.

"Sorry, folks. The beer does that to me."

Grillby smiled at Candace, "Now what is your next favorite drink?"

"Gin and tonic."

"You have interesting tastes."

"Can’t drink the same stuff over and over again. It’ll get dull."

"You were right in a sense, I like to know how much my employees can drink. So getting drunk with me is a sort of a hazing ritual."

"You had better be prepared, I can handle my alcohol well. It’s a side effect from working in bars while in school and being Irish. I can drink a lot."

Grillby smiled at Candace. "What will it be next?"

"Anything?"

"Anything."

"A shot of Patron silver."

"Well, if that is all for tonight, Grillby. Myself and Sans will head back to New Home. said Toriel. “It was nice to meet you, Candace. We will see more of each other, I’m sure. Will you be playing at Fridays mixer?”

"Yes."

"I will see you then." In a blink both Sans and Toriel were gone.

Grillby handed Candace and Undyne salt shakers and a lemon wedges.

Three shot glasses came out. Grillby filled them all with the requested tequila.

Candace licked the base of her thumb.

"Uh-uh Candace, we are taking this shot together."

Candace rubbed her her thumb dry.

"Ready Ladies? Lick.. shake…lick… drink… suck," Grillby called out the shot.

"Whoa, Candace, that is smooth tequila," said Undyne.

"Patron is the best," replied Candace. “But kinda pricey, so I don’t drink it much.”
“You really can hold your own, can’t you,” said Grillby. “Ever try monster alcohol?”

“I’ve had monster wine. Its good stuff. Much smoother than human wine.”

Grillby reached underneath the bar and pulled out a bottle filled with a glowing purple liquid.

Candace whistled, “Nectar?”

“You ever drink this?”

“No, but I’ve seen it before.”

“Be prepared, this stuff is much smoother than any human alcohol, but will get you drunk even faster than 151. Let’s see if you can handle a few shots of this stuff.”

“Try me.”

Grillby poured Candace the shot. Undyne was watching her carefully. Nectar was strong even for monsters. Humans who drank this had varying effects. Grillby wanted to know if she would be capable of handling magic of this magnitude. Most humans passed out after the first shot.

Candace looked at the glowing shot. She shrugged and downed the shot.

“Mmmm. That’s good. Is it me or is it getting warm in here?” She untied her bow tie and unbuttoned the neck button of her blouse. She fanned herself. She giggled. “Can I have another one?”

“Wait a sec, Can. Let me catch up,” said Undyne. Grillby poured out shots for himself and Undyne. He was still watching Candace. Humans ordinarily passed out by now. Her fair cheeks were rosy, but she was still in control of herself. Her rosy cheeks just set off her red hair and deep blue eyes. She was beautiful. She was getting drunk. Both he and Undyne downed the shot of Nectar.

Undyne giggled, “You’re right, Can. It is a little warm in here.”

Grillby poured out second shots for them all. They clinked glasses, “Cheers!” and downed the second shot. Both Undyne and Candace were laughing at nothing. Grillby watched them both.

“Come on Can, let’s go home. We can finish the vodka, watch movies, and fix breakfast in a few hours,” She was speaking carefully. You could tell they were equally drunk, even after drinking Nectar. Grillby was impressed. This was the first human he had ever met that could handle two shots of Nectar. They got off their bar stools. They staggered a little, they leaned on each other and laughed.

“Now, ladies, I can’t let you two try to walk home,” said Grillby. He picked up his phone and called than a taxi.

Candace was surprised he was acting stone cold sober even after the two shots of Nectar.

Grillby looked at Candace and Undyne. He himself was doing his best to act sober, even as these two didn’t bother. He helped them outside.

Grillby gave the cab driver the intersection of both Candace’s and Undyne’s building and got in the cab with them. The three of them staggered into the building and took the elevator up to their floor.

“Let’s go to my place,” said Candace. “Let’s let Alphys sleep.”

“I’ll go get the vodka,” said Undyne. She staggered off in the direction of her apartment.
Candace unlocked her door and let Grillby in. Her apartment was small but neat. There was a baby grand piano in the corner. There was also sheet music in a bookcase by it as well as a piece pulled out on it.

Grillby went to her piano and looked at the piece.

“Ahh… Moonlight Sonata. Good piece by Beethoven. Have you memorized it yet?”

“Close. I’m still working on some of the trickier parts. Let me go change.”

Candace staggered into her bedroom and closed the door. She quickly changed into jeans and a t-shirt. She started hearing music from her piano. It sounded like Chopin’s Minute Waltz. She smiled. Rumors looked like they panned out as far as Grillby being a connoisseur of music. She walked back into her living room and grabbed her cigarettes from her purse. She lit up as she walked outside to her small terrace. It was cold outside but it felt good on her alcohol warmed skin. Grillby followed Candace outside.

“I have a question for you. Why haven’t you auditioned for me before? You are one hell of a pianist.”

“You are the famous Grillby. I am just a nobody and human at that. I never thought you would give me the time of day for an audition,” Candace took a long drag from her cigarette. She adjusted her glasses.

“That hurts a little. I can see your point, though. I should have approached you a long time ago. I’ve been watching you since your debut with the symphony. I guess I wanted to see how you would grow before I approached you.”

“And now?”

“You’ve stagnated some. Playing the same tired pieces over and over again for people who do not appreciate your gifts. I’m just glad you didn’t throw in the towel.”

“Sometimes I think the only way I’ve stayed sane is being neighbors with Undyne. She is always trying to get out in public to play. Always getting me to try new pieces. She always said I was too damn good to let my talents slide. Speaking of which.”

Undyne had just staggered into Candace’s apartment. She had taken off her armor and was wearing jeans and a tank top. Candace put out her cigarette and staggered back inside. She pulled out shot glasses and wine glasses. Undyne had brought a large bottle of vodka. Candace pulled out of her refrigerator a large bottle of sparkling wine to use as a chaser. Undyne went to the drawer where she knew Candace kept her poker set. Candace turned on her laptop and pulled her mp3 list and started to play music softly.

“Strip poker?” asked Undyne.

Candace laughed, “I’m not that drunk, Dye!”

“CHICKEN!!”

“Okay, fine.”

“Shirts, first!”

Candace took off her Tee, Grillby took off his dress shirt and Undyne took off her tank top.
“Cheater!” yelled Undyne, “Your wearing a camisole.”

“I was supposed to be waitressing tonight, Dye. You think I have never had someone dump drinks on a white dress shirt? It’s closer to being naked than you think,” shot back Candace.

“She’s right, Dye,” said Grillby who was wearing a plain white tee himself. “I usually send people home after such a spill. No one likes being exposed like that.” He grabbed the vodka and filled the shot glasses and poured the wine. Flames were gently licking off his forearms. They toasted with the vodka and downed the shot. Candace dealt the first hand. They began to sip the wine as they played.

After about five shots each, the bottle of wine, more wine, frequent dance and story interruptions. They noticed it was close to five. There was a knock on the door. Candace who was down to her bra and panties, managed to get to her feet. She found a robe in her bedroom and staggered to her door. There was a note with a knife on her door.

“What the fuck??” she managed to slur. Grillby staggered to her. He hissed when he saw the knife. “Were we followed?”

“I don’t know,” he said quietly.

“I don’t want to touch it.”

Undyne had joined them. “Don’t touch it. Let’s report it to the police and let them handle it.”

They called the police and quickly got dressed. Grillby didn’t look as immaculate as he did when he first got there but he still looked damn good, thought Candace.

He handed her two pills. “To sober up with,” was all he said.

She was familiar with the pills. It would also prevent a hangover. She swallowed them dry, knowing they would work better taken that way. She began to feel their magic infuse in her. She was sobering up. Her head cleared but her glasses were filthy from being taking on and off as they played poker. She went to her purse sprayed and cleaned them to see clearly.

The police arrived, they stopped when they saw the captain of the monster division was here. They took their statements and fingerprinted the knife. When they were done they took the knife for evidence and handed Candace the note on the door. It had two words: RACE TRAITOR. Candace blanched, she had never been caught up in the racism before. All because she lived, worked, and were friends with monsters. It made her sick to her stomach. Grillby took the note and burned it in his hand.

Undyne’s eye went hard. “Candace, if they start threatening you more, tell me right away. I won’t tolerate this garbage so close to my own home, to a good friend. In fact I’ll talk to the building manager and see if there is anything on the security tapes.”

Grillby nodded at Undyne, “You may want to talk to your superiors about letting a few more Royal Guardsmen help out with patrols. I think we would all feel safer if a few more of our people were out on the streets. I am surprised though, most humans tend to be watched entering our part of town, just as we are when we leave here.”

Undyne’s face became grim. “I’ll see what I can do.”

“Am I watched when I move around here?” asked Candace.

Undyne shook her head. “Not by us. We know which humans are trustworthy. You and a few others
are. We always watch strangers though. Most of them are decent enough people. It’s the ones who aren’t that we are on constant watch for. I can’t say though, if humans are watching you, when you leave here. Being that you live among us with no hesitation and no problems, some might think that you are a monster spy.”

Grillby shook his head, “Humans and their paranoia. I had better go. Candace, I will see you at two for that tea party with Tuff. Undyne, come along if you can make it.”

With that Grillby left the two ladies.

“Come on Can, lets cook breakfast for Alphys,” said Undyne.

Candace and Undyne went to Undyne’s apartment and began to cook. Alphys awoke to the smell of breakfast. After seeing both Undyne and Candace drunk, she shook her head, but enjoyed the fresh breakfast they had made for her. It was something they liked to do after a rough night.

“What happened to get the two of you roaring drunk and cooking at five?” asked Alphys.

Undyne talked about the meeting at Grillby’s, but did not tell her about the threat that was posted on Candace’s door. It was too close to home to frighten Alphys with.

Alphys could tell that Undyne was hiding something. You don’t stay married for long without knowing the signs of hidden information. Alphys also knew that if it affected them Undyne would have said something. She would get it out of Candace later. Candace was an awful liar.

Undyne also told Alphys of the tea party with Miss Tuffet that was going on that afternoon. Alphys nodded, they had both known Tuff since they were girls in the Underground. Alphys wasn’t as good a player as Undyne and certainly not as gifted as Candace, but she had taken lessons with Tuff as a child. Tuff had remained a good friend who was extremely helpful when they had moved up to the surface.

After breakfast, Alphys got ready for work and left her wife and Candace with a smile. She would see them that evening, unless another emergency Council meeting was held. Candace went back to her apartment and went to bed. She needed to be up at noon for some rehearsal time before she went back to Grillby’s for tea time and later for work.
Candace awoke to her alarm at noontime. After a quick shower she dressed for a tea party and packed her work clothes for that night. She had a feeling that sometimes plans changed at a moments notice working at Grillby’s. After showering she began to practice the third movement of Moonlight Sonata. With just a little more practice she would be able to play the whole piece in front of an audience. Candace frowned, she might ask Grillby to let her off early to allow her to practice her repertoire for the next day’s mixer. Still it would be good to see Tuffet today. Tuff could make suggestions on her next pieces to study and memorize. Candace continued to practice switching from Beethoven to Mozart.

At one-thirty Undyne knocked on her door. Undyne was ready for a tea party with Tuffet. Candace went into her cabinet and pulled out a container of loose leaf Earl Grey tea. Candace grabbed her garment bag and with a smile both ladies headed to Grillby’s for tea with Tuffet. They decided to take a train and walk the rest of the way.

The short hairs on Candace’s neck were standing up. As they left the building they lived in it felt like they were being watched. They walked briskly from the train station to the back door of Grillby’s.

“Dye? Did you get the feeling that we were being watched?”

“Yeah, I did, Can. There will be knees knocking at the station after this.”

Undyne knocked on the back door. Dogaressa answered the door. With a gesture they followed her inside. Candace went to the locker room and placed her garment bag in it. Grillby met her at the doorway.

“There has been another change in plans. We are going to meet with Tuffet in the Underground and have our tea party at her estate there. Afterwards I want you to play at my bar there. A dear friend of mine is having a birthday party tonight and I want her to hear you play.”

“Dammit, I forgot it was the little punk’s birthday today,” said Undyne.

“Frankly, so did I, until Tuffet asked if I could deliver her gift to Frisk,” admitted Grillby.

“Let me call Alphys and ask if she can buy a present from the two of us.”

Undyne quickly left to another room to call Alphys.

“Well, I guess I can forget leaving early for some extra rehearsal time,” sighed Candace.

“You’ll get it no problem. Tuffet is excited that you are now working for me. She already plans to put you through your paces today. It will be good for you magically as well, she wants to teach you more about the magic of music.”

Undyne came back into the room after speaking to her wife. “Phew! I might have forgotten, but Alphys hadn’t. She’ll meet up with us later with a gift from both of us.”

Grillby smiled, “We should go. It’s a good hour train ride to the Underground from here.”
“Um, I don’t have a PassCard to enter the Underground,” said Candace. PassCards were a form of special passport allowing humans entry to the Underground. For humans to be granted one they had to work for a monster or know an official of the government.

“It’s okay. I have already arranged an overnight pass for you. Tomorrow morning, we will go to the PassCard office and make more permanent arrangements as one of my employees,” said Grillby. “Do you have your drivers license?”

Candace nodded.

“Good. That is all that we will need to arrange for one. If they require a second person to vouch for you, I’m pretty sure Undyne here can vouch for you.”

“No problem, Grillbz. I have wanted to show Candace my home for a while,” said Undyne.

“Shall we ladies?”

“Careful, Grillbz,” cautioned Undyne. “I’m pretty sure we were being followed from our building over here.”

“Shouldn’t be a problem once we get to the train station. PassCards and tickets are checked before we even get to the platform,” replied Grillby.

Grillby led them to the closest subway station which took them to Central Station which all trains either ended their line or started a new line. Grillby lead Candace and Undyne to an area that was sealed off from the other train routes. There was a window open. They walked up to the window. There was a seahorse monster behind the window. Grillby handed him a sheet of paper.

“An overnight pass as well as car tickets,” murmured the seahorse. He looked up at Candace. “Your photo ID miss?” Candace handed him her drivers license. “Very good. You will need to go the main office in the morning to pick up your permanent pass. You are lucky, Miss McLaren. Queen Toriel has already approved permanent permissions for you, even if you were to leave Grillby’s employment. Tomorrow when you are in the main office they will take some pictures and fingerprints and issue a permanent PassCard.” Candace was given her ID back. Grillby was handed three tickets. “Have a wonderful performance tonight,” the clerk said in closing.

Grillby handed her a ticket with another card attached to it. “Keep these together. They will ask for them at both door to the platform and before we board the train. The card will be stamped once we arrive at the entrance to the Underground. When we come back in the morning they will take the card when we board the train to leave.”

“Do you know why Queen Toriel is granting me a permanent PassCard?” asked Candace.

“No. I suspect, however, that you may find yourself performing for them in the future. She had called and asked several questions about your abilities to perform earlier.”

“She called and asked me several questions earlier as well,” chimed in Undyne. “I had wondered at the time. She will explain why when she is ready to.”

They walked to another door. There was a large dragon in black armor standing beside the door that snapped a smart salute to Undyne.

“RG 2, report!” she said to the dragon, saluting back.

“All things normal, although we did find a human attempting to follow you from Grillby’s. RG 1 has
since reported that they have been apprehended and taken to the police station.”

“Very good, RG 2. This is my friend Candace McLaren, I suspect that the human was really trying to follow her.”

The dragon looked at Candace curiously and nodded, “Your ticket and PassCard please?”

Candace handed over the ticket. He read over the documents and nodded. “First class cars are all the way on the front.”

“Wow Grillbz, even I don’t usually spend the extra for first class,” said Undyne.

“I figured we might want more privacy than in standard seating.”

“Good thinking. That way no one will disturb us without pissing off the Guardsmen on the train.”

“This has to do with last nights threat doesn’t it,” asked Candace.

“Yes,” was all Grillby said. Candace was aware of the threat and since there was no way to weed out all spies a few extra precautions were in order. He would explain once they were in the safety of their car.

They walked down the platform to were first class ticket holders were. There was another Guardsmen checking all tickets and PassCards. He nodded at Candace and gave a brief salute to Undyne, who nodded in acknowledgment. Candace had never been to the Underground before so had no idea how tight security was on the trains there. She thought it made airport security look like a cakewalk.

“Jeez, I thought airport security was strict,” she commented.

“It’s as much for the safety of monsters as it is for humans. We don’t want to be hurt nor do we want the humans who work for us to get hurt either,” answered Grillby.

Candace nodded. She knew that sometimes humans who worked for monsters had been harassed by hate groups. It was sad really. Humans who worked for and with monsters would tell you that monsters where frequently much kinder that humans. They were a people at peace with themselves. It was something beyond human comprehension. Humans still fought with other humans over petty differences. Monsters being wildly different from each other, didn’t sweat the small shit. They were MONSTERS and that’s that. Look at both Undyne and Grillby. Undyne was a fish monster who would raise hell to help a friend in need. Grillby was a fire monster who had a calmer disposition than Undyne but would no doubt rain fire on who would ever hurt a friend.

There was a bit of a ruckas. The Guardsmen who was checking tickets was pulling a human out of the class platform who had a regular seating ticket. The human was fussing over the fact that Candace was in the First Class line and was trying to make it sound as if she was being kicked out for being human. The Guardsmen said nothing and pushed her through a doorway to leave the ticket holders in peace.

“There’s one of your spies,” said Grillby.

Undyne nodded. “The Guardsmen will handle her. Someone might have panicked when they found out their original tail had already been apprehended by the police.”

“It’s a good thing your superiors listen to you.”
“They know we want the same thing. Hell they would be the first to tell you that they wish their recruits were as well trained as my recruit Guardsmen. A lot of what you hear about police brutality just doesn’t happen among us. We are very careful. A simple spray of calming potion allows us to diffuse dangerous situations nine times out of ten.”

“More effective than pepper sprays,” commented Candace.

The three of them boarded the train. A tall skeleton in a stewards uniform greeted them and showed them to their cabin.

“Is this the human Sans was telling me about last night, Undyne?” the skeleton asked.

Undyne smiled, “She is. Candace, this is an old friend of mine Papyrus. He is also Sans’ younger brother. He is both a steward and security for the train. He will make sure no one disturbs us. Watch it, Paps. We think some human spies are trying to follow us.”

Papyrus nodded. “I had already been informed about such a security breach. No worries, fire headed human, no one shall get past the Great Papyrus. I hope to hear you play piano tonight as we celebrate our friends birthday. Sans said you were an exceptional player.” With that Papyrus went to greet the next ticket holders.

The cabin was small but had spacious seating. There was tea and snacks set out for them as they got comfortable for the ride. The trip was only an hour long, but this was the only accepted way to go to the Underground. Cars and foot traffic would be turned away at the entrance. There have been just a few too many threats to allow for cars at the entrance anymore.

The train ride went smoothly as they pulled onto a platform just outside a large cavern an hour later. Papyrus joined them in their cabin as they pulled in.

“Excuse me, Undyne, Grillby and Candace. I have been asked to tell you to wait here for a few minutes longer than normal. We are trying to weed out a human with a counterfeit PassCard. As soon as we have detained them, you will be allowed to leave the train. Sans will be meeting us shortly to escort the three of you into the Underground. Until my brother arrives, I am to remain here to guard the three of you.”

Undyne started to get angry. “I just want to know why are these humans are threatening a friend of mine. Candace is among the best humans I have ever met. She has never had a problem among us. Why are humans threatening her?”

“I suspect Sans may know why, but he hasn’t spoken of it as of yet. He won’t say why until he is certain that Frisk is safe,” said Grillby.

Papyrus nodded in agreement. Undyne growled in frustration. There was a beep on a walkie-talkie. Papyrus pulled in an earpiece. After listening he replied. “10-4” “We can leave now, they have detained the suspect.”

The three of them stepped out onto a platform. The line of humans with PassCards had already been thinned out. Sans stood on the platform and smiled at the three of them. “This way, please.”

They walked over to an empty booth where they took Candace’s PassCard and Drivers License again. There was a bunny monster behind the booth who smiled kindly at Candace and stamped the card three times, once with red ink and twice with magic. She smiled at Candace and said, “When you leave tomorrow be prepared to spend an hour at that door,” pointing at a doorway. “The agents inside will create your permanent PassCard. After you have your permanent card you may buy an
annual train pass. The cost is three hundred dollars or one hundred gold for a yearly pass. That way you may ride the train daily if you so choose to. If you don’t buy an annual pass the ticket will be thirty five dollars or three gold per roundtrip ticket. First class is an extra fifteen dollars.”

“Thank you,” said Candace.

“I would get the annual pass if I were you,” said Sans. “Tori is paying quite a bit for both last nights and todays special performances. I think she has more special performances lined up for you. She has already asked Tuffet to help you prepare for such events.”

“That would explain the permanent PassCard,” said Grillby. “Still, I hope she doesn’t plan to steal Candace from my employment.”

Sans chuckled, “No, Grillbz she doesn’t. She wants to utilize her special abilities in a fashion similar to last night. Today is for Frisk’s enjoyment. Frisk was rather upset at not being able to hear Candace perform last night. She has never heard of a human being able to use music magic. She wants to know its subtleties and differences from the music magic of monsters. It’s an outgrowth of her university studies.”

“Frisk and her damn studies,” groaned Undyne. “She should learn that feeling can be more revealing than understanding. Alphys should tell her this type of magic isn’t a science but an experience. Alphys would know. She tried to study it like a science but found that it really just takes away from feeling the magic.”

“As I recall, she tried some of her experiments on me,” said Candace. “I thought her frustration was because I couldn’t use magic and couldn’t quantify what she wanted to know so badly.”

“No, Candace. She could readily feel the magic. But it’s not a type of magic that can be put into hard facts. It’s full of life and love. The kinds of things science has a hard time explaining,” said Grillby.

“Art would be a better description,” said Sans.

Chapter End Notes

Feel free to comment!
Grillby’s phone rang. “Yes, Tuff? No, we ran into a small delay. We will be there shortly. Yes, she did. We will see you in a few minutes.” To Sans Grillby said, “We have to go, Tuffet is getting impatient.”

“I am to escort you to Tuffet’s,” said Sans. “If you would please hold onto my jacket I will take us all there.”

Candace, Grillby, and Undyne grabbed various parts of Sans’ jacket and with a nauseating WHOOSH, they were next outside a large cavern that was covered in spider webs. Candace, being a long time friend of Tuffet, knew that spiders of every type including scorpions tended to flock around Tuffet. They wouldn’t hurt her. Tuffet would never tolerate the small spiders hurting her. Candace walked into the cavern confidently.

“Candace,” came a high pitched squeal. “How good of you to come to my home! Did you remember the Earl Grey?”

“I did Tuff,” replied Candace. She approached the spider monster with her arms out to hug her old friend. A spider lady wearing a purple dress with her black hair tied up into a bun, scurried to Candace and gave her a warm hug.

“Grillby, Undyne, Sans. Come here and give us a hug!” commanded Tuffet. They all smiled and greeted Tuffet with as much warmth and care as Candace had.

“Come in. Come in! We shall have tea in my parlor. Afterwards I want to hear all of you play my piano,” said Tuffet excitedly. She never had all three of her best students at once in her home before. Tuffet hoped this was the first of many such tea parties.

They walked into Tuffet’s parlor and Candace handed Tuffet a canister of loose tea leaves. With a smile Tuffet went to her tea set and added the tea to her teapot. She observed Candace closely. Candace was a little pale and looked tired. Looking Closer she could tell that Candace had used quite a bit of her magic recently. Hmm. She would ask after everyone was comfortable. She added some of her special tea leaves that would help give Candace more energy. She used it herself after she used as much magic as it looked like Candace had used.

“So Tuff, why are you here in the Underground, instead of your home on the surface,” asked Undyne.

“Some business with my sister has me here for a few days. I called Grillby to deliver my birthday present to Frisk for me, since I will be busy with Muffet tonight.” Tuffet sighed, she and her sister were like night and day. “So Candace, is Grillby already working you to the bone? You seem rather exhausted.”

“Not intentionally, Tuff,” answered Grillby for Candace. “An emergency meeting had been called last night to try to settle the rise in hate crimes. Those city councilors kept on debating after the issue was settled about the numbers of humans that work for us.”

Tuffet shook her head. “Let me guess. That fat old fool, Donaldson, kept on arguing that humans should only work for other humans in spite of what humans themselves choose to do. Nevermind that we have earned the respect of humans that work both for and with us.”

“That just about hits the nail on the head,” stated Sans.
“The hate crimes will only continue as long as he keeps whipping the anti-monster groups into a frenzy.”

“Aye, you’re right, Tuff,” murmured Undyne.

“How long was poor Candace forced to try to keep the mood calm?”

“Seven hours,” Grillby stated.

“And was she successful?”

“Quite. I was very surprised on how much endurance she has. You are the only person that I know of that could have endured even longer.”

“I am not so sure I could have. Not while trying to keep all the hatred out. And tonight?”

“She is to perform for Frisk’s birthday. Quite a different atmosphere. Tonight should be fun and not a grueling endurance test. Tomorrow she will perform at a mixer that will be balanced for fun and work.”

“I want to see her perform at the mixer, Grillby. It will give me a good idea on where she needs work magically. Today, she is still too drained from last night.”

Tuffet turned her attention to Candace. “Tonight I want you to play straight. No emoting while you play. Frisk will be able to see how you truly play tomorrow. You need to be at full strength magically for a mixer.”

“Tuff, I have a question,” said Candace. “Why did you never tell me that part of my gift is magic.”

“Mostly because right now your gift is tied up in playing the piano. You can only use it while you play, currently. The other reason is that being human, other humans tend to outcast humans with magical gift no matter how great or small they may be. You may not be able to use web magic the way I do, but when there is a piano in front of you, you are as powerful as any monster. It’s a subtle power. Not easily studied even by monsters.”

“You can force people to change their minds. There are other things you can learn to do, and I can teach you how to do them. However, if I were to do this, you must agree to something. You can never use this power on monsters. You must agree to live among us and share our sorrows. Permanently. If I were to teach you to your full power and ability, you agree to no longer be considered human. You will look like a human, but for all intents and purposes you will be a monster. I have had you live among us and learn about us for a reason. You are a powerful creature. I want that power to be ours. Humans haven’t earned the right to have those powers returned to them yet. Only a handful have, and you are one of them. I have spun a web and read the future for Toriel. Your fate is among monsters, not humans.”

“It always has been, hasn’t it,” asked Candace. “That was why you took me as your student to begin with, isn’t it?”

“Yes, child. That was why I sought you out when we first met. I had spun a web when the barrier broke to have insight into the future. I saw a human girl with hair like fire with magical ability. If I did not take her as a pupil the power growing within her would kill her. I found you and taught you how to control the power within. Enough to keep the magic from killing you. There is more power in you, though. I wanted to see what type of human you would become before I taught you more. You have exceeded my expectations. You have remained pure of heart and SOUL. It is time for you to break the bonds that humans have placed on you. Breaking these bonds places you among monsters
not humans. I personally am not sure if you were ever truly a human.”

“You think other humans will try to use her,” Grillby said softly.

“Or will kill her for being different,” chipped in Sans.

“NEVER!” exclaimed Undyne.

Tuffet smiled at the assembled group. “That is why I had her move into your building, Undyne. Of all the monsters Frisk has changed, she changed you the most. You would be fair to Candace until she ever gave you a reason not to be. You would defend her with your life if necessary. Now I am tasking all of you with guarding her.”

“Wait a minute. This is happening fast don’t you think? I’m not even sure what all the fuss is about. Not yet. You tell me that I am powerful, yet why is it that no one has ever realized that I am.”

Grillby said quietly to Candace, “They do now. Why else would you be at the center of the hate groups harassment now? They want to frighten you, push you off balance to the point where you will make a mistake, like move away. Isolation is a simple yet effective way to torment someone. Once isolated you are an easy target. They can either kidnap you or kill you and no one would ever know what has happened. You would just become another number.”

Candace sighed, “Do I even have the option to think about it?”

Tuffet looked at Candace closely, “You may, but I do not think you should wait too long to make a decision. If humans are targeting you, you will need to know how to protect yourself and soon. Otherwise, you might just find yourself dead.”

The mood had become subdued after Tuffet’s talk with Candace. Both Sans and Grillby noticed that while Candace remained pleasant, she was also lost in her thoughts. Grillby knew that to trying to talk to her more about Tuffet had said would go nowhere right now. He kept observing her, giving her the space she required. Sans was watching Grillby as he observed Candace and wondered about his old friend. As much as Grillby was divorced with a daughter, he seemed to care an awful lot for this girl. He would need to watch Grillby. He wondered how Candace would handle meeting his daughter and some of the fighting he still did with his ex-wife.

After the tea party with Tuffet concluded, Sans teleported them to Snowdin. Grillby and Undyne were arguing on whether Candace should spend the night at the inn or with Undyne at her house.

“Undyne, it will be easier for both myself and Candace if she stays here in Snowdin. We still have to go to the PassCard office in the morning and get that squared away,” Grillby reminded Undyne.

“What about the security issue that’s ongoing? She will be safer if she stays with me. It’s no big deal if we have to leave fifteen minutes earlier, to get her to you. You know the ferry is right by my front door.”

“Except, people tend to come and visit you day or night, especially Papyrus. No one gets any rest at your house. She needs to be sure to rest, tomorrow is a pretty big mixer. Tuff will be highly disappointed if Candace can’t play at her full ability tomorrow and will then take any choices away from all of us.”
“And the security issue?”

“I was going to ask Carrots if Lesser Dog could spend the night in the hallway. He can send the alert to both Dogamy and Dogaressa immediately.”

Undyne looked surprised, “When did Dogamy and Dogaressa get here? Aren’t they your security team on the surface?”

Grillby sighed, “Yes. But with last night’s scare, I thought it would be best if they came here ahead of everyone to double check everything. Besides, you know how Dogaressa likes seeing her grandpups.”

Undyne shook her head, “I’ll let it go for now, but I’m not happy. I still think she would be safest if she was at my house.”

Grillby smiled at Undyne, “She is coming back on Saturday to perform. She can spend the night with you on Saturday.”

“Come Candace, let me show you Snowdin. It’s a good thing it is winter in the city. You are already dressed for the cold,” said Grillby.

Snowdin surprised Candace by being a beautiful little Christmas village. Grillby corrected her by calling it a Gyftmas village. From Grillby’s description, it didn’t sound too different from Christmas. Gyftmas just didn’t have the religious symbolism. They walked to the front door of Grillby’s bar. He paused and bowed to Candace.

“Welcome to my original bar and grill.”

The inside was small and tightly packed. There was a green fire elemental standing behind the bar.

“Daddy!”, the fire elemental squealed. She came around the bar and gave Grillby a big hug.

“Fuku, sweetheart.” Grillby gave his daughter a return hug and kiss on the cheek.

“Fuku, let me introduce you to my piano player, Candace McLaren. Candace, this is my daughter, Fuku Ignus. Fuku runs my bar here in the Underground, while I run my second bar on the surface.”

Fuku held out her hand and she and Candace shook hands. “I remember seeing you play with the Ebott City symphony a few years ago. I’m glad to see that you now work for my father. I always told him that your talents were being wasted among humans.”

“I guess you are both right,” replied Candace.

“It’s good that you are playing for Frisk tonight. Not enough people play for her birthday.”

“Tonight is a special commission from Toriel,” Grillby informed his daughter. “She should have special payment for both myself and Candace. Keep an eye out for it.”

“I will, Dad.”

“Candace this way to my piano, we are early. I think it might need a good tuning before it is played tonight.”
Fuku was watching her father who was watching Candace. It had been a long time since her father liked anyone. His bitter divorce from her mother was one of the reasons he had moved to the surface. As a teen, all too often she found herself being pulled between both of her parents. There must be something special about this human to attract him. Even now, after being divorced for years, her mother would still go out of her way to pick an argument with her father. It was amazing that her father had come to the Underground at all with a woman. Her mother would stop by just to embarrass her father and humiliate the person he was with, employee or not.

Candace, for her part, walked over to the baby grand piano tucked into a corner and pulled it out. She began to play some simple pieces to test the tuning of the piano. Frowning she began to play faster double checking the action of the piano. She nodded and said to Grillby, “The action is in good shape but it does need tuning and some pedal adjustment.” She began to pull apart several pieces of the piano and from her tuners workbag pulled out felt and several tools. She worked on the piano while Grillby and Fuku retreated to an office to take a look at the books. Sans and Undyne retreated to the bar where Sans drank a bottle of ketchup and Undyne drank a cup of tea and made small talk. Candace was mumbling to herself as she worked. After about an hour Candace sat on the bench and began to play. She started simply with Ode to Joy and worked her way to the first movement of Moonlight Sonata.

“Beautiful,” came a new voice. Candace looked up and saw a young woman with wavy brown hair and dusky skin. Candace smiled and started to play the second movement. The audience in the bar was in rapt silence as she played. Grillby and Fuku came out of the office and watch her continue to play. Encouraged by the crowd she decided to test out her interpretation of the third movement. Grillby and Undyne’s eyebrows raised as she played it, they knew she was working on it but didn’t know how close she was to performing it. This was also to further test the action of the piano itself to ensure that she was correct about it being in good shape. Candace focused on her playing as she performed the piece. She was also checking her muscle memory as she played. When she finished, the bar erupted in applause.

“Amazing!” exclaimed the young woman.

Sans smiled at her and said, “See, Frisky, I told you she was awesome.”

Grillby smiled at them and stepped in, “Frisk, this is my pianist, Candace McLaren. Candace, this is her Highness, Princess Frisk Dreemur, ambassador of the Kingdom of Monsters to Humans.”

“Please, just call me Frisk,” said Frisk, holding out her hand in introduction.

“I’m glad you could make it today to Frisk’s birthday party,” she said. “Frisk was upset that she didn’t get to hear you play yesterday, so I called Grillby to see if you could play for her tonight. I’m glad you were available.”

“I’m just happy to be able to play for such illustrious company,” replied Candace.

“I wish to discuss further business with you later,” said Toriel directly to Candace.

“I hope you are not planning on stealing one of my employees, Tori,” said Grillby.
“No, nothing like that, Grillby. We will talk about it later,” replied Toriel. Grillby nodded at Toriel and helped Candace put the piano back together after it’s tuning.

After the piano was put back together she adjusted the bench for her usage and sat back behind the piano. She looked at Frisk and said, “Does the birthday girl have any requests?”

“Um, I do. Do you know the song that was on that Tom and Jerry cartoon?”

Candace and Grillby laughed to Frisk’s dismay.

“I’m sorry, Frisk. It’s not in disrespect,” said Grillby. “That was one of the pieces I asked her to play when she auditioned for me.”

“I will play Hungarian Rhapsody no 2, if I may play the sixth movement when I am finished,” said Candace. Grillby brightened at the prospect of a piece he didn’t know she knew.

“Yes! Oh, yes, please,” said Frisk. “I have loved that song since I was a child.”

“Cartoons of that era are frequent first exposures to some of the best in classical music. I’m pretty sure that Looney Tunes ‘Rabbit of Seville’, and ‘What’s Opera, Doc?’ introduced you to the opera. It was like that for me as a kid too, although my grandfather was no slouch on the piano himself and taught me since I was four.”

Frisk’s eyes brightened. She didn’t often get the chance to speak to ordinary humans. Although she was a princess, she had been born as a common human. It was nice to speak on equal footing without regard to rank. She was pretty sure that was part of why her mother had asked Grillby to have Candace play for her tonight. There weren’t many humans that she trusted around Frisk, and Frisk could use a human friend or two.

Candace held out her hands for silence, and having received it she began to play, once again, Hungarian Rhapsody No 2. The crowd began to clap along to her performance and was having a good time with it, as was Frisk. When she finished the second movement Candace once again held out her hands for silence and played the 6th Hungarian Rhapsody. The piece was unfamiliar to most, except Grillby who beamed at her performance.

“I have a question,” asked Frisk. “I know you are playing correctly, but why is it written in the music to sound as if you are playing incorrectly?”

“Those are called grace notes. It’s meant to catch your ear. Franz Liszt and Frederic Chopin made particular use of them. Chopin himself wrote a whole piece dedicated to ‘Wrong Notes.’ So in honor of your question I will play Chopin’s Etude, Opus 25 Number 5, the Wrong Note Etude. My apologies if it sounds like a cacophony, it’s written in honor of deliberate grace notes.”

Candace played for Frisk the Wrong Note etude. Frisk was smiling when she finished.

“Now it would be hard to believe that part of the same Etude and Opus comes this piece, which I dedicate to the town and people of Snowdin. This is the eleventh movement called ‘Winter Wind,’ ” said Candace.

Grillby could tell that Candace was following Tuffet’s instruction to play straight and wasn’t using her magic at all. Still, as she played he could feel the bite of the winds outside of Snowdin and see the fall of snow. Both the composer and the player were brilliant. Frisk was rapt in the music and everyone who was in the bar was just as enchanted. Fuku was trying to keep up with patrons as they ordered, but she stopped every few couple of minutes just to listen. Fuku had managers she could trust. She should come with them to the surface tomorrow and just enjoy a night off with Candace.
playing. Grillby made a mental note of that.

“Dye! Come and join me for a duet!” Candace shouted.

Undyne gave Candace a big smile and sat next to her on the bench.

“What shall we play?”

“How about Rhapsody in Blue?”

They nodded and started to play together. Even though they were playing as a piano duet, you could still get a sense of an orchestra even as they played. Grillby could tell they played duets often and felt a stab of jealousy. He wanted to play a duet with her.

“Do you know Brahms Waltz Number 39?” Grillby asked.

“Both parts,” replied Candace.

“Play with me. I’ll play the second piano, you play first.”

Undyne got off the bench and Candace moved up on the bench and Grillby sat next to Candace. They nodded at each other and began to play the duet together. Frisk could tell they were having fun together, as they smiled at each other while they played.

To Fuku it looked like a courting dance. Her parents, for all that they had been married, had not been SOULmates. Could it be the human with fiery hair was her father’s SOULmate? It would bear watching. She hoped so. In spite of rumors, her father was lonely. Women had a tendency to throw themselves at him, but he preferred to be the suitor. It was rare for him to be the chaser instead of the chased. It was good for him. Fuku could only hope her mother wouldn’t spoil things for her father.

When they finished, Undyne said, “Alright, you two. Quit hogging the piano, it’s my turn for a while.”

Grillby and Candace smiled at each other and ceded the bench to Undyne. Grillby lead her to a bar stool and got her a golden flower tea. He saw to some of his customers as Toriel sat next to her.

“Thank you,” she said. “Frisk doesn’t often get to be friends with normal people, I appreciate you treating her as such.”

Fuku joined them, “She is just a little too responsible. Sometimes she should take some time off for herself.”

Toriel agreed, “She works too hard for someone who is only just now twenty one.”

Grillby came back with a plate of food for Candace, “So, Toriel, what other business do you have planned for Candace? I was surprised to learn you had granted her permanent PassCard.”

“Really, it’s more for Tuffet. Tuff wants to teach her more than she already knows, but things are not going so well for Muffet right now. She needs to be here in the Underground for now.”

“What’s wrong with Muffet?” Grillby’s voice echoing his concern.

Candace was looking at Fuku. She got the impression that Fuku didn’t like Muffet.

“Not so much with Muffet herself, but with the smaller spiders. Webrot disease is going through her cavern and Muffet needs Tuffet’s help to cure the smaller spiders. You know it can take take a long time for webrot to be eradicated. Tuffet is a better healer than Muffet, so Muffet asked her twin to
help her,” replied Toriel.

Grillby shook his head, “She hasn’t been cleaning out the old webs enough. You know that after so long they need to be taken down and burned to prevent disease.”

“She has been focusing on her bakery. She’s trying to get things together to open another bakery on the surface. I told her she should wait a while until things are a little more settled with humans. You know how she is though. Once she gets an idea through her head, it’s tough for her to let it go.

“I’ll make sure to send her some herbs and sulfur rich soot. That should help kill the disease. She still needs to burn all her webs though. Webrot only goes away once all the webs, new and old, are taken down and burned. It stops the spread of the disease.”

“I’ll make sure to pass on your message.”

“Don’t tell her I said that. Muffet get ideas about our relationship once I say anything to her.”

Toriel smiled at Grillby. Grillby had found out to his detriment why it was better to be married to a SOULmate. She held her tongue. Besides some of the looks Grillby had been giving Candace gave her hope for Grillby. She had caught his jealousy when Candace was playing a duet with Undyne. Right now, he would pass it off as professional jealousy. When he was ready, he would see it for what it was. The first steps towards true courtship.

It was after midnight, Grillby lead Candace to an inn not far from his bar. There was a pink bunny monster waiting at a desk inside.

“Carrots,” Grillby greeted the bunny warmly, “This is my employee Candace McLaren. I have already paid for a room for her.”

Carrots nodded, “Lesser Dog got here an hour ago and has already patrolled the premises. He will stand guard in the hallway tonight, but don’t be afraid to pet him Miss McLaren. He loves a good petting.”

Carrots handed Candace a key. It was the shape of a carrot. “Your room is the first door to the left. Have a good night.”

“I’ll pick you up in the morning and we will go to the PassCard office before we leave. Be careful petting Lesser Dog, he doesn’t like to let go of a good friend.”

Candace wearily went to her inn room. There was a small dog that resembled a Collie waiting in the hallway. He was wearing a breastplate and had a small sword strapped to it.

“Woof!” he greeted Candace. Candace carefully began to pet the dog. He shook with excitement and his neck began to stretch. Candace petted him some more, the neck grew longer.

“Now, Now. I need to get some sleep. Keep an eye on my door for me and I will pet you to your hearts content in the morning.”

The dog barked in agreement and sat at attention in front of the door. With his neck stretching ability, no one could get loose from him easily unless he permitted it. The nice human would be safe.

Candace unlocked the door with the carrot key. There was a bed that looked like a pink cloud in the middle of the room. Candace wearily lay on it. It was as soft as it looked. She fell asleep before she
knew it. As she dreamed it felt as if there was soft music lulling her deeper into sleep.

Candace woke up on her own early. She felt refreshed and well rested. She walked out of her room and the dog guarding her door wagged his tail her. She crouched low and began to pet him. The dog got more excited as she pet him. Before she knew it she found that the dog had wrapped his neck around her and she was quite stuck.

“Please can you let me go?. I’m supposed to be meeting up with Grillby.”

“Woof,” the dog shook his head at her. He wanted her to pet him some more. She pet him some more and the more tangled she became.

Candace was begging, pleading, and trying to cajole the dog into letting her go. She couldn’t tell if someone had seen what had happened with the dog.

She heard a deep and hearty chuckle.

“I told you to be careful petting him,” came Grillby’s warm and amused voice.

“I was last night, but I promised him I would pet him as much as he would like this morning.”

Candace heard some mumbling. It sounded like Grillby was asking for Dogamy or Dogaressa. There was a distant howl. Suddenly, Candace found herself crashing to the floor after being let go of.

Grillby was smiling at Candace’s dismay. He helped her to her feet.

“Next time I tell you to be careful of certain monsters, please listen,” said Grillby.

“He is a sweet dog. It didn’t seem right not to pet him like he wanted so badly.”

“That is also his special attack if you were attacking him. He stretches his neck and entangles his enemies with it. His cuteness and sweetness is what’s so off putting. People want to pet him, then they become ensnared when they least expect it.”

“Sorry,”

“Come on, let’s get breakfast, then it’s time to go to the PassCard office.”

Grillby took Candace to the bar and grill. It was closed, except for Fuku, who appeared to be going over her inventories and accounting books.

“Dad, be careful. Mom called this morning and was ranting again about you being here.”

Grillby’s voice was flat, “She can rant all she likes. But she must also never forget that if she wants the alimony she likes so much, I need to be able to run my businesses.”

Candace didn’t say a word and tried to disappear. Of course, Grillby had to have been married at some point to have a daughter. She didn’t want to be caught in the crossfire of a divorced argument. She never understood why some divorcees could never get over their bitterness.

Grillby went to the back to get Candace’s breakfast. The front door burst open. Another fire elemental with white flames marched into the business.
“Where is he, Fuku?” the fire elemental had a femininely deep voice. Rich and smoky.

“I am right here, and if you think you can barge into my place of business to scream at me, you can march right out that door.” Grillby’s voice was quiet. He had come out the doorway from the kitchen and had a plate of food for Candace to eat for breakfast. He walked to Candace and place the plate in front of her.

“A human? You really have sunk low if you are currently fucking a human.”

Grillby’s voice got louder, “This is my employee, who came here on a special commission from Toriel herself. I am simply feeding her breakfast before we must return to the surface for tonight. I will not tolerate you slandering her. Leave, if you want to see your alimony check next week. If you do not, I will go directly to the divorce court judge and ask that they remove spousal support. You know I will win. Our original court order was only for five years. I have only kept paying you for some peace and quiet.”

The lady fire elemental sneered at Grillby, “Fine, go to the judge! He will not be impressed by all your girlfriends who hang around you all the time.”

Grillby laughed openly at his ex-wife, “As if you have any wiggle room yourself, Brandy. Who is it you are seeing now? Oh yes, I believe he calls himself Delphi. As if he were the holy fires of Apollo,” Grillby sneered at his ex-wife. “I see you have spent all of the alimony I have been giving you on him. What would happen if I cut off your alimony? Would he leave you for someone else? Someone younger and richer?”

Brandy looked at Grillby in surprise, she didn’t think he knew about her current lover. Not even Fuku knew about him. She had stepped into danger. It was true that her current lover was draining her dry. She needed more money from her ex-husband just to pay her bills.

Grillby’s voice took an uncharacteristic hint of command. “Go. Now. Leave me in peace. If you require more money, do what ordinary people do and get a job. I pay quite a generous amount in alimony, but you will not get any more from me.”

Shocked the lady spun on her heel and left.

Candace kept her gaze focused on her plate.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t want you to have to see any of that,” Grillby apologized to Candace. “What she said about you was completely out of line.”

“I just don’t know what to say. Does she always say that to your employees?”

“Sometimes. If she feels that they are younger or prettier than her. Brandy, that’s her name, was always a vain creature. I’m just glad that Fuku didn’t get her vanity or sloth. Please, Candace. Eat. I want to leave before she makes you a target for her insane jealousy.”

Undyne and Alphys walked into the bar. “Wow. I heard yelling. Was Brandy ranting at you again, Grillbz?”

“Always,” his voice was bitter.

“Hurry up and eat, Can. We are ready to go home, and I have reports to file at police headquarters.”

Candace nodded and quickly ate the breakfast that Grillby had prepared for her. It wasn’t as hot as it had been when that woman showed up, but it was still delicious.
“Fuku, does your manager know you taking today off special,” Grillby asked his daughter.

“Yes, he does. I will meet up with you later since I have to finish off inventory before I go. Before you leave, however, the payment you were expecting arrived.”

Fuku went to the back of the bar and came back with several envelopes. Grillby opened a sealed letter first and then three of the envelopes.

“One of these is for you Fuku, for last night. The other two are for the past two special meetings. These other two are for Candace. Her payment for playing for the queen and Frisk.”

Grillby handed one envelope to Fuku and two unopened envelopes to Candace. They were pretty thick. Candace opened the first one. There was two thousand dollars in cash in the envelope. There was also a note.

Here is the fifteen hundred dollars that Grillby negotiated for plus a five hundred dollar bonus for enduring as long as you did. I hope to use your services more in the future both on the surface and in the Underground. --- Toriel.

The second envelope had an equal sum in it with another note.

Thank you once again for playing for Frisk’s birthday party. I hope to see the two of you become friends as time goes on. Frisk couldn’t stop raving about your performance last night and I hope she is doubly impressed tonight. --- Toriel.

“Wow, I never saw such good pay with the symphony,” said Candace.

“King Asgore and Queen Toriel pay artists who work for and with them well. They know how rare gifts like yours are,” said Grillby. “I wish that Tuffet had introduced you to the queen before you left for Julliard. Tori would have made sure that even with scholarships you would not have had to take out loans for housing. At the Royal Conservatory, all students are given housing as well as all basic meals. It allows for students to focus on their studies, instead of worrying about where to live and when their next meal is going to be. I have noticed that on the surface student loans are closer to loan sharking. Who wants to spend twenty years paying back loans instead of building a career?”

Fuku nodded, “That’s why I went to the Royal University, instead of a surface university. Dad and I were shocked by the costs that humans and their parents frequently endure for education. Tori would be the first to tell you that there is no better investment of tax money than education.”

Candace finished her meal. “I’ll have to go to my bank at some point. I can’t keep this kind of cash on me.”

“Once we get back to town that’s what we will do. However I must insist you are guarded at all times. I don’t want you to get hurt just trying to take care of simple business,” said Undyne.

“How about assigning Lesser Dog to her? He will keep her safe and no one would ever think that the sweet and cute looking dog could be dangerous,” suggested Grillby. “That’s why I had him in the hallway at the inn last night. What bank do you use, Candace?”
“First National on Tem street.”

Undyne laughed. “How do you keep the Temmies off of you?”

“Easy, give them Temmie Flakes.”

“We should go. We still need to go to the PassCard office,” said Grillby. “If you would form a circle I can transport us to the train platform. Fuku, I will see you later at my apartment.”

“See you later, Dad,” replied Fuku.

Candace, Undyne and Alphys formed a circle and with a flash of fire they found themselves at the train platform outside a small building. Grillby walked to the door of the office and knocked. A small window opened and after seeing Grillby, the door was opened.

“Good morning, Grillby. Is this the human we need to create a PassCard for?” The monster appeared to be a waterfowl. It looked like a swan, with beautiful blue feathers and a green bill.

“Yes. This is Candace McLaren. It appears you should have gotten permanent permissions for her by the queen.”

The swan monster nodded. “This way, Miss McLaren.

An hour later after verifying her ID, fingerprints and various magical checks. Candace and Grillby left the PassCard office with Candace’s new PassCard and an annual train pass. They walked out to the platform where Undyne and Alphys were waiting. They then caught the return train back to Ebott City. Grillby insisted on escorting Candace to the bank where she deposited the majority of Toriel’s payment for her services. Grillby instructed Candace to be back at the bar by five thirty in the evening for that nights performance. Undyne and Alphys were still with Candace. They chatted amicably as they walked home. Candace did not get the feeling of being watched as she did the day before. She began to relax.

Three hours later Candace’s closet had been emptied and she sat on her floor disappointed at her wardrobe. It looked like she needed to go either to her storage unit to see if she had an appropriate outfit for the day or go shopping for a new dress. She decided to see if she had something first at her unit. Candace still felt leery of going out on her own. Still, she knew she couldn’t keep asking Undyne to guard her and she didn’t know if Undyne had asked Lesser Dog to come to her home. She decided it was worth the risk. She took Tuff’s Glove out of her purse and put in her pocket, just in case. The spider silk glove’s magic would activate and had a terrific punch attack if she were ever in a tight spot. She locked up and headed to her storage unit. Once again, she did not get the feeling that she was being watched as she walked confidently to her unit. Unlocking it, she walked inside and began to go through boxes of clothing. Candace heard people coming in and out of the storage facility. That was pretty common. People had a tendency to walk in and out as they either locked new things away or came to get things out of the units. She found a dress that would be a good performance outfit, but it needed to go to the cleaners. She would still need to go buy something for that night. She unlocked her hidden safe and pulled out five hundred dollars. It would be enough for both a new dress for that night and to clean the other dress for the following week.

Having tuned out the sounds of rest of the units Candace didn’t realize that it had become quiet. Too quiet. Candace suddenly felt some one grab her from behind and cover her mouth. The was a sweet
Undyne was angry. After she had filed her reports at the police station she had gone to the train station to pick up Lesser Dog and take him to Candace. Dogamy had told her that L had enthusiastically agreed to guard Candace and would be on the next train into the city. Can wasn’t home. She knew Candace was highly independent and had probably gone to get clothing to perform that night. Still, she should not have gone out alone. She called Grillby to see if she was with him.

“Hello?” Grillby answered his phone.

“Grillbz, it’s me. Is Candace with you?” Undyne asked trying her best to control her fear and anger.

Lesser Dog was sniffing around Candace’s door. The damn dog licked at her lock and magically unlocked it. She forgot that L had the ability to unlock doors with magic. He was sniffing around Can’s apartment. Undyne followed him in.

Grillby’s voice was surprised, “No. I thought she was going to be with you all day.”

Lesser Dog sniffed in Candace’s laundry hamper. He was getting a good sniff at what looked like a pair of her panties. Undyne blushed. She grabbed the panties away from L.

“L, GET OUT OF HER LAUNDRY!!!” “Sorry, Grillbz. I’m trying to control L...”

“He’s got a good idea. He can track her, if he has her smell. Call me as soon as you track her down.” Grillby hung up.

Undyne looked at the dog who was standing at attention in front of her. It looked like she was going to get a refresher course on dog magic.

“Come on, L. Let’s go and find Candace.”

Lesser Dog wagged his tail. He had her scent. He would have no trouble finding the nice human.

They walked out of Candace’s apartment and L locked the door with another lick. He began to sniff and found her smell. He let out a small whine that allowed him to lock onto her smell magically and began to lead the way. Undyne followed knowing that while Dogamy and Dogaressa were the more intelligent of the Dog Pack Unit, Lesser Dog was actually the best tracker in the unit. There were trade offs though. Dogamy and Dogaressa could communicate using words, L couldn’t. He had stronger dog instincts which is why he loved being petted more than the rest of the Dog Pack. As much as he could use his sword, his best weapon was a tie between is snaring ability and a truly vicious bite. However, unlike the dogs on the surface he had enough intelligence to know when to snare and when to bite. Being the most dog -like monster meant humans just saw a cute dog, instead of a dog with truly monstrous abilities.

Lesser Dog lead Undyne to Candace’s storage unit. Her door was wide open with Candace nowhere to be found. L kept sniffing. He began to growl. He could smell some nasty human who had not been with Candace had been in here. He could smell her leaving with the nasty human. He used a tracking magic even Undyne didn’t know he had. He began to glow and the scents began to show Undyne and himself what happened to the smells.

Undyne looked at L stunned as she saw him glow with magic and saw the smells take shape. She grew enraged when she saw the human drug Candace and take her from the unit. L growled angrily. They were both surprised when they saw the unit begin to glow brightly and begin to get hotter as
they realized that Grillby was there with them. He was white hot with rage.

Chapter End Notes

Briefly, Tuff’s Glove is actually the Tough Glove from the game. I decided to appropriate the Temmie name of Tuff Glove for story purposes.
Short chapter this time folks!
Candace woke up groggily not knowing where she was. It looked as if a tarantula had been tickling her face to get her to wake up. She had a bite on her hand. It crawled up by her ear.

“Sorry for the bite, Miss,” said the spider. “My bite counteracts the drug they had given you. My mistress asked me to follow you and keep an eye on you. I can smell Tuff’s Glove with you. You had better use it since they will come for you soon. I can help you, but you must be prepared to fight. I also have more information for my mistress.”

Candace reached into her pocket and put on Tuff’s Glove.

“All you need to do is take a swing at your enemy. The Glove knows what to do.”

“Is your mistress Tuffet?” Candace whispered.

“Yes,” whispered the tarantula. “She had seen the humans kidnapping you in her web. She asked that I follow you and help you as best I can. She told me to tell you she would explain more later.” The tarantula had one eye on Candace and the rest its eyes on the door. There were quite a few spiders in the room. They were all normal spiders, but being a matriarchal society, they all took their orders from Boss Spiders like Tuffet and Muffet. Spiders, living in the silence of their webs, gathered secrets. They passed on those secrets to their queens. That was how the tarantula found Candace faster than Lesser Dog. The spiders whispered their secrets to the tarantula, knowing he came from a Spider Queen.

The tarantula climbed off of Candace and inspected the lock. It poked its leg into the lock and unlocked the door.

Climbing back onto Candace it whispered into her ear. “We can leave quietly now.”

Cautiously, Candace opened the door. It was a dark hallway going in one direction. She silently walked into the hallway. She began to hear voices.

“Why didn’t you kill the filthy little race traitor? That was what I had ordered you to do the other day,” came a vaguely familiar voice.

“You forget yourself, Councilman. My orders come from the Council of Magi, we are to find all magical humans and bring them to our Master. This girl is gifted beyond your wildest dreams. If she is with Monsters, she can and will someday overthrow the Council. She will let Monsters control magic and truly free them. We cannot allow that. Humans can only rule this world so long as we keep Monsters in their chains.”

Candace grew enraged at the thought of monsters being kept like slaves. The tarantula on her shoulder began to rub his hind legs together creating a humming sound. Candace vanished with the humming. She quietly sneaked behind the man and with the gloved hand swung hard. The magic on the glove activated and punched the man unconscious. At the same time the other human screamed in pain as something was attacking him from behind.

It was Lesser Dog. He had bitten the other human in the hindquarters at first and having gotten his attention, bit him in the hamstring muscles, disabling him. Undyne face was pale with her rage as she held her spear in front of his face. The room was hot as Grillby followed the two of them still white hot in his rage. Undyne radioed for police backup.
“Go to him,” whispered the tarantula. “You are the only person who can calm him now.” The tarantula climbed off of Candace.

Candace approached Grillby cautiously. He shook his head at her and backed away.

“You! You damned impetuous fool! What where you thinking, knowing you have enemies out on the streets??!! You were lucky that Lesser Dog had just arrived to guard you! If we hadn’t arrived when we did, you would be dead or worse.” Grillby hissed at Candace.

“If screaming at me makes you feel better, then by all means keep going. I don’t think this is the time or place to do so, though,” said Candace calmly.

Grillby blinked at Candace. He suddenly realized she was right. She was looking directly at him unafraid of himself or his anger. He took a deep breath. His flames began to cool into a more normal color. His eyes were as bright as a star.

“You’re right,” Grillby ground out of his mouth. “But, I am not finished with you yet.”

Police arrived, it was a unit that was mixed humans and monsters. Undyne gave her report to the officers and the Councilman and the other human were arrested. They used a special pair of handcuffs that monsters tended to use on each other to bind their magic on the other human when Undyne reported he was a mage. She gave orders to put him in a monster cell that would keep him from using his magic. Candace was questioned by the policemen and a special spell was used on her to ensure she was telling the truth. Candace was released.

Grillby said nothing to Candace. Candace, for her part, ignored Grillby and was silent as the police drove them to Grillby’s apartment. Grillby hated this kind of silence. It was uncomfortable and unfriendly. At least with his ex wife she would have started on the cutting remarks and they would rip themselves into shreds by arguing.

He lead Candace into his apartment on the edge of the monster district. It was large penthouse that was one block from the train station where Candace repaired his public piano and four blocks from his place of business. It was also high enough to see the very edges of town and had a spectacular view when looking out the large picture windows at night. It was comfortably furnished and there was a grand piano in the corner. It was positioned so you could gaze out the windows into the city from many different angles from the piano bench.

Candace saw a door that lead to a terrace outside. She grabbed a pack of cigarettes from her purse and silently went outside to smoke. She wasn’t going to apologize. It was unfair to expect her to do nothing and be frightened when she could not sense she had been followed. She was not a child to be told what she could and couldn’t do. She at least had the sense to bring Tuff’s Glove with her.

Grillby was watching her smoke on the terrace. What on earth was he going to do with the girl? He was unused to women who were as independent as she was. Brandy, for all her yelling and screaming, was still clingy and dependent on him. They had been divorced since shortly before Frisk had ever come to the Underground and after all these years she still hadn’t let go of him. Candace was very different from Brandy. Let’s be honest with ourselves, he thought. You want Candace to be all contrition and tears and to be crawling all over you, begging for forgiveness. He studied her with her back to him. She is not that type of girl at all. She does not expect or demand more than what you have already given her. Let’s be brutal, Grillby, you find that independent streak as sexy as hell, he thought. He walked out onto the terrace.

“I’m not going to apologize to you,” said Candace her back still towards him.
“I know.”

“If I had thought for a moment I had been followed at all, I would not have gone out.”

“It’s unfair for me to think you would not be reasonable.”

“I had brought Tuff’s Glove as a precautionary measure.”

“It was a good precaution. I’m more angry that there was not more I could have done. Now that I think about it, since there is a mage involved, he could have kidnapped you at any time. Even in your own apartment. I’m just glad that Lesser Dog was able to track you.”

“What happens next?”

“I am going to call Toriel then Sans and get their opinions. I might ask Sans if you could couch surf with him for a few days. Undyne might want you to stay with her, though.”

“You mean taking me back to the Underground.”

“Yes. Before you object, listen to me. There are human mages involved. Maybe there always were. They know about you. There are a lot more protections for you in the Underground than here. Our magic is more limited here. There are no such limitations in the Underground.”

Candace felt something furry brush her hand. It was the tarantula. She smiled at the spider and he crawled up her arm and sat on her shoulder. She nodded at Grillby.

“Okay. That’s reasonable.”

“Is that one of Tuffet’s spiders?”

“Yes, although he didn’t give me his name.”

“Just call me Barkweb, Miss Candace,” said the tarantula.

“Let me make my calls,” said Grillby.

Grillby went inside. Candace lit up another cigarette as she calmed down herself.

“Fiery men, tend to be passionate men,” said Barkweb.

“What’s that go to do with me?”

“You’ll find out,” said Barkweb cryptically.
Undyne had come to Grillby’s apartment just as soon as she finished arresting the two men. One of her superiors had argued with her about the need to put the mage into an anti-magic cell. He had quit objecting when the man had been strip searched and several magical items had been found on him. They were sent to the monster’s labs for testing for what type of magic they had and what the items did.

Candace was napping on Grillby’s couch when she arrived. Grillby was watching Candace with a certain amount of possessiveness as she slept. Undyne looked at Grillby and raised an eyebrow at him. He blushed at Undyne when he realized that Undyne had seen the look he had been giving Candace. She smirked at Grillby. This was the first time, since she has known him, that he looked at any female this way. He never looked at Brandy in such a manner. Not even when things had been good between them.

Undyne cocked her head towards the terrace. This way, they could talk without disturbing Candace.

“Did you fight?”

“No. I realized no matter what, she would have been kidnapped. I’m just glad she took Tuff’s Glove with her when she left. Tuff also put a sentry on her, too.”

“I saw the spider in that place.”

“I’m taking her to the Underground for now.”

“It’s probably for the better, you know.”

“I just wish I could have protected her better,” Grillby’s voice was tired and a little sad.

“You can’t protect people from themselves. Candace has always been independent. She doesn’t like or take orders well. She probably also didn’t want to you to think that she was helpless, even though right now she is.”

“There is nothing wrong with asking for help if you need it.”

“It’s that independent streak again, she hates asking for it even if she needs it,” said Undyne.

Grillby was silent.

“Grillby, I have just one question for you. How did you find Candace’s storage unit?”

“I got lucky by spotting you and L tracking Candace. I just followed the two of you.”

“L should be here soon. Once he gets here, we should start heading out.”

“I have already contacted Toriel. We are to wait for Sans to arrive at about four this afternoon. But, I need a favor. Can you get into Candace’s apartment and gather her clothing and other things? She will need at least her clothes when we go to the Underground.”

Undyne nodded, “Since it’s only one, I can also make sure her laundry is done. I’ll be back in a
couple of hours.”

“Also on the way back, can you check her storage unit and make sure it’s locked and sealed from intruders?”

“Will do,” said Undyne. That would only take a couple of minutes, since she had already planned on doing that. They went inside.

“Mmm. Is that you Dye?” came the drowsy voice of Candace.

“Yeah. It’s me, punk. It’s a good thing you knocked the lights out of the mage. He had a load of magical gadgets with him. Listen Can, I’m going to go make sure your storage unit is locked up and sealed from intruders. After that, I’m going to grab your clothes from your place. Did you need anything else from either place?”

“Yes. In my storage unit you will find a small safe. It’s very small, only six inches tall and wide. I would like that. In my apartment, on the bookcase near my piano, there is a strongbox and an expandable file folder, I would like those things as well.”

“I’ll get a dimensional box from Alphys. I’ll be back in a couple of hours. I’ll also make sure your place is sealed from intruders as well.”

“Thanks, Dye.”

“Can I get your keys? I can’t unlock doors the way that L can.”

Candace dug into her pocket she pulled out the five hundred dollars she managed to get as well as her keys. She handed the keys to Undyne.

“The large silver key is for the lock on my storage unit. The green M+M key is the lock on my front door,” Candace instructed Undyne. “Careful walking in my bedroom there is a large pile of clothes from the closet on the floor. I couldn’t find anything suitable to perform in, which is why I went to my storage unit to begin with. I grabbed the money when I realized the dress I was going to wear needed cleaning so I could buy a new one.”

“You can convert your cash into monster gold once we are in the Underground. The Royal Bank does that on a daily basis. Sans is going to be here about four o’clock and we are going directly to the Underground once he arrives,” Grillby informed Candace.

“Are you over your peeves yet?” Candace asked sardonically.

“No. I am still very angry with you. But you are not a child either. I just don’t react to being frightened well.”

“Is monster gold pure gold or is it an alloy? If it’s pure gold I am going to walk out of the bank feeling like a pauper,” said Candace.

Grillby smiled at Candace. “Actually, its mostly brass plated in gold. There are some coins that are pure gold. But, like human hundred dollar notes, they are used for higher denominations of our regular coins and are sized according to the number of regular coins they are being used for.”

“Ten and twenty piece coins are actually silver,” chipped in Undyne. “I had better go. I’ll be back in a couple of hours.”
When Undyne left Candace with Grillby. She went first to Candace’s storage unit. After she radioed
and had the two humans arrested, she had RG 1 go to the unit to stand guard until she arrived. Once
she got there Alphys called and told her that Lesser Dog arrived at their apartment.

“Listen Al, Grillby is taking Can to the Underground. If L is there, can you ask him to let you in and
can you do Can a huge favor and start her laundry. I am going to be packing up a large amount of
her clothing, and she will want all of her things cleaned before she goes.”

Alphys chuckled, “I get to use my latest invention, The Laundry Box. It’ll replace all coin op
laundromats, no problem.”

Undyne smiled at her phone at her wife. She was always proud of Alphy’s inventions. “You got it to
work?”

“Yes. How do think I got all of our clothing done so quickly last week. That was the last field test it
needed. It’s ready to go. You know, I’ll put all of Candace’s clothes in it and you can take it to her.
No house needs more than one and I have five ready to go into homes. This way Can doesn’t have
to worry about laundry.”

“That sounds wonderful, Al! Listen, can I also get a dimensional box for Can’s other things?”

“Yep, I’ll put that in her apartment and we can pack what she needs as soon as you get here.”

“Okay, Al. I’ll see you soon. I love you.” Undyne hung up the phone. As she approached the
storage facility, she saw RG 2 had come with RG 1 and was standing guard outside. There was a
purple bunny monster, who was also a shopkeeper in their neighborhood, talking to RG 2.

“Undyne, Sam was telling me that someone tried to kidnap Candace from here. Is that true?” asked
the shopkeeper.

“If I say yes, can you keep it on a need to know basis, Honeysuckle?”

Honeysuckle’s face was dead serious. She knew what that meant. It meant to let other merchants
know quietly, but not let it out to the point where a panic ensued. That way, sharp eyes would watch
but ordinary folks could go about their business.

“You know you don’t have to ask.”

“Also, make sure all magical protections are being taken. There might be a human mage or two out
there.”

Honeysuckle’s face went pale. Their best weapon was monsters ability to use magic. If
untrustworthy humans could use magic, all bets went out the window. Candace was one thing. She
was sweet and had earned the trust of monsters the hard way. She would never willing harm a
monster. Most humans weren’t like Candace though.

“Damn.” she whispered.

Undyne nodded at Honeysuckle and walked into the storage unit. RG 1 stood guard just inside
Candace’s unit. She saw where Candace left her purse and the dress she had pulled out for cleaning.
Her safe was right out in the open. Fortunately Candace had the chance to close and lock it before
she was grabbed. She found the shielded padlock for the unit on a box near the door. She picked up
the safe, dress and purse. She turned off the light and closed the door behind her. She then locked it
with the padlock. She closed her eyes and concentrated for a moment on the door itself. She used an
invisible Guardsman’s seal on it. If anyone attempted to break into the unit, an alarm would sound
and Royal Guards would be immediately alerted. The thief would have an unbreakable tracking spell placed on him and he would be hounded for the rest of his life until he were caught.

After sealing the door Undyne smiled at RG 1.

“Just wanted your hunny dragon along today, huh?”

RG 1 smiled at his boss. “You know he finds train duty boring.”

“You heard what happened?”

“Some human tried to kidnap that nice girl, Candace, with magic.”

“Spread the word to the rest of the Guards. Keep your eyes peeled.”

RG 1 saluted, “Will do, Captain!”

“Walk with me, my arms are full.”

When they walked outside RG 2 joined them and they chatted as they escorted their Captain to her home. RG 1 would call a briefing for all Guardsmen on the surface at five with the Captain’s new orders.

Undyne found Alphys and Lesser Dog in Candace’s apartment putting Alphys’ latest invention, The Laundry Box, into a dimensional box. Undyne didn’t bother asking how one dimensional box could be put into another dimensional box. If she did ask Alphys would start to talk about quantum mechanics and numbers that gave Undyne a headache. All she really needed to know was that it worked. She let Alphys crunch the numbers.

“Oooo what a beautiful dress! Is that Candace’s?”

“Yeah. This is what the punk went to get when all this crap started.”

Alphys pulled the laundry box back out. “You know, it’s a good thing that my laundry box can also dry clean such a dress.”

Undyne laughed. “I’m pretty sure you thought of everything when you made that box.”

Alphys nodded “I try.”

The dress was a beautiful teal green made of satin. It was sleeveless and had a full skirt to allow Candace freedom of motion while she performed on a piano. There was also a beaded belt for a bit of sparkle at the waist. The color was perfect for Candace bringing out her red hair and fair complexion. Alphys took the hanger off of it and placed it into the laundry box. It would be as fresh as a flower in about fifteen minutes. Cleaned, dried, and refreshed. Since the box could also clean shoes she put all of Candace’s shoes in the box as well as winter coats and a bathing suit she found. She was pretty sure Undyne would want to show Candace her favorite swimming hole.

“Damn babe, you emptied out all her drawers as well as the closet,” complimented Undyne.

“Well, we just don’t know how long she is going to be in the Underground. So I put everything in The Laundry Box and she can grab what she wants, when she wants it, for however long she is going to be there.”

Undyne nodded. That was one of the things she loved about Alphys. Her ability to think long haul. Undyne had a bad habit of short sighted thinking and letting her temper think for her. Alphys was
much calmer and had a cooler head on her shoulders.

Undyne went into the bathroom and packed up Candace’s toiletries as well as her makeup kit. Candace hated wearing a lot of makeup, but if she was performing, she needed it to keep from looking like a ghost onstage. She then went to the bookcase and grabbed the strongbox as well as the expandable folder. Undyne hated seeing Candace leave all her sheet music behind and grabbed a cardboard box and packed every last scrap of music she could get her hands on into it. At least at her place, Can could practice on her piano. Then Undyne remembered that Can used contacts and packed the small container for them as well as the cleaning tablets and solution. She saw Candace’s spare pair of glasses and made sure those were packed too.

“Do you know where Can is going to stay in the Underground,” asked Alphys.

“I let my bosses know I was going to be in the Underground for a few days. She can stay with us. After that, I was going to ask Dad if she could stay with him.”

“That’ll do for now. But I don’t think Grillby will like her not being with him for long. I’ve seen some of the looks he gives her when he thinks no one is looking.”

Undyne smiled, “When do you think the wedding will be?”

“That depends. Grillbz needs to deal with Brandy more or less permanently. I already know Fuku likes Candace as a match for her father. Candace has to let go of her feelings. You know she always keeps her emotions to herself when it comes to people. She only ever lets out her emotions when she plays the piano. If they can lose their personal baggage, they are in for a wild ride.”

Chapter End Notes

I wish I had a box like that. As always comments welcome.
At Grillby’s apartment Grillby was watching Candace play his grand piano. He was lost in his thoughts. Little human, he thought. Why do disturb me so? What is about you that pulls on my SOUL so strongly? Why does it hurt so badly that I upset you? Why does a part of me think that a part of my SOUL will die if you did?

“You’re staring,” Candace said quietly.

Why do I need you so badly?, Grillby thought.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to stare at you. I was just lost in my thoughts. Listen, I’m sorry I jumped all over you the way that I did earlier. I was badly frightened when Lesser Dog used his magic to find out what happened in your storage unit. I thought that the most those people would do to you was to try to frighten you. I had no clue that they would try to kidnap you, maybe even kill you from what Donaldson was saying.”

Candace stopped playing the piano. She turned to face Grillby and pulled up her legs into her chest. All Grillby could really see was her eyes.

“It scares me too,” her voice wasn’t much more than a whisper. Her hands covered her eyes and Grillby realized she was crying. He went to Candace and picked her up and sat on the couch, with her in his lap, holding her close.

“Let it all out,” he whispered. “You need to. In the coming days you will need to be very strong. You cannot let those people poison you and make you as helpless as a baby. You need to know who your friends really are.” He stroked her hair and then stroked her cheek. He looked deep into her frightened sapphire blue eyes. Absolutely beautiful, he thought. Inside and out. No wonder Undyne is so damn protective of her.

He tilted up her chin and kissed her. He couldn’t help himself. His own SOUL demanded it of him. He broke off the kiss. Her eyes were very wide and vulnerable. He smiled at her gently and with a shorter gentle kiss began to stroke her hair again. He had felt a chime deep within their SOULS. He had never felt this chime before. It was the chime of a SOULmate. They didn’t say a word to each other. Words are not needed with SOULmates.

Candace sat in his arms with Grillby stroking her. It felt good to be in his arms. He smelled of vanilla and amber with a hint of smoke. She found his scent intoxicating. As if all the troubles in the world vanished when he held her. She had never felt as vulnerable or as complete as she did when Grillby kissed her. She had also felt the chime that had passed though them as he kissed her. She could tell it had startled him as much as it had with her. Part of her wanted him to go farther than a kiss. Part of her said she wasn’t ready to go farther just yet. Most of her just wanted him to kiss her again. Grillby smiled slowly at her and kissed her again. He pushed her gently down on the couch until his weight had her pinned down. His hands were exploring her clothed body as he kissed her. He was so warm. His hands found the hem of her shirt. She wanted Grillby’s hands on her skin. She began to feel his want and need beating through that connection. He removed her shirt. His hands began to stroke her bare skin. He broke off of her lips and began to kiss the rest of her torso. Candace moaned softly in pleasure.

Grillby wanted to taste more than her lips. At her moan of pleasure, he kissed her lips once more and
as he kissed her belly he began to run his tongue across her skin. His hands found her bra. Pesky thing. It was keeping some of the softest and most tender parts of her body away from him. He removed the bra. His hands cupped her breasts as the strip of cloth was removed. He could feel her desire for him ringing through their connection, as he stroked her soft flesh.

DING-DONG

Startled, they sat bolt upright. Candace began to blush in embarrassment. Grillby began to get hotter in anger at the intrusion. He looked at the clock. It was three o’clock. No one should be here for at least another hour. Candace grabbed her bra and shirt and ran to the bathroom.

DING-DONG… KNOCK, KNOCK…

“Hurry up Grillbz, we’re loaded down!” came Undyne’s impatient voice.

Grillby’s ran his hands over his body. He then realized he was fully aroused. Dammit. He was too full of her taste and too full of their mutual desires for that to leave him easily. Candace walked out of the bathroom. She was still flushed and her lips were still swollen from their kissing. They could only pray that Undyne wouldn’t notice.

BANG… BANG… BANG…

“WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU TWO??!!”

Grillby ran to the door and opened it. Undyne glared at him and stalked her way into Grillby’s apartment. Alphys took a close look at both Candace and Grillby. Lesser Dog followed them both. Alphys noticed Candace’s swollen lips and blush as well as Grillby’s aroused body. She could guess what they had been doing. Undyne placed the dimensional box on the floor. Candace grabbed her cigarettes and stepped outside to cool her overheated body.

Undyne settled her gaze onto Grillby. “All I am going to say is this. If you hurt her, you answer to me. Got it?” Her eye was as hard as diamond.

Grillby nodded at Undyne. He knew the threat. He knew how Undyne wanted to protect Candace. Undyne didn’t see that she was starting to hurt Candace. Her constant protection, in the name of not letting Candace get hurt, was keeping Candace from fully growing.

Candace was trying her best to settle back down. She took a long drag of her cigarette. She had never wanted anyone so badly as she had wanted Grillby in that moment. She could still feel the hot silk that had been Grillby’s tongue on her. In spite of what Undyne thought, Candace was not a virgin. It had been the first time she had ever completely let go of her control.

The door to the terrace opened. It was Alphys.

“What happened, Can?” she asked softly.

“Nothing,” was Candace’s terse reply.

“It looks as though the two of you were at least kissing. Perhaps more.”

Candace didn’t say anything. She would leave it up to both Alphys and Undyne to guess what had happened.
“I’m listening if you need to talk. Just remember all we want, is to make sure you don’t get hurt in the end.”

Candace said nothing. She knew they meant well.

“Come on, we’ve packed up your things. Take a look,” said Alphys.

“I’ll be in as soon as I finish my cigarette.”

“For the sake of expediency, don’t light another. There is not much time left before Sans arrives.”

Candace nodded, “I’ll be inside in a minute.”

As soon as she finished her cigarette, she went back inside. There was a tenseness to Grillby that said he was going to be on more formal terms with her. At least, while these two were around.

“Come here Can! I want to show you my latest invention!” chimed Alphys.

Alphys pulled a box out of another larger box. She set the smaller box onto a table.

“This is my newest invention, The Laundry Box. In it you can put in any article of clothing from jeans and cotton goods to delicates and leathers and The Laundry Box will clean and press them for you. You can even put in dirty smelly shoes and The Laundry Box can clean and even make minor repairs to them. The Laundry Box can also store them for you Indefinitely until you need them. Here I’ll show you how it works. Give me the socks that you are wearing.”

Candace reached down and removed her shoes and socks that she was wearing and handed the socks to Alphys. Alphys took Candace by the hand and pushed her in front of the box.

“Put them in the box,” Alphys instructed.

Candace did what she instructed.

“Now touch this label on the box.”

Candace touched the label. In her minds eye, she saw what appeared to be a list of all of her clothing. At the very bottom of the list it read Dirty Socks. She then saw three options underneath the laundry list. Retrieve, Info, Status.

“Now tap on the option Status and then tap on the Dirty Socks.”

Candace tapped on Status on the label and then tapped on the Dirty Socks.

“Dirty Socks-- nine minutes until fully cleaned. Seems as if Shoes also could use a good cleaning.”

Candace laughed, “It says my shoes could also use a good cleaning.”

“When you go to sleep for the night, put them in here. They will be clean and dry for you by morning. Now just to give you a heads up you can even put dry cleaning in here. Undyne came over with a dress of yours and by now it should be cleaned and ready to go.”

Candace read the items that were third and second to last. Silk Dress and Beaded Belt. She tapped on Info for the dress. It read, Silk Dress, a sleeveless teal colored silk dress meant to be worn on formal occasions. Use with Beaded Belt. Dress is clean and ready for use.

“Wow.”
“If you look at the laundry list. I put everything that had been in your laundry hamper in here as well as all the clothing from the closet and drawers. I included all your jackets and coats as well as all your shoes and a bathing suit. Since we don’t know how long you are going to be in the Underground I packed everything in here so you wouldn’t have to worry about clothes. Since The Laundry Box cleans and stores all your clothing, you won’t have to worry about running out of clean clothes or needing to go to a laundromat to wash them,” concluded Alphys. “Now I am going to let you know that this item has an official Status of Consumer Testing. If it starts to give you problems, let me know right away and I will fix or replace it. It shouldn’t give you problems, though. I had put things people normally keep in their pockets from coins to paper money to wrist lasers in it and they all came out perfectly. I even managed to sneak Undyne’s spear in here and both the clothes and spear came out in pristine order. Paper money came out looking like they had been fresh printed from a bank.”

“Being more cloth than anything that makes sense,” said Grillby.

DING-DONG.

“Who the devil could that be?” asked Grillby.

Lesser Dog, who had come with Undyne and Alphys, went to the door and sniffed. He began to wag his tail in excitement.

“Must be someone L knows,” Undyne commented.

Grillby went to the door and opened it. It was Fuku. He had forgotten to call her and let her know the mixer for tonight was canceled.

Lesser Dog barked and wagged his tail excitedly for his friend. He had known Fuku since she was a tiny flame. Fuku knew how to pet him and not get entangled in his neck. She had a bad habit of spoiling him with treats when he came to the bar.

“Settle down, L, or I won’t give you the bacon I brought for you,” said Fuku.

“You are going to make him fat with how you spoil him.” said Grillby.

“No, I won’t Dad,” laughed Fuku. “I’ve been giving him bacon since he was a pup.”

“What’s going on? It doesn’t look like anyone is ready for a mixer tonight,” Fuku commented.

“It’s been canceled,” said a new voice. It was Sans. He had popped out of nowhere into Grillby’s home. Candace jumped at the unexpected way he arrived.

“Canceled?”

“Some very nasty humans have been threatening Ms McLaren. They had partially succeeded in kidnapping her this morning. Toriel, Grillby, and myself all think it’s better for her to go and remain in the Underground for now,” said Sans.

Fuku was confused. Her father hadn’t even told her that anyone had been threatening Candace. She was a good human. Probably the best human she had ever met. She looked at her father then realized he was deeply angered. His protective instincts were going into high gear. She smiled softly at her father. The last time she had seen him so angry, she had been a small child. There was nothing very fatherly in his anger right now. It looked more like a man protecting his mate.

Grillby looked at his daughter and blushed. He realized she was picking up on every one of his
emotions right now. She smiled slowly at him. Fuku knew him best of all. Candace would learn, but Fuku was his daughter. He smiled as he remembered her as a tiny spark. There were reasons he was closer to her than her mother was. He signaled Fuku that he would explain more later. She nodded.
“Is everyone ready?” asked Sans. “Tori is waiting for us all at New Home.”

“Almost,” said Alphys. She picked up The Laundry Box and placed it inside the larger dimensional box. Grillby picked up the dimensional box and nodded at Sans.

“Everyone form a circle,” Sans instructed. Lesser Dog joined them. Candace felt Barkweb climb on her and settle on her shoulder.

There was a bright flash and a nauseating spin as they then found themselves standing outside of a cute house inside of a much larger castle. Both Toriel and Frisk were waiting. Candace staggered a little. It felt a little like being drunk without the fun parts of getting drunk. She found herself being supported by Grillby. She looked at him and began to blush a little. By the blue tinge on his flames he was blushing a little too. Sans was smirking at the two of them. Undyne was scowling.

“Come everyone, I have tea waiting,” called Toriel.

“And Mom’s famous pie,” chimed Frisk.

“Miss Candace, I must return to my mistress. I will come back when she is ready to see you,” whispered Barkweb. The tarantula climbed down off of Candace and scurried away from the group.

“L, why don’t you go and check in at Guard Headquarters,” suggested Undyne. “Make a report to Dogamy and get all the facts of this morning down on an official record. That way if human courts start to give us problems, your parts of this disturbance are down on a format that can’t be corrupted.”

Lesser Dog nodded and barked at Undyne. Fuku handed L a package of bacon for him to snack on while he made his report.

“Dogamy can translate what L says and put it in a language that we can understand,” explained Frisk to Candace. “The magic that is used when official Guard reports are made also ensure that lies are not told. Even if someone lied to Lesser Dog and he was reporting facts as he understood it, the lie make itself known and a further investigation would be opened. Human courts know our reports are as close as you can get to being fool proof.”

“Okay,” said Candace. The more proof she had the better.

“Come in, come in!” said Toriel. They walked into the house and saw a large table and place settings for all of them as they sat.

“I know you all must be tired, so I will wait until tomorrow for a more detailed explanation. Until then, Candace, I want you to know that you are welcome here in the Underground for as long as need be. From what information I have; it’s a lot safer for you here, than on the surface for now. Tuffet was very angry and has put out an army of spiders to help gather information.”

“Not much gets by the spiders because they are everywhere and even surface spiders follow the commands of Muffet and Tuffet,” said Alphys.

“Humans don’t know that and frankly they don’t need to know,” said Frisk. “We are not worried about normal humans because they are normal people with normal problems. Spiders are highly effective because no one pays any attention to them. Some even like them around their houses.”
Candace was all of a sudden felt very tired. She drank tea and had a slice of Toriel’s Butterscotch Pie. She stayed silent as Toriel and Frisk talked with the others.

Grillby noticed Candace’s silence and weariness. He remained polite as the others talked and argued.

“I’m afraid we have worn out Candace,” he said. “I will take her to my home here in Hotland and will bring her to your house tomorrow, Undyne.”

By looking at Undyne, Candace knew she didn’t like her staying with Grillby at all and was going to argue with him. Until she was nudged by Alphys who whispered in her ear. Undyne then made a face and nodded at Grillby who stood up and helped Candace to her feet. Candace smiled at Grillby gratefully. Undyne may not like it but knew that she would probably get more rest with Grillby than Undyne. Undyne would go out of her way to be a good hostess and would try to show Candace everything at once.

Grillby picked up the dimensional box. There was a flash of fire and they stood outside a townhouse in a cavern.

“Why is it when I travel with you in this manner it doesn’t nauseate me the way it does when Sans does it?” asked Candace.

“It’s a different mode of transport. When I flash travel we are actually traveling by fire. Sans calls on the void when he flash travels. The biggest difference between the two is distance and side effects. I can’t travel as far when I travel by fire, but being on the same plane of existence, it isn’t nauseating. Sans can travel farther by calling on the void, but it’s nauseating to travel between two planes of existence.”

Grillby pulled out a set of keys and unlocked the door. “Welcome to my home. Let me take you to the spare bedroom.” Grillby was very careful to keep things on a formal basis. He didn’t want a repeat of this afternoon, to find himself disappointed again. He wasn’t sure he could let go of his desires again, and not satisfy them. It had taken him much longer than he thought for his arousal to leave him.

Grillby lead Candace to the second floor. He opened a bedroom on the left hand side. It was bigger than the one she had in her apartment. There was a queen sized bed to one side and a wardrobe along another wall. The was a small nightstand next to the bed that had both a lamp and a light crystal. Undyne had similar crystals in her house. She said that while lamps were brighter, light crystals offered a quieter light that was better for the eyes at night. Candace found their soft light beautiful and agreed with Undyne that the soft light was easier on the eyes at night.

Grillby placed the dimensional box next to the wardrobe. “I know you are very tired, so I will leave you now. I will check on you later. If you get hungry, just let me know and I’ll fix something for you.” He turned to face Candace. She was trying to gauge his feelings.

“Thank you,” she said simply. Part of her was glad he was leaving her. Part of her was upset when he did. They had not spoken at all of what had almost happened on his couch earlier. Grillby left her and firmly closed the door behind him. It felt to her he was putting up a barricade between them. She would speak to him later.

Candace went to the dimensional box and pulled out the Laundry Box and set it next to it. Searching the laundry list she found a pair of pajamas and clean panties. In a door to the side, she found a bathroom complete with a shower and several soaps and shampoos for her to try. In the dimensional box she found her contacts case, cleaning solution as well as storage solution. She removed cleaned and stored her contacts for the night. After a look at the shower she then stripped and took a shower,
longing for her body to be clean. After her shower and taking care of personal hygiene she dressed in a soft purple pajamas consisting of shorts and camisole. She wasn’t very hungry after having tea with Toriel. She gave her damp hair a good brushing and decided to go to sleep. It had been a rough day.

For an hour after he had left Candace alone Grillby made himself busy in his home. He answered correspondence which included messages from his parents. They wanted to see him the next day. He paid his bills and saw to a couple of minor pieces of business. He decided he wanted a light snack and would check to see if Candace needed anything.

He had been keeping himself distant from her since he had been alone with her. She frightened him. When he kissed her in his apartment earlier he thought he only wanted a kiss. He had been surprised by how quickly he wanted more. As much as he had been initially angry with Undyne part of him was glad for the disturbance. His sudden want for her was clouding his judgment. He stared outside his front window questioning himself. That SOUL chime had been very real. He was going to hurt them both if he kept denying that bond. Grillby stood up and went to his kitchen. He made a simple sandwich for himself and got a Crab Apple and Sea Tea for Candace. He placed the snack for Candace on a covered plate and took it up to her room. He gently opened the door and realized she had fallen asleep when he heard a soft snore.

He studied the sleeping woman. Even with her sleeping in front of him, he could tell it would not take much for the desires that ran through his body earlier to return. Even sleeping and tousled she was beautiful. He placed the covered plate on the table in front of the bed. He had better go before he lost the will to. He quietly left the room and went out to his living room. He sat in a chair that looked outside and wondered at himself. He decided that there was not much point to staring out into space and went to bed. He undressed and climbed into his bed. It was a cold comfort seeing as there was a warm woman only three doors away. He took off his glasses and lay down and prayed that sleep would come.

As tired as Candace had been, she had woken up when Grillby had left the covered plate on the table. After he left her, she ate the light snack and drank the tea and lay back down hoping for more sleep. She couldn’t sleep. The bed seemed empty with only herself in it. After and hour of tossing and turning, she got out of the bed and opened the door. There were three other doors in the hallway to her left. Two doors were open, one was closed and she saw a faint light. She quietly opened the third door and saw Grillby sleeping in his bed. She crept to his bed and feeling bold lay next to him. She then felt his strong arms gently take hold of her and pulled her to him.

“Maybe now we can sleep,” murmured Grillby softly. He tilted her chin up and with a soft smile kissed her. They felt their SOULS chime again and they were suddenly very sleepy. They settled into each others embrace and finally fell asleep.

Grillby had been unable to sleep at all. He had been considering going to Candace’s room when he heard his door open. As she had stood there all he could think of was how he needed her in his arms. If she were there maybe he could finally sleep. When she lay next to him all he wanted was to hold her. When he pulled her into his arms he thought, how silly to deny what should be the best part of myself. She had been unsurprised by his touch and when he kissed her he could feel the tension leaving them. As she settled with him he knew he could no longer deny her. It would go nowhere and would hurt them both to try. Undyne would have to get over her overprotectiveness. This creature was his, not hers. Exhausted, he allowed himself to drift off into sleep.

Grillby awoke to the warmth of silk and soft flesh. He could smell her as she burrowed herself into his arms. He then realized he had one hand stroking her buttocks and the other stroking the skin on
her back. He also realized that he was quite hard, as he breathed in her scent and stroked her body. He froze.

“Don’t stop,” Candace murmured. She opened her eyes and burrowed deeper in his arms. She reached up and gave Grillby a resounding kiss. His resistance crumbled as he once again felt his SOUL chime with hers. He kissed her back and rolled until she was underneath him, his weight again pinning her. He removed her camisole and her breasts were completely free as he moved his hands to stroke them. He wanted to taste her, all of her, as he felt her desire rise to meet his. He began to kiss and lick her breasts as she moved her hips to feel his erection. At that moment they were lost to each others touch and their own desires. Even if they were once again disturbed they were lost in their own need. They removed the final pieces of clothing they had on. He could tell that she was ready for him. He penetrated her swiftly. She moaned loudly as he entered her. They began to move together as he took control and shifted her to better feel him inside of her. Grillby began to pant and moan in pleasure of being inside of Candace. He began to pump harder to increase the pleasure. Her pleasure spurring him to pump even harder. Suddenly her back arched and she screamed as she orgasmed. He felt her tighten around his penis and hold him closer to her. Gripping her, he screamed as his orgasm filled her with his semen. They rode out the high together. Slowly, shakily, he pulled out of Candace. Their breathing began to turn back to normal as they kissed each other in sated pleasure.

“My beloved, look at this. We seem to have made a mess of each other,” Grillby whispered.

“It’s a beautiful mess. It can wait to be cleaned,” Candace murmured back. She could feel his smile.

“You’re a beautiful mess, and you are making my life messy. I don’t know how I could have lived without such a mess before.”

“You can’t now anyways. It feels like we sealed some sort of compact. That we can’t really live without the other anymore. It would kill us to try.”

“In many ways our making love is sealing a compact. The ties of SOULmates. When SOULmates make love this way, it binds the pair as mates for life. Only death can ever break such a seal. Divorce among SOULmates is almost unheard of. I only know of one divorce among SOULmates. Their SOULS forever grieve for the loss of their mate. I never thought I would ever mate in such a fashion.”

“Feels good. It feels right in every sense of the word.” Candace nuzzled Grillby.

Grillby clutched Candace to him. “Mating is both good and right. When it is confirmed that you are pregnant, we will be married. Until then, we will make love frequently. I doubt it will take long before you become pregnant. Female monsters have a harder time becoming pregnant than humans do.”

“Barefoot and pregnant, huh.”

“You can put shoes on, but yes, I want you to swell with my child. That is something Brandy could never do.”

“Wait a minute, what about Fuku?”

“Fuku is different. It’ll take some explaining about Fuku. We will talk about her in the morning. Until then, let’s try to sleep for real this time.”

“You don’t really think we will sleep much, do you,” teased Candace.
“We can try, my love. I should have just put you to bed in here earlier. We could have made love many times and be dead asleep by now.”

“We can sleep in tomorrow.”

“I doubt it. Undyne will be here first thing in the morning to drag you to her house. I’m afraid we might be sneaking around for a few days, until she goes back to the surface. Tuffet is more laid back. She will find it amusing that we are now a mated pair. Fuku will want to start planning the wedding. Brandy is going to get the shock of her life when she learns her next alimony check is going to be her last.”

Candace wasn’t listening to him. She was kissing and teasing Grillby’s body. He stopped talking and let himself enjoy her gentle ministrations. He began to kiss and suckle her body as she did the same with his. When they were both aroused enough Grillby once again took control and made love to his mate ensuring she was again thoroughly satisfied before he took his own pleasure of her. This time when they finished they didn’t speak but enjoyed the afterglow as they fell asleep.
In the morning, Alphys was arguing with Undyne.

“Leave them alone, Dye! They shouldn’t be bothered until they are ready. Just like other fire elementals when they mate.”

“That’s another thing, he shouldn’t be mating with her! Not until after the wedding!”

“You don’t know a lot about fire elementals do you, Undyne?” Alphys voice was amused, but undeterred by Undyne’s anger. Alphys, being a native of Hotland, grew up around fire monsters. Undyne being a fish monster couldn’t tolerate the heat of Hotland.

Fire elementals had different wedding and mating traditions than most monsters. Grillby’s mother, Hearth, was a good friend to Alphys’ own mother and explained their traditions to Alphys, when Grillby had married his first wife. Hearth had been upset with her son’s decision to marry Brandy, when he knew they weren’t SOULmates. She felt he was settling for less than Grillby deserved. It had been quite a miracle that Fuku had even been conceived. Even if she wasn’t born the traditional way. Hearth thought Fuku’s conception was a testament to Grillby’s fertility and not Brandy’s. Especially since Brandy could not carry Fuku.

Now Candace, she was different. Grillby would bond with her in the ancient way of fire elementals. She might be human, but she was a strong woman. She would be able to carry Grillby’s child easily.

Undyne scowled at her wife and said reluctantly, “No. I don’t know that much about fire elementals. I could never stand the heat of Hotland, and after his divorce Grillby wouldn’t talk about his marriage. I thought it couldn’t be all that different from the rest of us since Grillby has a daughter.”

“The fact that he has Fuku at all is a testament to his own fertility. Grillby could conceive without a SOULmate. We have been waiting for things to settle with humans before we tried for a baby. Fire elementals don’t wait. Hearth once told me that their passions burn too strongly to allow for that. When a fire elemental finds his SOULmate, they bond very quickly as mates and become a mated pair. When they marry, traditionally, the bride is pregnant. It’s sort of like an announcement that they are mates for life and have successfully mated. When we came over yesterday, Grillby and Candace were probably very close to mating for the first time. I doubt they could have tolerated being so close to each other without making love. A close call earlier and proximity to each other would ensure that they would. Until they announce her pregnancy and marry, they are going to mate frequently, daily. They need to be allowed to enjoy this. In many ways, it’s a honeymoon.”

“How long, until they wed?” asked Undyne.

“Grillby is very fertile, so is Candace. I give them less than three months. I would not be shocked if they announce her pregnancy next month.”

Tears sparkled down Undyne’s eye. Alphys kissed her wife.

“I know it feels like Candace is abandoning us. We both know she won’t do that. What she is doing is pairing off and starting her own family.”

“You know I’ve always loved the punk as a sister.”

Alphys smiled at her wife and pulled her into her arms. “Come, love. Let’s share some of that newlywed joy.” Alphys kissed Undyne deeply and her tail began caress Undyne seductively.
Undyne melted into her wife’s caress as she felt a thrill of excitement. Alphys was right. Who was she to deny Candace the joys and pleasures of a spouse? Alphys removed Undyne’s shirt and began to taste and tease her wife’s body. Undyne was always amazed at Alphy’s strength as she picked her up and carried Undyne off to their bedroom. They would make their own joyful noise.

It was noontime. Both Grillby and Candace were surprised that Undyne had not called nor had she pounded on the door first thing that morning. Grillby said that Alphys probably had something to do with that. Alphys’ mother was a good friend of his own mother. She would do her best to leave them alone that morning.

When they had woken up, they found that they couldn’t really get enough of each other, sexually. Grillby explained that Candace must be fertile and that the sex would be at its highest frequency if she was. He was responding to her fertility. When she took another shower to clean up she studied herself in the mirror and wondered what she would look like pregnant. It was amazing to think she would become so and soon. She rubbed her lower belly. Grillby stood behind her and placed his hands over hers.

“Soon,” he whispered in her ear. He was shirtless. Candace could trace every muscle on his body. She then noticed a vertical scar just below his navel.

Candace touched the scar. It looked and felt surgical.

“What happened for you to get such a scar?”

“It’s… complicated.”

“You mentioned that Brandy couldn’t carry Fuku. Did you carry her?”

“I also said Fuku was different. But, in answer to your question, the simple answer is yes. Brandy and I were not SOULmates, but we wanted a baby. Brandy and I conceived twice prior to Fuku. I don’t know if not being SOULmates had something to do with it, but Brandy miscarried her other two pregnancies. We went to see a doctor who said that he could get us to conceive in the lab, but because Brandy would probably miscarry, it would be better if I carried Fuku. Since monster embryos primarily feed off of magic, there would be a good chance I could carry a child to term. My relationship with Brandy was different then, so we both agreed that I would become pregnant. And I did. It was at the same time the strangest and most exhilarating thing I had ever done. Fuku was delivered from me surgically at 38 weeks of pregnancy.”

“But, over the course of my pregnancy things began to change between Brandy and myself. I had to take special hormones daily to continue the pregnancy. I was thrilled to be pregnant. My body changed some due to the hormone pills as well as the pregnancy. Brandy began with cutting comments on how I was becoming a woman. I grew breasts. I became very emotional along with the pregnancy. There were times when I was just flat out tired. But I loved my baby. I loved how she moved within me.”

“As you become pregnant, Can, people will make comments on how I was an overprotective father to Fuku. The reason is that in many ways I am both Fuku’s mother and father. My sperm conceived Brandy’s egg, but I carried Fuku inside of me for nine months. That creates a special bond. It was something that Brandy never understood. It soured our relationship after she was born. Brandy started to say she needed more of a man than me and began to take lovers. To be honest, so did I, if for no other reason than to feel like a man. I stopped taking the hormones after Fuku was delivered and my body returned to normal, but my marriage never did. When Fuku was ten, Brandy and I
separated and started divorce proceedings. It was a bitter divorce. Fuku was fourteen when it was finally over. Frisk fell into the Underground not long after. The Barrier broke and I moved to the surface to get away from Brandy.”

“Since then, Fuku came back and forth between us. I kept up Brandy’s alimony for some peace and quiet in my life. Then one day I go to the symphony with Fuku. They had a new concert pianist with hair like fire. There was something about that girl that I liked. A warmth. Something that stirred my SOUL as I felt a gentle magic come from her. I hope that girl can understand the tale I just told her,” finished Grillby.

Candace didn’t say a word. She bent down and kissed Grillby’s scar.

“It’s a beautiful scar,” she told Grillby. She began to give the scar butterfly kisses. No wonder he had been reluctant to tell her about this. Grillby shuddered at her ministrations. Her tongue began to trace both the scar and the rest of his groin. His breath became strangled. She began to go down on him. He pulled her off of him and kissed her deeply.

“We were made for each other,” was all he said as he picked her up and took her to the bed. She accepted all of him. It was more than enough.

It was after one in the afternoon. Both Grillby and Candace pulled away from each other long enough to get dressed and eat. Grillby phone chimed as a text came in.

“It’s Fuku. She would like to come over for a visit,” Grillby informed Candace.

“I’m surprised she is bothering to ask,” commented Candace.

“She’s testing the magma. She doesn’t want to disturb us if we are currently mating. She probably has guessed that by now, we would have already started to mate or would be close to it. She just wants to know more about what happened yesterday.”

Candace nodded. She knew that special consideration would be needed for Fuku. She didn’t want to come between Grillby and Fuku. She just wanted her own part of their lives.

“I should check in with Undyne and Alphys anyways. Remember they want me to spend a couple of days with them.”

“Days are fine. Nights I would like you to come home to me.”

“That should be fine, even though Undyne won’t like it much.”

“She’s going to have to get used to it. I know she is used to you coming over to visit whenever the three of you wanted it. Things are different now. You are now mated. It isn’t right to stay away long from your mate.”

“Especially since we are mating.”

Grillby nodded. “Yes,” was all he said.

“I’ll make sure she understands that.”

“Good.”

“Let’s at least have Fuku over before I go visit Dye.”
Grillby smiled. He was glad Candace was gently inserting herself into his family. She needed to. She was going to bear his next child and it was important, for Fuku especially, to know that they were becoming a whole family. Fuku always wanted siblings. Grillby texted Fuku back and told her she was welcome to visit.

Fuku was making arrangements for her managers to take over for a while. She had a few hours where she could visit her father. She knew she had to be careful not to disturb him too much right now. She knew when he left Toriel’s house the day before that he was very close to mating with Candace. Alphys told her that she was pretty sure they were about to mate, when she and Undyne came to his house. Fuku was happy for her father. After years of bitter wrangling with her mother, he deserved happiness. She wished her mother would stop going from boyfriend to boyfriend and try to find her own SOULmate. That would stop the wrangling between her parents.

All Fuku could want was her parents to find peace in their SOULS. It looked like her father was finding his peace. That was enough for now. Fuku had always been closer to her father than her mother. Since he was the parent that had become pregnant with her, she supposed that was natural. Grillby texted back saying she was welcome to come visit. She hoped he had started mating. She could then plan the wedding with her grandmother. Grandma would be excited to learn that Grillby had had met and was mating with his SOULmate. It’s all she ever wanted for him.

Fuku took off her work apron and told the manager she would be back in a couple of hours. With a flash of fire she took herself just outside his townhouse in Hotland. She rang the doorbell.

Her father answered the door. There was a certain calmness to his SOUL that spoke louder than words that mating had begun. She beamed at her father and gave him a big hug and a kiss. “I’m so happy for you, Daddy,” she murmured.

Grillby blushed at his daughter. “Thank you. You have no idea how much your acceptance means to me,” he murmured back.

Fuku broke away from her father. Candace was standing behind him, shyly. She was also blushing. Fuku came and gave her an equally big hug and a kiss. “Welcome to the family,” she murmured for Candace.

Candace’s eyes started to tear up. Fuku’s acceptance was more than she could had hoped for. Fuku pulled her father into the embrace.

“All I have ever wanted for you, is to be happy, Daddy.”

Grillby started to tear up. Words could not express the joy that radiated from himself and Candace at Fuku. She knew that Candace was not taking him away from her. All that was happening, was that their family was growing.

All three of them brushed their tears away.

“Have you told Grandma yet?”

“No. I wanted you to know first,” said Grillby.

Fuku smiled. She was still his first consideration after all these years.

“Let me step outside and call her. You know she will want to help me plan the wedding.”
“It doesn’t need to be fancy, Fu.”

Fuku rolled her eyes at her father. “You think Grandma will be satisfied with a simple wedding? She has waited for a long time for this and she won’t be able to not pull out all the stops for your wedding, Dad. She won’t be able to help herself.”
Hearth Ignus was enjoying tea with her best friend Peachscale. Peach had gotten a call from her daughter, Alphys, that she was going to be in the Underground for a few days. Alphys told her mother that there had been a disturbance on the surface. Peachscale didn’t have a lot of details only that it involved her nice human neighbor.

It worried Hearth with her son being on the surface, and working closely with the King and Queen trying to broker peace between them and humans. She had met Alphys’ nice neighbor a few times while she and Peach went to go visit their children. It had surprised her at first that a human willing lived in a monster neighborhood. Undyne explained that her neighbor had been vouched for by Tuffet and was a pianist by profession. When she heard the girl play, she was stunned by the sheer beauty of her playing. She wanted to introduce her son to the girl about maybe working for him. Grillby always kept an eye out of the best piano players and was no slouch on the piano himself. He would know a great player when he heard her.

Hearth’s phone rang. It was Fuku. Hearth frowned. Fu usually called when there was trouble. Fu came to visit every Sunday with her father and was expected tomorrow. If she was calling, she must be getting some sort of shitstorm from her mother. Hearth’s eyebrows clicked together. If that was the case, then she would deal with Brandy permanently.

Hearth answered her phone.

“Is it your mother again?” she said by way of greeting.

“No. I swear this time it’s great news!” Fuku said enthusiastically.

“Oh, so we have gone from good news to great news. Have you met your SOULmate? Even if your father never had one, that doesn’t mean I don’t still have hopes for the two of you.”

“It does involve Dad. And yes, he has finally met his SOULmate!”

“You know I won’t take kindly to a bad joke Fuku! I don’t want to get my hopes up only to be dashed away when I go see your father,” said Hearth sharply.

“I am dead serious. I am here with Dad and have met her. He has already taken her as his mate, Grandma. You had better get here before they kick us out to be alone again.”

Hearth Ignus rose to her feet. “Are you at his house here?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll be there in a few minutes,” Hearth hung up.

“Was that Fu?” asked Peachscale.

“Yes. We should go, Peach. Fu said that Grill had found his SOULmate and has already made her his mate.”

Peach stood up and grabbed her purse. “I want to see this!”

“Me too,” Hearth smiled at Peach. They had been best friends since they were both girls. They listened to all of each other’s problems. Peach’s fear when Alphys began to withdraw from life.
Hearth’s worry over Grillby settling for an ultimately failed marriage. Peach’s joy when Alphys married Undyne. Hearth’s joy when Fuku had been born. They had both hoped for a long time for better for Grillby.

There was a flash of fire and both Hearth and Peachscale were standing outside of Grillby’s townhouse when he was here in the Underground. Although Grillby tended to come over weekends to check his books and visit Fuku. He usually didn’t arrive until later.

Peach gave Hearth a reassuring squeeze. She knew that Hearth didn’t want another disappointment. Hearth wanted her son to truly bond with someone. There was a lot Grillby never understood because of that lack.

Hearth nervously rang the doorbell. There was the soft playing of a piano in the background. Shadows moved and then the door opened. Grillby had opened the door. There was a soft murmur and the piano kept playing. Hearth studied her son. He had a blush to his cheeks as they looked at each other. His SOUL seemed calmer and happy. Hearth smiled. Fuku was right. Grill had found his SOULmate. She reached up to her son, pulled his head to her, and gave him a kiss on his cheek.

“Where is she?” Hearth asked softly.

“She is in the next room, Mother. I’m warning you now, she’s human,” Grillby replied softly.

“If she is anything like Alphys’ nice neighbor, I don’t care,” replied Hearth. She knew it was only a few bad apples spoiling the bunch. Most humans were not that different from monsters.

Grillby smiled. “Good.” “Candace, my mother is here.”

The piano stopped and a Hearth saw a familiar red haired girl come and stand by Grillby.

“Oh! Ms Hearth. I didn’t know Grillby was the son you wanted to introduce me to.”

“If I had known you were his SOULmate, I would have introduced you to him when I first met you.” Hearth’s eyes filled with tears as she pulled Candace into a fierce and welcoming embrace. Human or not, she liked Candace. She was sweet. She had become very close as friends to both Alphys and Undyne.

“You have met?” came Grillby’s surprised voice.

“Maybe if you came to tea when Alphys invited you, you might already be married. Instead of making excuses,” came Peachscale’s dry reply.

Grillby couldn’t be offended. He had known Peach for as long as he could remember. Peach, being Alphys’ mother, would come to the city every few weeks to visit Alphys and Undyne as they made their new homes there. Of course, his own mother being best friends with Alphys mother, would sometimes come with her. No wonder she knew Candace.

His mother had told him of a girl she wanted him to meet. She always said she was a damn good piano player. He thought she was just trying to set him up on a date. Funny how things turn out.

Grillby and Candace had been gracious hosts for about an hour. Fuku and Peachscale had been talking about wedding plans. Hearth put in her a few of her wishes while she observed her son and his mate. They didn’t know it yet and would not know it for a few weeks, but they had already been successful. Hearth could sense the tiniest spark of a new SOUL in her son’s mate. They would learn
of it when Candace began to feel her hormones change. That took time. Until then they were still going to mate. Hearth remembered the heady feeling of being newly mated. The pleasures, the passions. They needed to enjoy this. Right now they were the absolute center of each others universe. She rounded up the other two women and reminded Grillby about Sunday lunch. She wanted them both there.

“Honestly, Grandma. What was the rush about leaving?” asked Fuku

“You’ll understand when you get your own mate, but we were starting to intrude,” said Hearth.

Peach whistled, “She must be fertile if they are mating that frequently.”

“Yes. I sure you are right, Peach.”

“Where to now, Hearth?”

“Let’s visit Alphys and Undyne. Candace is a good friend of theirs and I want their input on the wedding plans.”

“Good idea. I want to talk to them about having a baby of their own. It would be quite a feat if there were two babies at once. We could plan a double baby shower, Hearth!” said Peachscale.

Hearth smiled. That would be nice.

Grillby closed the door after everyone left. He had noticed his mother was watching them rather carefully. He was watching Candace as carefully as they were being watched. He went to Candace and kissed her.

Candace felt as if her body was once again on fire. Grillby clutched her to him and picked her up.

“I’m not even sure why we bothered to get dressed,” Candace murmured.

“We will be left alone now. At least for as long as you are fertile. My mother won’t tolerate us being bothered. She wants us to be successful as soon as possible.”

Grillby took Candace to his bedroom and placed her on the bed. He pulled her close and began to kiss her. She snaked one of her legs around his waist. Right now, this is all that mattered. Their being together. Nothing else was quite as important as that right now.

Elsewhere in Hotland

An old man sat in a shallow spring of water at his home. If you were to look at him all you would see would be a thin, hairless, ash grey body staring deeply into the water. The water steamed around him as he stared. If another monster came to him they would get the sense of magic as he looked in the waters. His son was with him at that moment.

“Father, what do you see?”
“I see a human girl, her hair is like fire. She has many enemies who lurk in the shadows of the surface. I see someone trying to kill your son. The girl is pregnant by him.” his voice was in a far away monotone, crackled with age.

“SOULmates?” came the startled question.

The old man didn’t answer. He stared deeper into the water. “Difficult labor. Very difficult. I cannot see if she or her child survives. Only her labor is difficult.” The old man looked up. His eyes were color of coals from a fire. On his back are scars. As if he had been whipped in the past. His face is deadly serious as he regards his son.

“What do you know of her enemies? Why are they trying to kill Grillby?” came the urgent question.

“Grillby fights for his wife and unborn child. His wife, this human, is gifted. Gifted in ways that humanity has not seen in centuries. She allies herself with monsters. Her power, her gifts, she uses for our benefit. Some human mages see this as a betrayal. Others don’t. Those who think this is some sort of betrayal, see her unborn child as a threat. All the strength of a human SOUL, combined with all the magic of a monster. Something that cannot be enslaved, as I had been all those years ago.”

The old man stepped out of the spring. He dried his thin body with a towel and covered his body with a special robe to keep the heat near his body until his fires returned.

“Go, Vulcanus. Hearth should be home soon. Let me ponder what I have seen today, alone.” The old man turned his eyes on his son.

“One last question: When?”

“The normal course of pregnancy is nine months. Grillby now takes the girl as is mate, even as we speak. I see this happening as the girl goes into labor.”

Vulcanus nodded at his father and reluctantly left as had been requested. He thought upon his father’s words as he left him. Grillby mating? Under ordinary circumstances, that alone was worth celebrating. His father’s words chilled him, though.

The old man went to sit in a chair by a window that looked out on the magma of Hotland. He fell asleep in his chair and began to dream.

“IGNUS!! Ignus! Where are you, stupid boy?” called a tall human with a full beard.

There was the crack of a whip as a child made of fire stepped out of a fireplace. He is very small. If he were human, he appeared to be about five years old. His clothes were patched rags.

The child prostrated himself in front of the adult human male in front of him.

“I’m sorry sir,” the child apologized. “Missus asked me to stay in the fireplace until her bread had finished baking.”

“How many times have I told you, that you answer to me, not Missus,” yelled Master. The human fondled the whip at his belt. “Last time I said this, I told you that you would get a thrashing if you did not answer me immediately! Remove your shirt!”

The boy, Ignus, paled. He knew no matter what answer he gave the human, he was going to get thrashed. Master, was drunk again and looking for things to beat up. He probably only called him
over to beat him. Such is the life of a slave boy. He took the lashes meted out so that Missus, who was the very opposite of Master, would not.

Ignus removed his ragged shirt and stood still with his back to the human. He could only hope his lashing would not be too bad. Last time he had gotten thrashed, it was only by some miracle that he had not been dusted.

He bit his lip as he felt the sting of the first lash. Ignus would not give into this human’s pleasure by letting him see him cry. Even if he were badly injured, he would hold his tears until the human left him. After five lashes the human grew bored.

“No matter what I do to you, you won’t cry, will you boy?” the human barked a laugh. “You’re a proud peacock. Keep up that pride and when you become a man it will be that much more pleasurable to kill you. Go back to your fireplace. I would like that bread to be finished in time for dinner tonight.”

The human left.

Being alone again and in pain, Ignus crawled back to the fireplace. As he let his fires return to baking, he let his tears free in it’s safety. No one could tell he was crying when all they could hear was the crackling of his fires.

A human boy about his age crept out of the shadows and picked up the shirt Ignus had left on the floor. He was the only one who wasn’t fooled by the crackling of the flames. He could hear the snuffling of the other little boy, who was the fire in front of him.

“You know he pushes you to see if he can make you cry, don’t you?” said the human boy.

“It’s none of your business,” replied Ignus.

“Do you need healing?” said the human, ignoring Ignus.

“If your father catches you, he will thrash us both.”

“So, do you like hurting?”

“No, I don’t. But I don’t want either of us getting killed over pain. Leave me alone. Go play with your brothers before you are caught,” said Ignus.

The human boy looked hurt. Ignus ignored this. He was a slave, the human was not. The human boy didn’t understand this, yet. He wanted to be friends. Ignus was desperate for a friend, but didn’t want to get killed over it. The human would learn all too soon. When he did learn this, it was only a matter of time before he held the whip to force Ignus to obey. Ignus didn’t want his heart to break over seeing a friend become his master in truth.

The old man, Ignus, woke up. There was not a day that went by when he did not remember that he had been a slave. His son Vulcanus and his grandson Grillby had not been kept in chains. Ignus rubbed is thin wrists. It was something he could never forget. His flames re-ignited. He thought of the human girl he had seen in his vision. His grandson’s soon to be wife. He thought of the human boy he had grown up with. Changes were coming, as they had then. He prayed to the gods that his family would never know the feeling of the whip and chains. He prayed that the human he once knew was still alive.
An old cat woke up and stretched his achy old bones and walked arthritically to the fireplace. These days it was only fire. Not a living creature made of fire the way it had been when he was young and appeared to be human. He supposed that really he was still human although no one ever saw him as human. In the thousand years since human mages created the barrier which sealed monsters from humans, he chose to remain separate from humans. It was better that way. The Council of Magi existed even then. These days, no one had the power to even think of a creation such as the barrier.

When the news had reached the council that monsters had been freed, he knew that scared the Council. All of a sudden it was if their worst nightmares have come true. He was the only member of the Council of old who knew why monsters had been sealed away. He alone knew that the barrier was really to keep humans from exterminating monsters altogether. Now, as he crept and walked along the hallways of the Council, he heard the panicked whispers. No one payed attention to the old cat. Gullible fools. By locking themselves away the Council learned nothing. They did not know that something could appear as one thing but be something else entirely. They did not know that if monsters really wanted to, they could rule humanity much as humans had tried to rule them. Humans had grown weak, slaves to technology and slaves to their pleasures. Monsters had not enslaved themselves in this manner. Their magic was intact. Only a few humans had such magic anymore and humans were driving those few into alliances with monsters. It was better that way, really. Monsters respected that power and would never abuse it the way humans would to satisfy their pleasures.

The cat settled himself in front of the fire letting his old bones soak in the heat. He remembered his old friend, Ignus. He remembered the slavery Ignus had been born into. Born as a slave and sold to his father at the age of three. Ignus was a proud fire monster. Even as they were boys, he was proud. Taking beatings without ever letting his master know how much it hurt. He remembered healing Ignus when the fire monster slept. Ignus had never thanked him directly. Ignus even then worried like Rasmus’ mother would. He remembered how his father had forced Ignus to kill him. He remembered setting Ignus free, before other humans came and killed the monster who had only defended his life.

A pair of green gold eyes began to close themselves for a cat nap. No, the cat didn’t want people to know that he was a human named Rasmus. Rasmus had been a different life. Rasmus had been born a noble. Rasmus was Chancellor of the Council of Magi. Rasmus had been ignored the past one thousand years. Now he was just called that flea bitten pile of bones or that damn cat. Those names suited him better than Rasmus ever had. Nowadays, he looked at the magical children that occasionally were brought to the Council. Most were like their teachers. Cynical, bored, and unintelligent.

There was one that he liked though. He was smart, and best of all, he could still wonder at the world. He would go and sleep with the child at night. The boy would sometimes cry being away from his home. Mostly the boy whispered secrets to the old cat. He would soon take the boy from this terrible place. It was no place for a child like this. A boy with dreams needed to dream. Right now the boy was probably stealing a fish for him.
A phone woke up both Candace and Grillby. They awoke with a tired groan. Grillby fumbled for the phone half aslee and answered it.

“Who ever this is better have a good reason for waking me up,” growled Grillby.

“Fleur, it’s the crack of dawn. What do you have to say that’s so important… Yes, it’s true… Yes, we will be there… Fleur, I hate to be short with you but this can all wait until later… Alright, I’ll see you then. Goodbye.” Grillby hung up his phone and threw it to the far side of the room.

“Who was that,” asked Candace.

“My sister. She wants to know of what she heard from our mother is true.”

“And she calls at six in the morning to find out?”

“Yes. Fleur was always an early riser. She had probably been up for at least an hour and couldn’t help herself,” Grillby yawned and made himself comfortable again with Candace in his arms. As soon as he had done so he found himself being entranced by Candace’s soft curves and warm scents once again filling him with desire. He kissed Candace, who was also was finding his warmth and strength enticing.

It was several hours later. Candace and Grillby finally managed to crawl out of bed. Candace went to her laundry box and pulled out a fresh outfit for the day. Something nice enough for a luncheon with Grillby’s family. Candace heard the splash of a huge bathtub being filled in the bathroom. Candace went to inspect. Grillby had pulled out several towels and what appeared to be a robe and placed them close to the tub.

“Come here,” called Grillby. “I want to show you something.”

“Okay,” answered Candace, not sure what was happening.

“Get into the bath and close your eyes.”

Candace, having slept naked the past few days, stepped into the bathtub. She screeched.

“The water’s freezing!”

Grillby laughed, “It’ll be hot soon enough. Trust me on this. Get in and close your eyes, I want to show you something.”

Candace warily sat in the cold bath water and closed her eyes. The cold water was making her shiver after being warmed by Grillby’s flames the past few days. She heard a soft hiss and the water began to get warm. The hissing became louder as she felt someone else join her in the bathtub. The water was now hot. She felt strong arms take hold of her and found herself being kissed by something warm and very wet.

“Open your eyes,” Grillby whispered.

Candace opened her eyes. The man holding her was clearly Grillby. Or rather it was Grillby when he doused his flames. You could still see his handsome facial features, but there were no flames. He
was an ash grey color and was hairless. You could clearly see that his eyes were a very bright gold and still held fire within them. Candace could tell where he had grown breasts at one point although they were now his pectoral muscles. He was looking at Candace shyly and a little hesitantly. Candace smiled at Grillby and kissed him back.

“Is this what you really look like?” she asked.

“I guess you could say this is what my core body looks like. When I am dry, all anyone can see are the fires that cover me. When I douse myself in water to bathe or if there was an emergency and I had to swim, this is what lies underneath my fires. But, there are drawbacks. When my core body is exposed in this way, I am more vulnerable. My skin is very sensitive. I cannot use fire magic when exposed like this. I wanted you to see me at my most vulnerable so it would not shock you.”

“So if someone poured water on you, what would happen?”

“There would be a momentary shock of being doused, but it’s not enough to kill me. You would have to directly attack my core body to try to kill me. I could not use fire magic for defense, though. I would have to use other attacks or FIGHT physically.”

“How long until your fires returned?”

“Keeping warm and dry, it takes an hour for my fires to re-ignite. Some of us can only use certain types of magic when they are wet. My grandfather for one, can catch glimpses of the future scrying in water when he is doused,” said Grillby. “He says that by making himself vulnerable, it allows him to be more open to what the future may hold.”

“How often do you do this?”

“Once or twice a week for bathing purposes. My grandfather says that with patience I could learn to scry, but I don’t like making myself as vulnerable as scrying requires.”

Candace kissed Grillby. “Let’s hurry up with that bath, then. The sooner we wash the sooner you can dry.”

About fifteen minutes later, Candace and Grillby emerged from the tub. Candace covered herself in a towel while Grillby dried off his body and used his robe that covered his body explaining it would also retain heat until his fires returned. Candace dressed in the outfit she pulled out of the Laundry Box and brushed out her hair and took her contacts out of their case.

“I wish you would wear your glasses more,” said Grillby, who was watching her put in her contacts.

“I believe I told you I don’t like them flying off of my face when I play piano.”

“Yes, but I think you look cute when you wear your glasses.”

Candace laughed, “You’re biased. You wear glasses, too”

Grillby stood behind her and pulled her into his arms. “Maybe I am biased, but I still think glasses look cute on you,” he murmured.

Candace smiled and gently squeezed Grillby’s cheek. “You’re cute too, all grey and exposed to the world.”
“Stop that. We just cleaned up and I want to wait until after lunch before we start making a mess of ourselves again.”

Candace pouted at Grillby who laughed. She then smiled and laughed as well. It really was ridiculous.

Grillby went and walked downstairs to his kitchen. He made a simple breakfast for the two of them as they waited for Grillby to re-ignite. They talked and laughed over their meal. They had just finished eating when Candace caught a whiff of smoke and saw Grillby’s fires re-ignite. His flames once again covered him as if they were tendrils of hair. His natural scents began to fill the kitchen. Candace once again found herself intoxicated by Grillby’s smell. All was well for her so long as she could smell him. Grillby got up and went to finish getting dressed. He wanted to make a quick stop at Undyne’s house before they went to go see his parents. He wanted to reassure Undyne that Candace was well and they were settling down together.

Grillby came back downstairs dressed in a pair of black slacks that were of finer quality than he normally wore for work. He wore an emerald green dress shirt that complimented his natural fiery glow.

“We had better go and visit Undyne and Alphys before they send a search and rescue party after you. I also want to introduce you to the ferryman. They provide a quick trip through all three major zones of the Underground. This way you can have more independence and can go exploring on your own while I take care of business. Ask Frisk to come with you. She loves to wander around the Underground.”

“Yeah, we kinda forgot to go and visit Dye yesterday,” said Candace sheepishly.

“I’m pretty sure Alphys kept her distracted or got her to see that she was starting to stifle you. I mean no offense to Dye, but I would be willing to bet she had a way of discouraging other men, didn’t she?”

“A few times. I was usually pretty good at weeding out men on my own. There were however a couple of times when no just wasn’t enough. Undyne scared the living shit out of them,” replied Candace.

Grillby nodded. “Come, let’s go and pay Dye and Alphys a visit.”

Grillby locked up his house and holding Candace’s hand they began to walk into Hotland. She was surprised by a huge metal complex that seemed to be just touching the magma below them.

“That’s the CORE. They are able to produce electricity to the entire Underground from the magma here in Hotland. They get huge blocks of ice floated downstream from Snowdin through Waterfall into the CORE to keep the heat and temperatures inside the working parts of the CORE stable. I don’t know a lot about how the CORE operates though. You should ask Alphys. She had been the Royal Scientist when Frisk first fell into the Underground. I think Sans also knows how the CORE operates, but he doesn’t like to talk about it. He would tell you that had been another life for him. Watch your toes around Sans. Outside he’s all fun and games. But he is probably the smartest monster in the Underground. I would hate to ever get on his bad side,” said Grillby.

“I’ve noticed one of the things he does the most is observe,” noted Candace.

“That is also quite observant,” chuckled Grillby. “Yes, that’s correct. Observation is quite a powerful
tool. Before Frisk came here, most monsters would tell you that I never spoke. It is much easier to observe when you fade into the background. I still use this technique among untrustworthy humans. Like when we had that meeting. Most people don’t pay any attention to the man that is serving them, so it is easy to fade into the background and watch.”

They reached a tunnel shaft that appeared to be an elevator. Grillby punched a button and the door opened. Grillby waved Candace inside. There was a series of six buttons to push.

“Right now, there are two buttons to keep in mind. L1 and R3. L1 will take you out a flight of stairs directly to the river and the ferryman. R3 will take you to highest parts of Hotland not far from either my house or to MTT Resort. From the resort you take an elevator to the city. There is also a bridge to the CORE. From the CORE there is an elevator directly to New Home where King Asgore, Queen Toriel and Frisk all live.”

“Now I am going to give you a word of warning. I encourage you to press all the elevator buttons to explore Hotland more. But, be careful. There have been reports of ghost-like creatures who will talk for a time about a Dr Gaster. There is no official record of a Dr Gaster anywhere in the Underground. If you see a strange ghost-like creature by any of the elevator shafts, ignore them. They will fade away on their own.”

“But aren’t there a few ghost monsters?”

“The Blook family, yes,” replied Grillby with a smile. Mettaton is probably the most well-known of the Blook family.”

“I was thinking of Napstablook. I’ve met him a few times when he visited Undyne. He’s sweet but super shy. He would vanish whenever Dye would try to introduce us.”

“You would have had better luck if Frisk introduced the two of you. He is a good friend of Frisk’s. Now, the creatures I am talking about aren’t like Blooky, or other ghost monsters. From what has been described to me, they are completely grey. One was observed in Waterfall asking about what it would be like if the world had completely forgotten about them. The creature appeared to be a child. It had begged the water elemental I know to forget about it after a while. Then, POOF, it vanished.”

“Water elemental?” asked Candace.

Grillby smiled at Candace. “Just as I am a fire elemental, there are three other elemental types. Our magic primarily is used to control certain elements of life. Fire, Water, Earth and Air. My primary magic isn’t necessarily about cooking, although that is one use of my fires. It’s about controlling fires. Using my flames to give warmth and allow life to grow. But what humans fail to understand is that we four elements are at our best when we are in harmony with each other. Fire is a purifier and can be used to cleanse, just as Water and Air can. On the surface when a forest fire is sparked it is actually quite beneficial to the earth. It allows junk that naturally piles up in a forest to be burned and those ashes help renew the earth. If you think about it, volcanic grounds have some of the richest soils because the life, death, and renewal process is constant.”

“As far as Water elementals go,” continued Grillby, “They tend to live in the waters and springs of Waterfall, although many are returning to the surface to work in the rivers, lakes and oceans around the world. They observe the plant life and living creatures in the water. They tend to the purity of the water and also ensure that certain water levels are clean and healthy for all living things. They allow water to flow through tributaries to growing fields for food.”

“Air elementals do the same for the air we all breathe. Here in the Underground if you feel a fresh breeze, more than likely an Air elemental is nearby. They check on the balances of air for both
animals and plants. Good air for animals is bad for plants, but bad air for plants are good for animals. Air elementals maintain this balance.”

“Earth elementals use the combined magic of Fire Water and Air to grow things. You will find most earth elementals near growing fields. Many young earth elementals have found jobs on the surface working for small farmers, who try to work naturally with all four elements. A good thunderstorm is really all four elements of life working together,” finished Grillby.

“Wow,” was all Candace said. It was quite a bit to take in all at once.

Grillby smiled and pulled Candace to him. “I know, it’s a lot of information at once. You need to be prepared for other elementals. We all walk freely here.”

Grillby pushed the button marked L1. The doors quickly shut and there was the brief sensation of movement. The door promptly opened and they were in a different part of Hotland.

“This way.”

Grillby lead Candace down two flights of stairs to a small canal. There was a person on a longboat wearing a long cowled robe.

“Tra-La-La! Fancy seeing you here, Grillby!”

“Hello, Coral. This is my lady, Candace.”

“Your lady? As in your mate? Undyne was heard to be grumbling to her father about it.”

“Yes, Coral. In fact, we are on our way to visit Undyne.”

“Congratulations! Hurry on then! Whenever you need a ride, Miss Candace, please come to any of my docks! Any friend of Undyne, is a friend of mine!”

“What about me, Coral?” said Grillby slyly.

“Cheeky boy! You know some folk of Hotland are terrified of the waters here.”

Grillby laughed, and Coral laughed. They seemed to be sharing an inside joke. Candace boarded the boat and Grillby followed her.

“We’re off!” said Coral happily. “Come on, sing with me!”

They both sang with Coral and they arrived on a small dock.

“Tra-la-la, You are welcome to ride at anytime!”

“I’ll see you later, Coral,” Grillby said to his friend.

Grillby helped Candace off of the boat and began to guide her.

Candace smiled. “You can hear the bubbling of water here,” her voice sounded abnormally loud to her.

“Waterfall is an apt name for the place. It’s caverns are frequently used for meditation purposes. Everyday noises sound unnaturally loud in the crystal silence of Waterfall,” said Grillby softly. “We fires have a tendency to have a roar, water sings, wind howls and earth sighs.”
Candace smiled. He was still talking about the elements of life. She began to wonder where humans fit into the picture. If humans ever did fit in at all.

Grillby lead her to a cavern where there was a fish shaped house in the middle of it. She saw the oddest thing working in a garden. It appeared to be a life sized doll of Mew Mew Kissy Cutie. The anime had been popular when she was a girl, but she had never seen a living doll before. It was staring at Candace. There was something about the doll that said that maybe it wasn’t quite right in the head. Grillby knocked on the side of a door.

There was the mechanical sliding of a door.

“FINALLY! It’s about damn time the two of you show up!” shouted Undyne. Candace found herself being pulled into a fierce embrace. Alphys stood behind Undyne and rolled her eyes.

“Come in! Come in! Your mother and Fuku have already been hear wanting to discuss wedding plans, Grillby,” continued Undyne.

“I’m afraid we can’t…” started Candace.

“I know. We are coming with you to Vulcanus and Hearth’s house. Especially after we explained that you don’t have any living relatives,” said Alphys.

“We don’t even know if Can is pregnant yet,” objected Grillby.

Undyne gave Grillby a withering look. “Do we care? No. We want everything in place for when you do announce a pregnancy.”

“But…”

“No buts, either. You know your mother has been waiting for this for years. We all want the two of you to have a nice wedding. We love the two of you too much not to honor such a special occasion.”
Not as Determined.

After a couple of boisterous hours visiting Undyne, an alarm went off on Grillby’s phone.

“It’s time for us to leave,” he announced. “We don’t want to be late to my parents. Both my grandfather and my sister will all be there.”

Undyne and Alphys nodded and grabbed a few personal items.

“No, I will use flash travel,” replied Grillby. “There are too many of us for the ferry.”

They gathered in a circle and there was a flash of fire. They were standing in front of a large manor house. Grillby guided Candace to the door and rang a doorbell. Undyne and Alphys stood behind them. Hearth opened the door. Her yellow flames were bright and she looked excited to see the four of them. There was another fire elemental right behind her, dressed in a skirtsuit. Her flames were a purplish pink and she seemed just as excited as Hearth at their arrival. Hearth gave her son a kiss on the cheek and quickly embraced Candace.

“Welcome to our family home, Candace!” said Hearth excitedly. “This is my daughter and Grill’s sister, Fleur,” introducing Candace to the other fire elemental.

Fleur came right up to Candace and gave her a warm hug. “Welcome to the family,” she said in greeting to Candace.

“Where are your husband and three masters of disaster?” asked Grillby jokingly.

“The kids are in the back garden, wearing out Dad. Ahi is hiding,” replied Fleur.

“As well he should be,” came an aged voice. “He knows I am still upset at him.”

Both Hearth and Fleur turned to an aged man. He was not as tall as Grillby and used a cane. His flames were the same golden orange as Grillby’s and he held himself with a great deal of dignity. Candace got the impression that he was inspecting her quite closely as they stood in the foyer.

“Candace, let me introduce you to my grandfather...”

“I can introduce myself, youngster,” came a clipped, but amused reply.

Grillby went immediately quiet. Candace noted that he must be the real power in the family by the way everyone differed to him.

“So. For the first time in a thousand years, a human has been brought to us. Let’s see what kind of human you are, before I allow you any farther into my home.”

Before she knew it Candace was frozen in place. It seemed as if the older fire elemental had called her very SOUL out of her body and was inspecting it.

“Perseverance? Hmmmm. There are overtones of Kindness as well. Not nearly as Determined as Frisk. You know the value of hard work and are kind to those around you. There is magic in your SOUL. Very rare for a human. Hmmmm. Very loyal to those you consider your friends and family. Deceit is not in your nature. You are probably an awful liar.”
He let go of Candace’s SOUL. She stumbled as Grillby tightened his grip to keep her from falling.

“Forgive my inspection of your SOUL. I had heard you were an exceptional human, but I wanted to verify that for myself. I am Ignus. I am the patriarch of our family. I like to ensure that my children and grandchildren are marrying the right people. I had warned Grillby about Brandy when he first married her. You, however, are not like her at all. I can see this is indeed a true SOULbond,” the elderly Ignus finished.

Grillby grew angry. “Granddad, there is absolutely no reason to pull on her SOUL that way!”

“Isn’t there? It has been a thousand years since I have been in the presence of a human. The last time I had seen one I was a young man, right about your age. I had been a slave. I know that not all humans are bad or evil. But for the safety of us all, I need to be certain that even your SOULmate would never willingly bring harm to us.”

“There are other ways to get what you wanted, without touching her SOUL!”

“True, but those are slower and oftentimes less effective.” Ignus looked carefully at his grandson. This was as much a test on him as he was testing the girl. Inwardly, he was pleased. He would go through great lengths for his mate. The outcome of his prior vision relied greatly on Grillby’s resolve for her and their child.

“Candace, let’s go. I will not tolerate any insult on you.”

“Grillby, please-” Hearth began to plead.

“I’m sorry, Mother. I will not allow for anyone to insult Candace. If certain members of this family can’t accept that she is human, then we will go elsewhere. If anyone wishes to visit honestly we will be at the bar.”

Before Candace could say anything, there was a flash of fire and they were just inside Grillby’s bar in Snowdin. Grillby gave Candace a reassuring hug.

“I’m sorry, Can. I didn’t think my grandfather would react so negatively towards you,” Grillby whispered softly.

“It all happened so fast. I’m confused onto what actually happened,” said Candace in a daze.

“My grandfather did something he should not have without your permission. He took hold of your SOUL.”

“Why?”

“I’m not certain. There are other ways to find out if someone is a decent person without resorting to taking hold of their SOUL. It can be dangerous. He could have started a FIGHT with you if he didn’t like what he had seen.”

“But I didn’t do anything,” protested Candace.

“I know. That’s why we left. I will not tolerate him insulting you without cause, nor will I tolerate anyone making a cheap shot. Come, I expect Fleur, her husband and kids, Fu and my parents to be here shortly.”
The shouting was just starting at Vulcanus and Hearth’s house.

“How did you do that?” yelled Vulcanus. “You already knew she was a decent person, for all that she is human.”

“Dammit, Grandfather, first you belittle Ahi. Then you go and insult Candace. Way to keep a family together. We are leaving. I really do want to get to know Grillby’s bride,” Fleur had become a very pale lavender as she had heated up in anger. She didn’t think it was too much to ask for a nice luncheon to get to know her older brother’s mate.

“I’m going with you Aunt Fleur,” said Fuku. “This is a backhanded insult to me as well. I already told you she was a good person, Grandpa.”

“Come on, Fu. We will all catch the ferry,” said Undyne. She had frankly been shocked at Ignus’ attitude towards Candace. Everyone who knew Undyne should know she would never have gotten close to a human who she deemed unworthy. Alphys nodded at Undyne. They were united in this.

“I’ll join you,” said Hearth.

“We are all going,” said Vulcanus. He was beginning to think that his father was starting to get senile. Then he remembered the vision from the day before. He would talk more to his father later. Perhaps Ignus had other motives he wasn’t divulging yet. Right now, the rest of the family needed to be together. They were elated at the possibility of Grillby getting married. It had been a long time coming for him.

“Alphys dear, could you call your mother and tell her to go to Grillby’s bar instead? I wanted Candace to meet the rest of the family before she came over.” said Hearth.

Alphys nodded at Hearth.

“Do you mind if I invite Dad?” asked Undyne. Her father had become a sort of honorary uncle to Candace.

“No, I don’t mind,” said Hearth. On any number of family occasions with Peachscale’s family, Undyne’s father, Cetus, had been a welcome addition. He had a cooler temper than his daughter, but the same big heart.

Vulcanus managed to get everyone in the same room and with a flash of fire, he transported them all in front of Grillby’s original bar. Vulcanus had always been pleased with his eldest son’s success as a businessman. He had given Grillby his original start-up loan when he had married Brandy, so that he would always have a means of supporting a wife and family.

He had worried when Grillby selected the remote parts of Snowdin for his bar and grill. Grillby’s assurances that there were no other businesses like this in the area more or less guaranteed his success. It hadn’t hurt that even before the barrier fell the Royal Guard made it a sort of local HQ. It became a local hangout spot for the towns residents. When the barrier fell and the wrangling between Grillby and Brandy assured that Grillby would go to the surface, Grillby trained managers who could handle day to day business while he lived on the surface. When Fu finished her degree, she had more or less taken over his original bar, though Grill still had to make some decisions.

Vulcanus lead the group inside the bar. Grillby and Candace were playing a duet on the piano. As they walked into the bar they were stunned by the magic that flowed between them as they played. Grillby’s family was surprised by its intensity and were then satisfied that Grillby and Candace’s marriage would be a wonderful thing for them both. Only SOULmates could share magic in this
fashion. Any remaining qualms Undyne had vanished. She knew they belonged together.

Grillby and Candace stopped playing and kissed.

The adults in the family applauded. Fleur’s three children made gross out faces at each other.

Grillby and Candace blushed under the applause, seeing that the family had joined them.

“What piece was that?” asked Undyne.

“Rachmaninoff’s Opus 11 ‘Romance’,” answered Candace.

“Fitting,” said Alphys.

Grillby got off the piano bench and began to pull tables and chairs for his family. Candace began to play another piano piece. This one reminded her of Waterfall. As she finished she then immediately began to play another piece. Undyne smiled, both pieces reminded her of the bubbling waters of her home. The family began to relax as the tranquility of the piano filled the room.

“Chopin’s Waterfall?” asked Grillby.

Candace nodded, “Followed by Un Sospiro. Those have been itching my fingers since we went to Dye’s house earlier.”

“You can tell how one inspired the other,” commented Undyne.
The family got comfortable. Grillby introduced Fleur’s husband to Candace as well as his father. Fuku insisted that her father relax with the family while she prepared a meal for them. Hearth began to discuss wedding plans and both Fleur and Fuku kept chiming in suggestions. After a time Candace mosied her way back to the piano and once again she began to play for the crowd in the bar.

Eventually both Alphys’ mother, Peachscale arrived as well as Undyne father, Cetus. Cetus was a fish monster bigger than Undyne but with the same red hair and blue scales. Cetus began to joke around and tease Grillby about his upcoming nuptials. He also made some veiled threats about seeing to Candace’s well being. Candace didn’t mind. Cetus was as big a softie as Undyne. He had done any number of kind and fatherly things for her after her own grandfather had died. She tended to think of Cetus as an honorary uncle. Sans came at his usual time with Frisk and they got caught up in the celebration.

During the lunch a large, muscular, purple dinosaur with brown hair came to the bar.

“Suzy!” yelled Undyne. “What brings you here to the Underground?”

“Orders, Captain. I have dispatches from higher ups for you and Alphys both.”

Undyne got up and walked to Suzy. Suzy handed Undyne several envelopes. As Undyne read the letters, Suzy and Frisk looked at each other. They didn’t say anything to each other.

“Well, Frisky,” said Sans. “We had better go before your mother decides to look for us.”

Frisk nodded at Sans. Sans started to walk and with a flash both he and Frisk disappeared.

“Why the hell is it that I always feel like should know her,” complained Suzy.

“Know who?” asked Grillby.

“Frisk. We have been acquaintances for years, but I always feel like I should know both her and Sans from somewhere else.”

“Clamgirl once said the two of you should be friends. It’s too bad she vanished right after the barrier fell. She might have been able to explain more to the two of you,” said Undyne.

“Vanished?” asked Grillby.

“Like those other grey things that are sometimes spotted in Hotland. She spoke to Frisk and then completely vanished. No one had ever seen her again. Not even her brother.”

“Spooky,” said Candace.

“To say the very least,” said Fleur. “I have seen some of those things in Hotland. The first time it scared me for a week. I do not know who they are or what their purpose may be. But I do know they scare me.”

Suzy shrugged. “It doesn’t really matter. It’s just a strange deja vu whenever I see Frisk or Sans.”
Undyne read the dispatches that Suzy had brought for her. She nodded and spoke to the group

“Me and Alphys need to return to the surface tomorrow. Grillbz I know you won’t like this but Can needs to be back by Tuesday. By law and court procedure, she needs to give a deposition to both the district attorney and later to a judge who is trying to determine whether to grant bail to that kidnapper or not. Lesser Dog’s full report will be entered in as evidence at the same time.”

“Here is my question, Dye. What happens if human courts fail her and those criminals walk free,” Grillby ground out of his mouth. He was starting to get brighter and was heating up in anger. “I do not want her on the surface if someone tries...”

“To kidnap or hurt her again,” finished Undyne. “I know Grillbz. This crime happened on the surface though. This must go through human courts, at least at first. Candace is human, and Frisk can’t do anything about whose court this falls on because of that. At least, not until after you are married and only if another crime happens after you are married. I am taking her safety deadly seriously. I am having both L and Guardsman Suzy guard her until this is settled.”

“Me? Why me?” asked the purple dinosaur.

Undyne smiled at Suzy. “Because you can be as vicious as myself when provoked. You would not hesitate to kill if it comes to that. I have known you almost as long as I have known Frisk. Of all the kids that used to follow me around to see me arrest bad guys, you were the one I mentored. I taught you about using your natural strength and harness it as a duty to both yourself and our people. One day I expect you to become an officer and maybe even take my place as Captain. Consider this more training. For all the crap that some humans give us, there are also those like Candace. Kind and genuinely wanting to know us as a people. Learning about them will help you extend our duty not just to monsters but to all who need our strength.”

“Noelle won’t like it. She hates it when I start to pull in overtime,” said Suzy.

“I’ll talk to her and her father,” said Grillby. “I’ve known Rudy a long time, he will understand if someone explains it to him.”

Alphys read her letter. She sighed. “They want me to go and test those magical artifacts that were recovered with that mage. They want to know what they are and what they do.”

“If we know what they are we wont get caught with our pants down, like we have been this past week,” commented Undyne.

“What time do we need to to be there on Tuesday?” asked Grillby.

“Nine in the morning and expect it to go all day,” replied Undyne.

“Damn it, that means we need to return tomorrow,” cursed Grillby.

“It’ll be alright, Grillbz. We know that Can is being threatened we can take better steps to protect her now.”

Hearth was watching Candace. Candace had become pale and looked frightened.

“Suzy,” commanded Undyne. “For now, return to the surface and prepare a detail with Lesser Dog to secure Candace. I want the two of you the closest to her when I cannot be there.”

Suzy smiled toothily, “Do I get to rip their faces off if they breathe too close to her?”
“Whatever it takes to secure her safety,’ replied Undyne.

Suzy headed for the door, “Call me when you arrive back on the surface. I’ll go and get my axes ready.”

With that Suzy left the group.

“No matter what, taking Suzy under your wing was one of the best decisions you have ever made, Undyne.” came the quiet voice of Cetus.

“Yeah. She’s rude and crude, but she gets shit done. I have always liked that about her ever since she was a kid. Reminds me of myself when I was that young.”

Chapter End Notes

This is not a Deltarune crossover. Since Suzy is mentioned by Clamgirl in the game, this is how I imagine her in the Undertale timeline. I can just imagine Undyne taking an equally rough and tumble preteen Suzy and mentoring her the way both Gerson and Asgore did for her. I did ship her with Noelle though. I think they would be cute together. Finally, yes, I have pulled a couple of things that were used in the Switch version of Undertale, Like Mad Dummy taking over Mew Mew Kissy Cutie and Clamgirl becoming a Gaster Follower.
This is just a fun post. One of my favorite Youtubers Rousseau just posted a Meglovania x Moonlight Sonata crossover piece.

You can find it here https://youtu.be/wyykUJGHVsE

I couldn't stop laughing when I saw it!

Copy and paste to see vid!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!