A Spooky Irish Ghost

by raspberriesnchocolate

Summary

If you asked him, Nathan would tell you that he was horrible with kids. The only time he'd been decent was when one of them used their powers on him to make him think that he was. He didn't like kids, kids didn't like him. He was fine with that.

But this Klaus kid, he looked like he needed somebody's help, and through process of elimination, Nathan was the one for the job.

(AKA Klaus accidentally gets an Irish ghost mentor who seems like he should've had a mentor for himself.)

{Minimal to no knowledge of Misfits necessary, it focuses more on Klaus and Nathan than all of them.}
A small boy mashed his palms into his ears, trying his best to block out the screaming.

The air was musty and cold, and the boy wished that he had said no. Would his father even have listened?

Klaus whimpered again, salty tears running down his face.

He squeezed his eyes shut, not wanting to gaze at glowing ghosts and open wounds. How long had it been since he was locked in here? There was light in the cracks now, so maybe it was morning. He had been locked in here after dinner.

Klaus’ musings were interrupted by the sensation of ice water running along his sides. Against his better judgement, he peeked one eye open to see a young woman with a slit in her neck hunched above him, dripping blue blood on his head.

“Klaus,” she burbled.

Klaus screamed.

The ghosts around him perked up at the noise, starting up their shouts again, a horrible cacophony of noise echoing in his head.

“Klaus!”

They lunged forward, mutilated limbs flapping in his face, spraying him with the sensation of ice. Klaus could feel his throat and lungs burn, watching the fingers pass through his torso. They weren’t supposed to be in his chest! It was his, not theirs!

“Stop!” He cried.

They bellowed even louder, if possible.

“Oi! Leave him alone!” A new, loud voice called out.

Just like that, the voices stopped, leaving Klaus with ringing ears and phantom cold.

All he could hear was his own shaky gasps and hiccups.

“Hey, hey. You- shit, you alright, mate?”

Klaus looked up to see a curly haired young man staring down at him, concern on pale features. He was a ghost, or something, Klaus could see. The man was pale, but had warmer features to him than the others.

The man fidgeted before dropping into a squat to peer at Klaus’ face.

“You good now?”
Klaus breathed in deeply, nodding once, staring warily at the stranger.

“You’re dead.” He said.

The man blinked before frowning a bit. “Yeah, so?”

“But you’re not… You’re not dead-dead.” Klaus whispered, still shivering a bit. He was glad for the distraction.

“Well, yeah. I’m stuck, but not like these poor sods here.” The Irish not-ghost grinned at him, jerking a thumb at the rest of the ghosts, who stood and watched them with glazed eyes.

Klaus took one glance and started whimpering again, pressing his body into the wall.

“Shit- uh, sorry! No, look! It’s okay, kid, see? They’re dormant right now, don’t worry,” The not-ghost hastily assured, awkwardly patting Klaus on the head.

The action wasn’t comforting, but the faint warmth Klaus felt when the hand touched his head was.

Of course, Klaus was a child, and children cry when they’re overwhelmed. After feeling such abject terror and then stark relief, Klaus’ brain just broke down.

So Klaus cried, to the panic of the Irish not-ghost. He didn’t know how to deal with children!

“No no no no no! Hey-kiddo, Klaus, I didn’t mean to scare you! I won’t touch you again, sorry-”

Klaus whimpered a bit more, shaking his head and reaching out to try and tug on Nathan’s pant leg.

Nathan cursed, blinking down at the hysterical child, tentatively reaching out again to stroke his hair.

Klaus saw the incoming gesture, and in his hysteria and desperation, Klaus pulled at something deep within and suddenly, he was clutching Nathan’s skinny leg. Nathan jerked, stuttering out a curse at the sudden sensation of corporeality.

It had been so long since he had felt weight on his feet, fabric on his skin. His hair raised at the cold (cold!) air of the mausoleum. Nathan’s hand was really there, resting on Klaus’ head.

Nathan didn’t know what to do, feeling uncomfortable. He gave a few pats to Klaus’ sweaty hair, as if he was petting a dog. Klaus whimpered, clutching harder. It was actually starting to hurt, and Nathan was starting to panic.

“Think, Nathan, think. What would mum do?” Memories of his mother slapping him and fainting a few weeks later flashed in his head.

Maybe not. He just had to wing this one, didn’t he?

He looked down at the sniveling child attached to his leg, prying him off and sitting down.

Nathan fought a grimace as he tentatively opened his arms in a clear invitation of a hug. Kids liked hugs, right?

Klaus dove forward, pressing his face into Nathan’s chest, quieting slightly.

Nathan’s grimace faded, and as he wrapped his arms around the boy, he realized that he… He really didn’t mind this. It felt nice.
He could do this, Nathan thought, rubbing Klaus’ skinny back, feeling the tremors begin to fade.

Klaus finally quieted, but remained pressed into Nathan’s chest.

“So.. My name is Nathan.” He said, leaning back a bit to glance down at the boy.

“Klaus,” Klaus answered, voice muffled through Nathan’s jumpsuit.

Klaus closed his eyes against the warm stranger’s (well, he knew his name, so was he a stranger?) chest, breathing in and out. Nathan smelled like- well, he smelled like cotton and man and dust. It wasn’t good or bad, it was just a scent, but Nathan had a scent, and that’s what mattered. Ghosts never smelled like anything pleasant. Ghosts never had a scent in general unless they purposefully passed their limbs through Nathan’s nose and face.

“Are you not a ghost?” He muttered aloud.

“I don’t really know. I was, but you’re touching me, so I guess I’m not? But your hands are glowing.” Nathan’s Irish lilt brought a smile to Klaus’ face, who unwrapped an arm from Nathan’s middle. It was glowing. It was blue from the tips to his wrist.

He shrieked, waving it around. The ghosts in the room rustled at the noise.

Nathan grabbed his wrist, “Calm down, Klaus!”

Klaus took a deep breath, before slumping against Nathan’s chest. Too much was happening and he was just so tired.

He looked up at Nathan, who, in some weird way, looked like an older version of himself, but with curlier hair. “How did you get them to stop?”

Nathan glanced at the idle ghosts around them, who had resorted to staring or walking/shuffling around the building.

“Well, I was mad when I told them. Like, angry.”

Klaus scowled, realizing that his father might be right in that he must get over his fear to control them. He told them to leave out of fear, not anger.

As if sensing his annoyance, the ghosts seemed to become transparent, and Nathan became more solid and warm.

“Ohay,” he muttered, narrowing his eyes at the transparent spirits.

Nathan, who was still hugging him, looked around. “Holy shit, man! Sorry, language.”

Klaus giggled. “You sound like Luther. He’s a real kiss-ass to Father-”

He was interrupted by the heavy door creaking open and his father stepping inside.

For the first time, Klaus thought he saw a glimmer of interest in his father’s eyes. That interest was directed towards him. It made him both scared and proud.

He felt Nathan tense and hold him tighter.

“Number Four, get up this instant!” His father called, thumping his cane on the floor. The familiar thud sent Pavlovian fear through Klaus’ body, and suddenly, Nathan’s arms phased through him.
“Nathan!” he cried, looking at the now pale looking Irishman. He tried in vain to grab onto him again, but his hands, no longer glowing, passed right through.

“Number Four!” His father growled, and Klaus scrambled to stand, looking at his feet.

His father dragged him out, the path to the car remaining silent. The older man gave Klaus a once-over, before nodding once and giving him an order to get in the car. Klaus watched the man pull out a device and point it to the crypt, pressing a few buttons. He climbed into the backseat before his father turned around.

“Is this your dad? He’s getting on in his years, isn’t he? Looks like he could crumble to ash any moment, now.”

Klaus started, looking in shock to see Nathan lounging in the passenger seat. A grin stretched his face at the curly-haired man attempting to poke his father in the face. Throughout the entire ride, Nathan made remarks, mostly mocking his father, and it took all of Klaus’ energy not to laugh.

Klaus looked out the window to hide his smile, realizing that for the first time, he felt okay after a trip to the mausoleum.

“He looks like Santa had a bad divorce, doesn’t he?”

Klaus ducked his head, snorting quietly, coming to the conclusion that he was okay because this time, Nathan saved him.

It was nice.

Chapter End Notes

Nathan’s existence is explained in the 6th chapter. Just know that his immortality affected him in a funky way and sent him to Klaus. Oh yeah, Nathan never switched his powers here, mostly because I hated how the writers of Misfits sent Nathan off.

There aren’t enough crossovers with TUA and Misfits, which is a shame because there’s so much potential there.

This is mostly a fic for me and my friend, but if you liked it or wanted to comment, I would be really tickled.
The Ghost at the Table

Chapter Summary

In which Nathan is confused, and Klaus is tired. That's it. That's literally the entire chapter.

Enjoy!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

They found their way home, and Nathan whistled at the mansion.

“Nice place, Klaus. Once your father clocks in, at any minute now, really, look at him, you could turn this place into a museum. Make loads o’ money, you could.”

Klaus stifled a giggle, shaking his head.

His father gave him an order to shower and come back down for breakfast. Klaus nodded, eager to get out of his dirty, sweaty clothes. He turned to leave, but his father’s hand on his shoulder stopped him.

“Number Four,” His mouth was a thin line, and he seemed to hesitate. “You have made exceptional progress. I pray that you do not fail to keep it up.”

Klaus stared in shock at the man, ignoring Nathan’s muttering of, ”Don’t let him touch you, he’ll absorb your youth!”

“You are proving yourself capable of using your potential, Number Four. I can only imagine what took you so long. Now get dressed, I will not waste time waiting.” Klaus sped up the stairs, Nathan following suit. Klaus was deep in thought, mostly uncomfortable at the praise (was it even praise? It sounded more like a statement) that his father had given him. The older man looked just as uncomfortable as Klaus felt.

In his musings, Klaus missed the jealous stare of the boy down the hall, but Nathan did not.

“Don’t look now, but Fred from Scooby Doo over there looks like he either wants to shag you or kill you.”

Against Nathan’s wise advice, Klaus turned and met the stare. Luther stared at him, a sour look on his face, before the blond slammed his door shut with a bang.

Klaus hesitated before entering his room, grabbing his uniform and turning to the not-ghost looking around his bedroom.

“I’m gonna go shower and get dressed, so you can um, I don’t know, explore? Don’t go into any closed rooms, my siblings could be changing, too.”

Nathan wiggled thick eyebrows at Klaus. ”How old are said siblings? Are they very pretty?”
Klaus wrinkled his nose. “Allison is pretty, so is Diego, I think. But they’re all my age.”

Nathan proceeded to have an exaggerated empty puking session, before walking out of the room, muttering about berries and slices of cheese.

Klaus stared after him before walking to his bathroom and finally cleaning off the night’s worth of grime.

While he was in the shower, he heard the door on the other side open. (The siblings shared bathrooms. Five, Ben, and Klaus shared one, Luther and Diego shared another, and Allison and Vanya shared another.)

He heard a soft yawn and the sounds of someone brushing their teeth.

“Ben?” He asked, sputtering when soapy water entered his mouth.

“Yeah. Where were you last night, Klaus?” The meek boy questioned, sleep still in his voice.

“In the-” Klaus coughed up water as he made the same mistake again, “muzzle-Liam.”

Ben was silent for a few moments.

“You mean the mausoleum?”

“Yeah, that.”

Ben spat out his mouthwash. “You sound good.”

*Your voice isn’t hoarse from screaming*, went unsaid.

“Yeah. It’s great. I made a friend and unlocked a power.”

“That’s neat. What is it?” Ben asked. Klaus could hear him changing clothes.

Klaus had finished, his skinny arm blindly fumbling for a towel. It was handed to him.

“Thanks, Benny.” He sang, wrapping it around himself and stepping out to collide into Five.

“Oh. Thanks Five-y… Five-o…” Klaus struggled before sighing. “Thanks, Five.”

Five gave a catlike smirk, accepting the thanks. Klaus liked to think he knew Five enough to identify the smirk as a genuine smile.

“What’s the new power you unlocked?” Five asked, grabbing his own toothbrush.

Klaus opened his mouth to speak, but Mom knocked on the door, announcing that breakfast was in a few minutes.

Klaus sighed. “I’ll tell you guys later.”

The three went off to their respective rooms, getting dressed. Nathan was lounging on Klaus’ bed, eyes closed and humming some strange tune.

“So what’s the deal with your family? I took a look around, and there’s signs on the wall that teach you how to cripple somebody for life.”

“We’re superheroes. It’s part of our training.” Klaus answered, pulling on his socks and tying his
"You're just kids, though. You should be... I don’t know, participating in bullying, and shoplifting, and pure, mindless vandalism."

"Crime stops for no one." Klaus recited, brushing a hand through his hair.

Nathan opened his eyes and sat up, shooting such an unimpressed look at Klaus that he flushed pink.

“What? It’s true.” He defended.

Nathan narrowed his eyes and began to reply, but Klaus left before he could, ignoring the curses from Nathan as he trailed after him.

The group stood behind their designated chairs, waiting for their father to come down. A few minutes passed, and Nathan soon grew bored, shooting up a peace sign and going off to explore.

Their father arrived, passing through Nathan and sitting down.

“Sit!” he barked. The family sat and began to eat.

It was silent except for the clinking of silverware and the droning lecture in the background.

Klaus couldn’t help but notice Luther’s cranky air. His brother was tense, eating mechanically. Allison looked concerned, and the group shared a look.

When Luther was angry, Allison was angry.

Klaus rolled his eyes and took a sip of his orange juice, almost choking when Nathan raced into the room.

"Klaus! Klaus, there's a fuckin'- there's a monkey in your kitchen!"

Klaus snorted, “His name is Pogo and he’s a chimpanzee, actually.”

His family paused, staring at him. Klaus flushed, realising that he had just spoken during mealtime, and to somebody they couldn’t see to boot.

“Sorry,” he muttered. “Ghost.”

His father looked disapproving, and Luther seemed to relax at the familiar situation. Klaus was the loud, useless brother that Dad disapproved of. His praise never lasted for Klaus. This was how it was supposed to be.

Luther looked like he was waiting for their father to call Klaus out for lying for attention.

Klaus felt annoyance burn in his veins at the expression on Luther’s face, clenching his fists under the table.

Nathan looked sheepish, stepping behind Klaus.

“Sorry, Klaus.” Nathan said, patting Klaus on the head twice before passing through again.

His family, other than Five and Father, jerked back at the voice and translucent body that appeared for a moment before disappearing.
“Number Four! Do not conjure at the table!” His father barked. Half his siblings looked like they were going into shock. They always knew that Klaus could see ghosts, but to know about them was different than to see one, right before your very eyes.

Five looked curious, Luther looked like his oatmeal had poisoned him. Allison, Vanya, Ben, and Diego looked scared, but Diego was trying to put on a brave front.

Klaus relaxed his fists. “Sorry, sir.” He apologized.

The family continued to eat, with frantic glances at Klaus.

Once they had finished and were dismissed to their rooms, Klaus collapsed on his bed, exhausted from the lack of rest.

“Can we go see a movie? I’d kill to watch one right now, I’m really bored.” Nathan said from where he was perched on Klaus’ dresser.

He heard his door open and close.

“Oo ‘way,” he mumbled through his pillow. He was harshly rolled over by Five, whose expression was that of a mad scientist.

“You conjured someone.” He said.

Klaus jerked back, cursing. “Jesus, Five!”

“Hi, Klaus.” He turned to see Ben at the door.

“Hi, Ben!” He replied cheerily, waving.

“How did you conjure that man? At breakfast?” Five continued, wiping his hand on his shorts.

“I was mad at Luther, and then Nathan- that’s his name- was just there.”

Ben stepped forward. “Why were you mad?”

Five rolled his eyes, obviously not caring about Klaus’ emotional state.

“Luther was being a smug little prick.” Klaus bit out, hands glowing.

“Your hands are glowing.” Five said, gripping Klaus’ wrists with his thumb and forefinger.

“Yeah, no shit.” Nathan said.

Five spun around, launching a punch at Nathan’s face.

“OW! Holy shit! My nose- ah, fuck, my nose!” Nathan fell off the dresser, rolling around on the ground and clutching his face.

“Nathan!” Klaus rushed over to check on him. Five held one of Klaus’ pens in his hand like a knife, while Ben had stepped behind him in fear.

“Klaus, you better un-conjure me right now, mate. My nose is bleeding! I think I’m better off without my senses…” Nathan wailed, still on the floor.

It seemed that Nathan’s injury overshadowed Klaus’ anger at Luther, his hands ceasing to glow.
Nathan moaned at the relief, to Klaus’ discomfort.

"Don't... Don't do that." He muttered.

“Is-Is it gone?” Ben asked. The two others stared at where Nathan had been a moment ago.

“He’s still there, he’s just not corporeal.” Klaus sighed, feeling even more tired after that ordeal.

Five was tense, scanning the room as if he could find Nathan. Ben looked more curious than scared, now. After all, if that ghost went down from a little punch, what was there to fear?

Nathan was stood a few inches from Five, mouth open in a gape.

”This little bastard broke my nose!” Nathan waved his hand around in Five’s face.

Klaus groaned. “He didn’t break your nose, Nathan, he just punched you and you rolled around in pain.”

Ben and Five jerked back, looking for Nathan.

“Ben, Five, sit. Come on, don’t worry. He can’t hurt you.” Klaus patted his bed, smiling encouragingly.

Nathan had rolled up his sleeves to his elbows, a sneer on his face as he attempted to punch Five’s face.

“He’s really mad at you, Five, he’s attempting to beat you up.” Klaus admitted, and Five tensed, grabbing the pen once more.

“If you manifested him again, I would kill him.” Five growled.

”Look at this smug little bastard! Do it, Klaus, make me solid so I can break his nose!” Klaus laughed, knowing that Five could kill Nathan in a few seconds.

“I can’t do it on command, only when I’m angry.” Klaus said, waving his hands at them, showing off their non-glowy skin.

Five frowned. “I thought I could only use my power when I was angry, but I learned to harness it. You should do the same.”

The two glanced at Ben, who fidgeted.

Nathan was swinging, now, shouting curses at the thirteen year old he was trying to punch.

“Okay,” Klaus gave in. “Worth a try, right?”

Five shifted so that he was facing Klaus. “Okay, you’ve gotta focus. You have to feel that thing within you and pull on it. Like when you conjured him earlier, feel for that power.”

“You sound like Dad,” Klaus muttered, but focused nonetheless. Ben watched them both curiously.

Nathan had quieted, but was in what he thought was a fighting stance, ready for the moment he manifested.

Klaus kept his eyes closed, focusing, trying to find that thing within him. His body relaxed and he took deep breaths.
Nathan geared up, grinning at the faint sensation of feeling.

Five leaned closer, watching how Klaus’ fists seemed to glow for a moment.

Klaus’ eyes stayed closed, and he stretched his neck.

Ben and Five stared, tensing, ready for the ghost to come back. Nathan was tense, too, glaring at the back of Five’s head.

Klaus’ hands seemed to flash for a moment and then-

Klaus slumped over, fast asleep.

Ben and Five stared, bewildered.

“That’s disappointing.” Ben muttered. Five nodded.

“We should let him sleep, he’s been out all night.” Ben continued, standing up and heading to the door, passing through Nathan, who was complaining very loudly and trying to wake up Klaus.

“Yeah, alright.” Five stood as well, turning to look at Klaus for a long moment.

Klaus snored soundly, and Five scoffed before none-too-gently shoving a pillow under his head.

Nathan silently pouted at Five, knowing that there was no chance of him manifesting now.

Five reached up to the ceiling to turn off the light, muttering a “goodnight,” and teleporting to his own room.

Nathan shrieked.

"Oswald!"

Chapter End Notes

Yes, I know that the teleporter from Misfits was named Ollie, but Nathan had no clue until Simon helped him out. Next chapter will be a mission where Klaus and Nathan prove their worth.

If you're curious about the berries and slices of cheese line, it's just my self indulgence. One of my favorite lines in Misfits was "You’d screw your own sister for a slice of cheese," "I don't even like cheese," "I know, that's what makes you so sick."

Also, I posted this yesterday and it already has so many hits and kudos? The devil works fast, but y'all work faster.

I enjoyed reading all your comments, especially your speculation for future chapters, so thanks for those
The Umbrella Academy had another mission. They received an anonymous tip that several kidnapped children were suspected to be kept in an abandoned warehouse.

The delicate nature of the situation excluded Ben, who was just fine being the lookout.

“What’s the plan, Spaceboy?” Five asked, pulling on his socks. Luther either didn’t detect the mockery in Five’s tone, or he didn’t care.

“We go in there, beat them up, have Allison do her rumour thing, then help them out of there. Klaus and Ben are the lookout, Diego, Five, you’re with me.” Luther put on his domino mask, followed by the rest of the squad.

“Wait, I’m lookout again?” Klaus groaned. It was never fun to have to watch all his siblings save the day.

”Oh my goodness, you guys look like total cunts.” Nathan laughed at them all, apparently done with checking out Mom. And wasn’t that gross.

Klaus ignored him, as he’d begun to do. The cool factor of having a ghost friend was drowned out when your friend was a total twat most of the time. Nathan seemed convinced that Klaus was bound to be a Nathan 2.0.

“What else would you do, Four?” Klaus rolled his eyes. Whenever they were in their uniforms, Luther resorted to calling them by their numbers. Were they numbers or their first names? Klaus knew the answer.

“I don’t know, help?” He shot back. Nathan laughed again.

”Wow, watch out, ghost boy! He might glare you to death.

“Being the lookout is helping, Four. Just go with Six, okay?” Luther waved him away.

Klaus wandered over to wear Ben was struggling to knot his tie.

“I don’t know why I ever wear the uniform anyway, it always ends up covered in blood.”

“No, you’re on lookout with Number Four. I guarantee you that you’ll get this much action.” Klaus pinched his fingers together.

“Your fingers are touching.”

“Yeah, I know.”
Ben gave him an exasperated grin and put on his mask.

"So how do those masks stay on? Is it sticky?" Nathan tried to pick up Klaus’ mask, pouting when his hands passed through.

“No, they’re perfect molds of our face, with slight suction to keep them in place.” Klaus answered, picking it up and putting it on.

“Are you talking to Nathan?” Ben asked, looking around.

“Yeah, he’s trying to figure out how the masks work. He also thinks we look stupid.”

Ben smiled, “Tell Nathan I agree. Or- well, I guess he can hear me. Hi, Nathan.”

Nathan shouted a hello, but Ben didn’t hear it. Klaus sighed. “He says hello.”

“Cool.”

Klaus opened his mouth to say something, but the group was ordered to go to the car. Klaus and Ben sat in the back, chatting idly. Nathan sat in the passenger seat, or well, he sat on Diego.

The car was silent for a short moment, and Klaus snorted. Five raised an eyebrow at him.

He leaned forward to whisper to Ben and Five.

“Nathan’s sitting in Diego’s lap, but don’t tell him.” Five’s mouth twitched into a smirk, and Ben smothered his giggles with his hand.

"What do you want me to do? Ride on the roof? Nathan turned, shooting up a middle finger at Klaus.

Diego turned. “W-what?”

“Don’t worry about it. Me ‘n’ Ben were just talking about lookout stuff. You wouldn’t get it.” Diego scoffed and turned back around.

The rest of the ride was spent with Klaus carrying a conversation with Ben, Five, and Nathan. Allison asked something once in a while, too. Diego stuttered out a question here and there, but Luther just kept his eyes forward, refusing to talk with Nathan.

The car pulled up at the warehouse, and the group stepped out.

They knew their father and Vanya were far away, watching. Klaus liked to sympathise with Vanya, always having to stay behind.

“How do we find out how many people are in there? Those cameras are on. I’m pretty sure an alarm would go off if we tried to peek through the windows.”

The group all looked at each other, realizing that Five couldn’t just jump in the building, especially if there were alarms.

"Some group of superheroes you are. Don’t even have an invisible guy? They’re dead useful, if not a bit creepy." Nathan piped up.

Klaus blinked at the jumpsuit-wearing Irishman.

“Did you have an invisible guy?” He hissed under his breath. No one but Ben noticed, as Five,
Luther, and Diego were arguing on how to start the mission.

"Yeah, he was great. He had fish-eyes, but it worked. He was like a handsome shark, that one."

Ben frowned at the air. “I wish I could see Nathan.”

Klaus turned to crack a joke, but the motion seemed to dislodge the dust on the gears of his brain.

*See Nathan.*

Klaus slapped himself in the face, earning the glares of the rest of the group. He ignored it, whirling around to grin at Nathan.

“Nathan, why don’t you go in there and count all the goons? Then you can come back and tell us!” He urged.

The group looked surprised at the oddly logical idea that exit Klaus’ mouth.

Nathan shrugged. "*Sure, I guess.*"

Klaus grinned wider, watching Nathan skip through the walls.

“G-g-good idea, Klaus.” Diego patted Klaus on the shoulder.

Luther looked put out, not used to changes in routine. He kept quiet.

“Do you think Allison’s power works on Nathan?” Five suddenly asked after a few minutes of silence.

“We can find out,” Allison added, looking hopeful at Klaus.

“Um, I guess we could test it when we go home.”

The group looked appeased at that. Klaus saw Nathan appear from the walls, strolling over like he had all the time in the world.

“There’s 34 goons in the first room, 20 in the second, and 10 guarding the cells. There are four girls in each cell.” Nathan looked proud at his ability to count.

“How many cells are there?” Klaus asked. The rest of the group snapped to attention.

"*I don’t know. I didn’t count.*” Nathan shrugged.

Klaus rolled his eyes, relaying the information to his team. Five looked at Klaus, before looking at the air. “Anything else stand out to you, Nathan?”

Nathan puffed up at being important. "*They all have really big guns, and the cells are in a bigger vault with a huge door.*"

Klaus repeated that to Five, who nodded.

“Alright, Klaus, you and Ben are on lookout still,” Luther started, and Five interrupted. “If we ask for backup, you better be there.”

Klaus beamed. Five looked away, but he saw the familiar smirk creeping up on his face.

Ben hesitated. Klaus reached over to squeeze the shorter boy’s hand.
“You don’t have to,” he whispered. Ben gave him an uncertain smile.

“Fine,” Luther bit out, obviously annoyed at the interruption.

“Let’s go. Allison, behind me, don’t want you getting hurt.” He growled, walking up to the front door.

Diego and Luther rushed ahead, and Five lagged behind to say, “Kick his ass later,” before appearing next to Diego.

Ben and Klaus strolled around outside. They were having a riveting conversation about how many cool things Nathan could do.

“Can he eat?” Ben wondered. He turned to the air where Klaus said Nathan was.

Klaus clenched his fists, trying to force corporeality on Nathan. His fists glowed but sputtered like a lightbulb in a horror movie.

Ben peered at Klaus’ hands. “Maybe you’re not pulling hard enough.”

Klaus rolled his eyes. “If I pull any harder, I think I’ll piss myself.”

Ben laughed. Nathan tilted his head and began talking. “Just get mad! Here, here’s a scenario for you.”

Klaus frowned at the excited not-ghost.

“So you go to this bowling alley, and this man- Bev, we’ll call him, he just holds you to the ground. And you’re flailing and trying to escape his grasp, and no-one’s helping you, and- ” Klaus ignored the story, shooting Nathan a look, before closing his eyes and trying to find that power he had had before.

He opened and closed his fists a few times, feeling a growing coolness in his veins. He mentally tugged at it.

“AH!” Ben shrieked, jerking backwards at the man who suddenly appeared.

Nathan stretched, an unsettling number of pops sounding in the silence. Well, it wasn’t exactly silent, the group was beating up goons in the background.

“You know, I can’t crack my back when I’m ghostly. I can’t really feel much of anything.” Nathan complained, leaning down to touch his toes. More pops sounded, along with Nathan's unsettling moans. He stood back up.

“Hi, Ben.”

Nathan waved at Ben.

Ben gave an unsure smile. “Hello, Nathan.”

“Hey, Nathan, what’s your last name?” Klaus asked, fishing around his pocket for gum.

“Young. Nathan Young.” Nathan popped the collar of his jumpsuit.

“Why are you in a prison outfit?” Ben asked.
“It’s not a prison outfit, it’s my community service uniform. And it’s damned sexy.” Nathan corrected, snatching Klaus’ gum and popping it in his mouth.

“I haven’t tasted anything in so long! Thanks!” Nathan cheered, chewing with his mouth open.

“... ew…” Ben and Klaus muttered.

At that moment, Allison, Luther, Five, and Diego burst from the building with around twenty girls in prisoner outfits. Most of them were shackled, and a few were limping or carried.

“Where are the goons?” Nathan asked, chewing obnoxiously.

Five narrowed his eyes. “Hey, Nathan. They’re dead, one is unconscious and tied up.”

Nathan’s brows rose. “Wow, you guys don’t screw around, do you?”

Luther growled, glaring at Nathan. “What are you doing here?”

Five rolled his eyes. “Isn’t it obvious? Klaus summoned him.”

Luther’s face turned even more sour. “Well, un-summon him, now. We’ve got to go before the cops get here.”

“Let’s unshackle the girls first.” Klaus suggested. Diego picked the locks off of the girls, Luther just snapped them. The girls were obviously scared by his freakish strength.

Klaus shook his hands as if they were covered in water and he needed to dry them. Nathan drifted in and out of solidity in tandem with the glow of Klaus’ fists.

“Hurry up, Four!” Luther barked, startling the girl he was freeing.

Klaus stuck his tongue out before taking a few deep breaths. The chill in his hands receded, and Nathan seemed to turn pale once more. A piece of chewed gum fell from the air.

“So you can’t eat?” Klaus wondered aloud.

Nathan pouted. “You’re just jealous because I won’t ever get fat.”

Klaus laughed. The wail of sirens came closer.

The group of teenage superheroes sped towards the car. Luther slammed on the pedal, and the car sped off with a squeal.

They all grinned at each other at a job well done.

“Hey Klaus, is Nathan here?” Five asked once they were on the freeway.

“Yeah, he’s sitting in Diego’s lap.” Diego screeched and batted at the air, only stopping when the group laughed at his panic. Even Luther smiled.

“He’s n-n-not really th-there, is he?” Diego smiled sheepishly at them.

Klaus didn’t reply, but the shit-eating grin he shot Diego seemed to be enough.

Nathan was, actually, sitting in Diego’s lap.

Five cleared his throat. “I just wanted to know if Nathan could eat.”
Klaus and Ben shared a glance.

“Well, Klaus gave Nathan some gum earlier when he was manifested, but when he went back to normal, the gum just fell.” Ben explained.

Five looked thoughtful at this.

“Hm.”

The rest of the car ride was spent listening to 80s music and dancing. They got odd looks, but who cared? The Umbrella Academy just saved the day, they could do whatever the hell they wanted.

Once they arrived home, they found their father waiting for them. Vanya was in her room playing violin.

*It sounds nice,* Klaus thought to himself.

“Excellent job, all of you. You should have left sooner, however.” The man thumped his cane on the ground, the rest of them snapping to attention, their backs ramrod straight.

*I bet that cane’s been inside of him. He seems kinky like that.* Klaus felt his face turn blue from holding in laughter.

His father turned to him, and he immediately schooled his features.

A moment of silence passed. “Clever thinking, Number Four. Using your ghost companion for surveillance.” Then, the man dismissed them to their rooms, heading up to his office.

Luther shot Klaus a sour look before running upstairs. A slam of a door followed.

Klaus and Ben walked to Klaus’ room, not feeling like they needed to talk. Vanya’s violin filled up silence.

“She’s getting really good,” Klaus remarked. Ben nodded.

Klaus had his hand on the doorknob before deciding against it and walking to Vanya’s room, the last room in the hall.

He knocked once, Ben right behind him. Nathan was downstairs trying to possess objects.

“Come in,” Vanya said, pausing in her playing.

Ben and Klaus poked their heads in. Vanya looked surprised that it wasn’t Mom, Pogo, or Dad.

“Hey, Vanya. We just wanted to say that you’re getting really good at the violin and that it sounds really nice,” Klaus grinned at her, gesturing to the violin on her shoulder.

Ben nodded, “Really nice. Like if waffles were a sound.”


They closed the door heading back to Klaus’ room to hang out, or for Ben to read comics to Klaus. Klaus liked it when Ben read the comics for him. He put on voices, expressive in a way that he was never in real life.

If they had stayed a little longer, they would have seen Vanya put down her bow for a moment,
beam like the sun, and play it with such cheerful vigor that you could taste it.

Chapter End Notes

Aw, Vanya finally has some recognition!

I'm glad you guys like Nathan's dialogue. I really do try. Your reviews are the only source of dopamine for me at the moment, so thanks.

I might change the updating schedule to every other day instead of every day. Quality over quantity and all that.
Klaus stretched, walking down the stairs with a leisurely pace. Luther was ahead of him, tightening his tie.

“Hey, Luther. Mornin’!” He called. Luther turned and gave him a glare.

“Morning, *Four.*” The tall boy spat before heading off to eat breakfast. Klaus stared after him, completely bewildered. Did he do something wrong?

He followed after him, deep in thought. Ben soon found his step beside him. “G’morning, Klaus,” He greeted, stretching with a yawn.

Quiet footsteps followed the two, and Klaus turned to see Vanya walking behind with her head down. Well, now that he thought about it, her head was always down, wasn’t it?

“Hey, Vanya,” She perked up, “good morning!”

Ben waved at her, and she grinned and waved back, uttering a small “good morning,” back.

The trio walked in companionable silence to the breakfast table, breaking off to stand behind their chairs. Luther, who was having an amiable sounding conversation with Allison, fell silent at the sight of Klaus. His gaze turned frosty, and he angled his body to look away.

No one flinched when Five popped in, except for Nathan, who was lounging on top of the head over the mantleplace. It looked really comfy.

“I really dislike that one,” Nathan shouted, pointing at the boy.

Klaus shot him a thumbs up, leaning over to whisper to Five. “Nathan says he doesn’t like you,” Five’s lips lifted in a smirk.

Klaus shot a glance at Nathan, who was pretending to grip the head’s horns like motorcycle handles.

Klaus whispered to Five. “I think he’s scared of you.”

Five’s smirk widened, looking around the room for the orange jumpsuit, landing on Luther.

One dark brow rose, and he turned to Diego, who was carving a pattern into the underside of the table.

“What’s with One over there?” Five whispered. Diego glanced up before whispering back, “Dad praised Klaus instead of him yesterday,” and shrugged as if it was an adequate explanation.
And to the Umbrella Academy, it was. Luther worked the hardest for praise, be it in training or missions, even simple things like sitting up straight and pushing in his chair every time.

Five and Diego shared a knowing look, snapping to attention when their father walked in.

“Sit,” the man ordered, and the group complied.

“That looks positively disgusting.” Nathan had walked through the table to observe the oatmeal in Klaus’ bowl.

Klaus shot him a look, taking a spoonful of the stuff to challenge him, never once breaking eye contact.

Unfortunately for Klaus, Nathan was standing in front of Allison, who took his silent challenge personally.

Allison took a spoonful without even grimacing. Klaus took another. Allison took another.

Nathan had moved out of the way, leaving Klaus and Allison staring intensely at each other.

Allison took another spoonful, muscles in her jaw jumping as she swallowed the goop.

Klaus paused for a second, confused, before accepting the challenge in her eyes. He took a large spoonful and licked it clean, swallowing with emphasis.

The two continued their silent challenge.

Sadly, Luther noticed the two making intense eye contact, and watched Allison lick her spoon clean after finishing, all the while staring hard at Klaus.

Nathan noticed Luther noticing. "Yikes," was all he got out before Luther’s glass of orange juice shattered in his tight grip.

The table stilled, their father looking baffled before scolding Luther.

“What is the matter with you, Number One? Clean yourself up, and have your tantrum elsewhere!”

Luther flushed a blotchy red before storming off, holding his cut hand close to his chest. Mom came over to wipe up the spill. Breakfast was silent after that, only a few baffled expressions exchanged.

Once they all brushed their teeth and came downstairs to relax, Klaus tentatively approached Luther.

Nathan had disagreed once he had told him his plan.

“So you’re going to approach the prick that YOU angered?” Nathan was obviously unimpressed.

“Well- no, I’m… Yeah.” Klaus sighed out.

Nathan trudged over, bending to look into Klaus’ eyes, barely an inch away from his face.

“Have you got a fever? Because there’s no way you naturally have that little self-preservation.” The curly-haired teen furrowed his brows, passing his hand through Klaus’ forehead like he was trying to take his temperature.

“Wow, I didn’t know you knew a big word like that.” Klaus mocked, flipping Nathan off and stomping downstairs to talk to Luther.
“Luther,” He said, placing his hand on Luther’s shoulder. The blond shrugged it off, whirling around to glare at Klaus.

“What, Four?” He snarled, hiding his bandaged hand behind him.

Klaus bit his lip, shifting his weight. “Why are you mad at me?” He finally questioned. Nathan was behind Luther, crossing his arms in an ‘x,’ the universal sign of ‘No.’

Diego, Allison, and Ben stood a little ways away, watching with wide eyes. Five and Vanya were probably in the kitchen, eating those strange but sweet peanut butter and marshmallow sandwiches.

Luther paused for a moment before flushing an angry red.

“I’m not mad at you, Four!” He yelled, getting all up in Klaus’ face. Nathan looked genuinely scared, why wouldn’t he, Luther broke a glass with one hand.

Klaus leaned back in surprise for a moment before getting all up in Luther’s face.

“Then why don’t you call me by my name? Why do you never talk to me anymore?” He yelled, voice cracking on the anymore.

Luther and Klaus weren’t exactly close, but under Reginald Hargreeves’ strict training, the kids all shared a special bond. You had to, under those conditions.

Luther reared back, a brief flash of guilt on his face. The guilt was squashed down by anger.

“It is your name! You seem to respond well enough when Dad calls you by it!” Luther snarled, lunging at Klaus.

Klaus, who was more nimble than strong, evaded the other boy. He stared at Luther, shock written all over his face.

“So that’s what this is about?” He screeched in return through grit teeth.

Luther stood like a bull ready to charge, eyes narrow and breaths shallow.

Nathan was panicking. What the everloving fuck was Klaus thinking? The blondie could snap him in half, easy!

He hated not being able to touch anything, knowing that if he couldn’t get this anger to dissolve, he could at least take any blow that Blondie tossed at Klaus. Nathan was overwhelmed by his need to protect his little teenage idiot.

Klaus hissed at Luther, walking right up to him. “I get it. You’re just jealous because Dad-”

Luther growled, low and guttural, snapping forward and closing his fist around Klaus’ neck, holding the boy in the air. The smaller of the two was still forcing out words despite his closed throat.

“-is proud of me…” Klaus choked out, an evil but triumphant grin on his face. His fists weakly tried to pry the fingers on his throat away, glowing slightly.

Nathan charged, tackling Luther to the ground, and the two began to brawl like bears. Nathan scratched Luther’s face, biting down on the hand that tried to punch him.

Maybe there was no such thing as self-preservation, he thought to himself, ducking out of the way of Luther’s good fist.
The rest of the siblings, who were already spooked and didn’t try to interfere, ran to fetch their mother, father, or Pogo.

Klaus had dropped to the ground, wheezing. His fingers scrabbled at the bruised flesh around his neck, eventually tugging off his tie so he could breathe easier. He panted on the floor like a dog with asthma.

Nathan was clumsily dodging Luther’s fists, reaching out like a viper to deliver quick slaps or punches. He tried to embody Kelly, yanking harshly on Luther’s hair or slapping with the back of his hand.

Pogo and Mom rushed into the room, Pogo immediately tending to Klaus on the floor while the impeccably dressed mother hoisted Luther in the air by his collar.

Nathan jerked back, flickering out of existence. Luther thrashed, eventually turning to see Klaus wheezing on the floor, angry red marks around his throat. His brown hair fell around his face, and his face was splotchy and pink. The ghost-boy had teary, red eyes.

Luther felt a vicious stab of guilt jab his gut. Then, a pang in his heart, washing away any anger.

He had almost killed Klaus.

Luther slumped like a puppet with cut strings. Mom put him down, ushering him to his father’s office.

“Boys will be boys,” she muttered under her breath.

The two boys stood in front of their father’s office in silence.

Luther glanced at Klaus’ neck. His hand was outlined in red and colored in with purple.

Klaus tensed at the stare, shuffling a bit to the right, away from Luther.

Luther felt another harsh pang in his chest.

*He’s scared of me*, his mind supplied, Luther’s face scrunching up in guilt.

Their father eventually looked up, snapping his book closed with a snap. Nathan stood in between Luther and Klaus, just in case.

“Words cannot express how disappointed I am with you two,” The man began, glaring at them through his monocle.

Luther rushed to explain before the man held up a hand, silencing him.

“You will spend the next few days on lookout.” Luther jerked back as if struck, mouth forming the word ‘no,’ but unable to speak them.

“And you, I thought that you were progressing!” The posh, British voice reached a crescendo. Klaus felt the hair on his neck rise, the urge to bolt flooding his senses.
“You will spend the rest of the day, and all of tomorrow, in the mausoleum.” Klaus grit his teeth, “Without your companion. I will recognize the signature if you try.” Nathan hissed, moving so his body shielded Klaus, even though he could not be seen.

Klaus knew he was trembling, he knew his lip was bleeding from biting it too hard, but he couldn’t bring himself to care.

“That is all. You are dismissed.” The two walked in tandem down the hallway.

Luther stopped, holding an arm out to stop Klaus as well.

“I’m sorry,” He whispered, looking away in shame.

Klaus looked at Luther for a very long moment.

“Okay,” he replied tiredly, walking to his room and closing the door.

Luther floundered for a moment before following, pressing his ear to the door.

“No, no, no, no, no, I can’t go back- I can’t- not without you, I’m-” Klaus was whimpering, Luther realized with a start.

“I’m going to-two days, no, no, no, I can’t, I can’t, I can’t, I can’t, I can’t!” Klaus shrieked out hysterically.

Luther was startled by Ben, who had come to visit Klaus.

Ben regarded Luther with a cool disinterest.

“What’s his punishment?” The small boy demanded quietly.

“He- Dad said the mausoleum, without Nathan, for a day and a half.” Luther whispered, before meeting Ben’s stare.

“Why is going to the mausoleum a punishment?” He asked, wringing his hands, listening to Klaus cry.

Ben regarded Luther with an uncharacteristic sneer, “Why don’t you ask Dad?” before opening the door and letting himself in.

Before Ben closed the door, he spotted Nathan holding a shaking Klaus. Klaus’ eyes were screwed shut, and he scratched at his own face to rid it of tears, leaving pink marks. Sobs tore themselves out of Klaus’ mouth, wracking his entire body with deep shudders.

Luther stood, staring at the closed door, feeling lost in his own home.

Was that his fault?

Chapter End Notes

Not really happy with this chapter, it feels kinda rushed. Sorry about that, I promise a better one next time.

Whenever I get the notification for comments during class, it's an actual motivation to do
my work so I can read them. You're all too sweet in your reviews, and it means a lot to me.

Anyway, I'm debating whether or not to bring the rest of the Misfits crew into this, because that would complicate things a bit. Tell me what you think, should I introduce them? Should I make a new work that branches in that direction while keeping this one Nathan-centric? Should I do neither? Let me know.

Chapter Summary

Klaus realizes his newfound powers are not what they’re chalked up to be. Nathan finds himself in a familiar situation. The Academy have a general consensus that Reginald Hargreeves sucks.

(Apologies for the title, I couldn't help myself.)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Klaus walked on shaky knees down the stairs. Nathan trailed behind him.

His father stood by the door impatiently, thumping his cane as if to say, ‘Hurry up, Four.’

Klaus felt tremors at the sound, heading towards him, ignoring Nathan who was trying to talk him out of it.

A few feet from the door, Klaus turned to Nathan, panic blurring the edges of his vision. Nathan looked at him curiously. Klaus wondered if he was imagining the concern on the Irishman’s features.

“You can’t come with me.” He whispered. His father watched impassively.

“Yes I can. What’s the old bastard gonna do? Kill me?” Nathan scoffed, moving a bit passed him.

Klaus whimpered, and Nathan stopped and turned to see Klaus’ eyes darting nervously from his father to Nathan.

“Just… listen. You can’t. He’ll punish me if you do.” Klaus pleaded, ignoring his father who had already moved to the car.

Nathan looked hesitant.

”I don’t like this, Klaus.” He finally said, moving back.

Klaus breathed out shakily. “Neither do I.”

His father set up a camera on a stone coffin a few feet away from Klaus. The ghost there screamed at him, obscene threats that sent shivers down his spine.

Klaus wished Nathan were here.

“This camera can pick up signatures of the dead.” His father said simply. Klaus felt tears prick at his
eyes again.

His father didn’t even say goodbye, smoothly exiting the mausoleum.

Klaus settled in his corner, trying to breathe normally. The ghosts looked at him, taking slow, dragging steps towards him.

"Klaus,“ A familiar, mangled woman shuffled to him, hands outstretched to grab him. Blood dripped down her torso, her throat ripped and open like a book underwater.

Klaus tried to pretend that Nathan was there to help him, to tell him a vulgar story that would make him laugh so hard that he couldn’t breathe.

It didn’t work, Klaus thought with a sinking heart.

The woman was joined by a troop of teenagers, followed by men in suits, and then children. They all tried to grab him, icy fingers dipping in his head and heart. They seemed upset that they couldn’t grab him, angry that they couldn’t hurt him. Their volume rose like crashing waves.

Nathan would’ve told them to stop by then.

Klaus tried to summon up anger, tried to pull on the energy within. He felt it, almost gasping in relief.

He gave it a strong tug, waiting for the ghosts to quiet.

They didn’t.

“Klaus!” The woman burbled with a manic gleam in her eye, hissing in delight when she managed to scratch Klaus’ face.

Klaus cursed, jerking back so hard that he smacked his head on the stone wall behind him.

He had made them corporeal.

An old farmer man gripped his wrists with cold, clammy hands, tugging him this way and that like a life sized ragdoll.

“No! Let- LET GO!” He screamed, trying to jerk back. The teenagers gathered around him, delivering sharp kicks to his legs. A little girl pulled on his hair, her brother pushing him to his side.

A mother pet his head almost tenderly, dragging her nails into his cheeks, drawing blood.

“STOP!” He begged, bringing his arms up to shield his head.

They surrounded him like a gang, kicking and pulling and bruising and stomping on his fingers. He was sure they were broken, now. He felt them burn as he held them to his chest, trying to catch his breath, wincing when an old man struck him with his ghost cane.

Nathan cursed, falling off the bed with a thud.
“Ow,” He groaned, rubbing his arm. That had hurt like a-

Hurt.

Nathan grinned, running to open Klaus’ door. Klaus must be home! He was corporeal, after all. Now he just had to find the little bugger and give him hell for worrying him.

He sped down the stairs, calling Klaus’ name like some sort of dog for its owner.

He saw Klaus’ brothers and sisters on the couch, staring at him.

“Where’s Klaus?” Nathan asked them, at the same time that the group asked him, “Have you seen Klaus?”

Nathan’s thick brows furrowed.

“He’s not home?” He asked, suddenly feeling very stupid. Of course, there wasn’t a difference in his expression, because he always felt stupid.

The Five kid popped in front of him, peering deep into his eyes. Nathan shrunk back, cursing.

“Watch it, Oliver!” He hissed, swatting at the kid.

“My name is Five, Nathan.” Five responded, popping back to whisper amongst his siblings.

“Hey, Nathan,” Ben called tiredly from the couch, the worry lines in his young face lessening somewhat.

Nathan strode to the couch, plopping down opposite the blonde kid. No one was talking to him, and everytime he tried to contribute to the conversation, he was shut down immediately.

Five cursed before turning to Nathan.

“Do you have any sense as to how Klaus could be doing? You’re tethered to him, right?”

Nathan shook his head. “I’m not tethered to him, but if he’s manifested me, he’s either really angry or-” He swore, standing up so fast that the girl next to him flinched.

“He’s probably panicking! He hates the mausoleum, ah fuck, I should’ve gone with him!” He cursed, pacing. He kicked the couch, wincing when his toes stung at the impact.

Ben stood up as well, followed by the knife-kid, and Five. The shy girl stood up, too.

“W-well, we’ve g-g-gotta save him!” The knife-kid stuttered, fists balled up.

Five, Ben, and the girl nodded.

“What? From what?” Luther asked, genuinely confused, but standing up too. Nathan bared his teeth at him, and Luther stepped back.

Five looked incredulously at him. “You really don’t know?”

Luther flushed.

Five rolled his eyes, and instead of answering, he ran to the stairs, turning to beckon the group to follow him.
On the way to Pogo’s quarters, he hurriedly explained. “I heard Dad telling Pogo about a camera for Klaus. It must be in the mausoleum.”

Pogo opened his door to see the entire academy, even Vanya, plus one curly-haired man in an orange jumpsuit.

_That’s Nathan_, his mind supplied.

“Yes?” He asked, noting their pinched expressions.

“We need to see the camera in the mausoleum.”

Pogo frowned. “I’m not allowed to-“

“I heard a rumor that you showed it to us.” Allison piped up, and the group followed Pogo up to a room filled with TV’s.

Nathan swore, staring in shock at the footage they saw. Vanya began to tear up, covering her mouth. The rest of them grit their jaws at the sight of Klaus curled up on the floor, being beaten by various manifestations.

Five growled, staring hard at the screen, trying to memorize the setting. He gave the group an order, scrunching his nose up in concentration.

“Get a stretcher ready in the living room.”

And then Five popped out of existence, appearing on the screen.

Allison and Ben ran downstairs to the infirmary, hastily grabbing a stretcher and hauling it to the living room, ignoring Mom’s inquiries as to what they were doing.

The rest of the group barreled down the stairs, with Nathan bringing up the front.

They waited with baited breath for Five and Klaus to come back.

Klaus was exhausted, each shaky breath was agony. His bones sang in protest at each kick delivered to his body. His ears had bled, his face was sticky, and he just wanted to go home.

"**Klaus!**” They called, never tiring in their endless torment.

His eyes were closed by now. It was easier to ignore the black spots in his vision that way. His head felt heavy and pressured like he was underwater, adding to his unsteady breathing.

This was why he didn’t notice when Five popped in, the ghosts around him stopping and staring in primal curiosity.

“Klaus,” Five whispered, tentatively touching Klaus’ shoulder. Klaus didn’t respond, only trembling in response.

“Klaus, it’s me, Five,” He tried again, trying to get Klaus to open his eyes. Klaus shook his head, curling up further into the ball he was in.
Five sighed, lightly gripping his brother’s shoulders and popping out of there, the ghosts roaring their disapproval. Klaus’ eyes snapped open at the feeling of being shoved into a wormhole and being spit out.

His pupils shrunk at the bright light, barely registering his body being lifted into a stretcher.

Gentle hands wiped his face and ears, and suddenly, he could hear again.

He drowsily looked around to see his siblings surrounding him with varying expressions, mostly concern, horror, and in Luther’s case, intense guilt.

Orange flooded his vision for a second, and he realized that it was Nathan, hunched over the stretcher, tears in his eyes.

“Nathan,” He muttered, trying to convince his arm to lift and pat his cheek. His arm decided against it, moving briefly before dropping down. His wrist burned.

Nathan squeezed his eyes shut, tears rolling down his cheeks. He grit his teeth, leaning forward to rest his forehead on Klaus’ own.

Klaus closed his eyes, listening to Nathan’s mantras of apologies.

“’S okay,” He murmured. Nathan shook his head, leaning back and wiping his eyes with the back of his sleeve.

Mom came over, carrying a first-aid kit. The group watched as she began to treat Klaus, wincing in sympathy when he hissed in pain from the alcohol.

They discovered that Klaus had fractured his middle, pointer, and pinky fingers on his left hand, broken his right wrist, and lacerations on his back and legs. The bruises were another thing entirely. Klaus looked like some sort of leopard of a human, spotted with purple and blue and yellow all over.

It was heartbreaking.

Allison and Diego had to turn away. The others had pinched expressions.

There was a single thought that echoed in all their heads, even Luther’s, as they looked at their battered brother.

_Fuck Reginald Hargreeves._

As if summoned by the thought, the man swept into the room. After a brief lookover of Klaus, he turned to Luther for explanation.

“What is going on in here?” He demanded.

Luther grit his teeth and set his jaw, glaring uncharacteristically at his father.

Five stepped up. “Nothing much, we were just trying to save Klaus from dying.” Reginald turned to him, disapproval in his eyes at Five’s tone.

“’Y’know, after he was, what’s the word, _mauled_ to near death because he was locked in a mausoleum of angry ghosts? Yeah, that.” Five continued, crossing his arms. The bite to his words revealed his true emotions.

Reginald didn’t reply, turning to look over Klaus’ wounds, and before anyone could stop him,
Nathan shoved the old man aside.

“You best not get close, you old bastard.” Nathan growled, angling his body to shield Klaus’ face from view.

Reginald looked impassively at the ghost before stepping back and observing Klaus’ wounds.

“So even in such a state, he has you manifested,” He finally said. Nathan narrowed his eyes, but didn’t respond.

“Foolish, wicked child,” Reginald murmured, eyes going back and forth between Nathan and Klaus.

The rest of the academy tensed, but without warning, Reginald drew a gun and shot Nathan in the face, point blank.

There was a moment of shock, where no one moved. A drop of blood seemed to echo and spur them into action.

“Nathan!” The children screamed, shock and horror etched on their faces.

Nathan staggered back, slumping against the stretcher. Klaus moaned out in panic, but his hands glowed still.

Nathan’s blood pooled under the stretcher, and the curly-haired man finally stopped moving. Reginald left the way he came.

The kids stared at what used to be Nathan’s face. Klaus was trying to move to see, but he couldn’t move.

“Wait…” Ben muttered, pointing a shaky finger at Nathan’s head.

They glanced at Ben incredulously before looking back at Nathan.

“Look.”

The hole was a whole lot smaller, and was growing smaller as the seconds ticked by. Soon, Nathan’s face was back, not a single wound remaining.

Nathan’s eyes flew open and he surged forward with a gasp. “Oh, fuck, that hurt!”

Klaus helplessly flailed a bit to attract attention.

Nathan staggered to his feet, using the stretcher as support. “Be right back,” He whispered to Klaus, patting him on the head in an echo of their first meeting.

Klaus tried to follow, hissing at the pain that erupted in his body. He decided to wait until Nathan came back from whatever he was doing.

Nathan trudged up the stairs to Reginald’s office, throwing open the door.

He was treated to the rare sight of Reginald Hargreeves jolting back in fear and shock.

Reginald was speechless, pointing a finger at him, mouthing words without sound.

Nathan bared his teeth at him, stomping forward and grabbing Reginald’s wrist and turning it over. Reginald’s hand was now in a “gimme,” position, and with the shock still prevalent, he didn’t move
“Fuck you and your stupid fucking gun.” Nathan hissed through bared teeth, before rearing his head back and releasing a painful sounding cough.

And with that, Nathan spat out a single, bloody bullet into Reginald’s outstretched hand.

He then stormed out of the room to return to his boy, while Reginald shakily removed his monocle to pinch the bridge of his nose. His fingers curled around the bullet, sticky with blood.

Nathan could never be dealt with.

And for the first time in over a decade, Reginald Hargreeves did not know what to do.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the late update! My bad.

The majority of the comments say that they want to keep it at just Nathan, so that's what I'll do (Kinda glad for that, I was never as invested in them as I am with Nathan).

There will be heavy references to them though, and in the Nathan's existence explanation chapter, I promise to write about them!

This chapter opens up a few plotholes, I know, but I blame them on the irregular-ness of Nathan's existence.

Okay, this note's a bit long now, so thank you for the comments and kudoses, you're all too sweet.
Klaus is stuck in the infirmary, bored out of his mind. (This is a cooldown chapter after the whole fiasco that was chapter 5)

Father had given them less strenuous training schedules, claiming that he wanted them to work on stamina instead of power.

The academy knew exactly why he had laid off the heavy training.

Reginald Hargreeves had realized how powerful his children were, and was trying to dig his way out of his grave.

Klaus knew that Nathan had had a large part in this, so did the rest of the squad. They each came to thank Nathan after he had un-manifested, so Klaus had carried conversations like that, back and forth.

Klaus was hesitant to try and manifest any ghost again after what had happened in the mausoleum. Nathan understood, shooting Klaus a thumbs up and sitting at the foot of his bed for most of the time.

Klaus and Vanya bonded a bit more, seeing as she was the only one who didn’t have training. They talked about this and that, mostly about how her violin mastery was coming along. Klaus admitted that he would push his dresser to the middle of the room and sketch along the wall space there. There were tons of doodles and writings behind that dresser. When he was done, he would push it back in place to hide it from Pogo, Mom, and Father.

He agreed to show it to Vanya when he was allowed to leave. Vanya had to leave for dinner an hour
later. The rest of the academy popped their heads in to wish him a speedy recovery, and Allison even dropped off some nail polish, promising that Klaus would like it.

Nathan looked curious but not disgusted as he imagined Father might be when he saw it. Klaus explained that he was only curious to see if he liked it or not, to which Nathan responded that he didn’t mind. In fact Nathan reasoned that if it was attractive on girls, than guys should have a chance to try that out as well. Klaus was surprised at his casualness, and Nathan explained how he had worn a dress once and looked damned good while wearing it.

This led to a get-to-know-Nathan session, where Nathan explained his story and past to Klaus. He was an excellent storyteller.

“See, I was done in for eating some pick ‘n’ mix. That’s why I’ve got a community service outfit.” Nathan began, preparing to regale the bedridden Klaus with the epic story of his ‘death.’

Nathan Young had died doing the right thing. He could still remember the feeling of impalement.

He would never forgive himself for dying by way of fence.

Of course, when he woke up in a too-small coffin, dressed in casual clothes, thank god, he had immediately rejoiced in having a superpower.

Immortality, he cheered in his coffin.

His newfound power had turned out to be a curse, dying over and over of starvation and thirst in the stuffy wooden box. Nathan was pretty sure he was breathing his own carbon dioxide now, along with the fumes from when he had apparently shit himself.

Nathan was known as one of the most, if not the most, cocksure people on the planet. He was young, dumb, and fearless, with almost no regrets in life.

However, dying over and over and waking up in the same tight box really changes a guy, Nathan discovered.
At some point, after dying of hunger for the seventh time, Nathan quietly prayed that he would not wake up.

He woke up, but not in the coffin.

“Thank God,” Nathan shouted, stretching his arms and back, pops sounding in the eerily silent stretch of woods he was in. Accordion music played in the background, but other than that, he could hear no birds or wind.

“You’re welcome.” A little girl on a bike said, observing him with a bored expression. Nathan whirled around, tilting his head at what was apparently God.

“You’re God then? Huh, what do you know.” Nathan raised a single brow in surprise. He was expecting the big old man with a beard.

God, which was a little girl apparently, tilted Her head in response.

“So you didn’t like your power.” She said, to which Nathan shrugged.

“In any other situation, it would be pretty cool. I’m done with waking up in coffins, though.” He crossed his arms in an ‘x.’

God wheeled around him, starting to make her way to the other end of the road.

“Wait!” Nathan called after Her.

“What?” God responded, a twinge of annoyance in Her voice.

“Where do I go?” He demanded, gesturing to the lonely woods.
God stared at him.

“So you don’t want to go back, and you don’t want to stay here.” She said with a deadpan tone and expression, annoyance in Her eyes.

Nathan shook his head.

The deity wheeled back to him, and for a moment, the accordion silenced.

Finally, She shrugged.

“I guess I could drop you somewhere else, or at least…” She pondered for a moment.

“...Or at least?” Nathan pressed.

“I could send your mind somewhere else. No body.”

“Nobody what?” God rolled Her eyes at his question.

“Well, no body for you.”

“Oh.”

Nathan was silent for a moment.

“Wait- why not?”

God rolled Her eyes again.
“I just don’t feel like making you a body. Bye, Nathan.”

The accordion became louder and louder, and Nathan was suddenly in America in 2002, along with a bunch of grumpy ghouls in a crypt.

“And that’s how I met you.” Nathan finished pleasantly.

“That’s so…” Klaus tilted his head at Nathan.

“Amazing? I know.”

“Stupid.” Klaus finished, rolling his eyes at Nathan.

Nathan stood up, pouting, but before he could begin an argument with Klaus, which would likely consist of “is not’s” and “is-to’s,” Luther the big blonde giant walked in.

It was already nine at night, so it was surprising that Luther, or anybody who wasn’t Mom or Pogo, would come and visit little old Klaus.

Luther sat unsurely in Klaus’ bedside chair.

Klaus looked at Luther, waiting for him to speak.

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Klaus looked at Luther.

Luther looked at Klaus.
Eventually, Luther gave in. “I’m sorry, Klaus. For all-” he gestured to Klaus’ cast and braces around his fingers, “this.”

Nathan left the room, not wanting to deal with emotional brother bullshit, pretty ironic because of how much brotherly bullshit he himself brought up.

Klaus blinked in surprise. “Oh, yeah. Um, it’s okay. It’s mostly Dad’s fault.”

Luther shook his head. “No, no. I know it’s mine. I gotta take ownership. I gotta take the blame, you know.”

Klaus gave Luther a look. “You know you don’t have to take the moral high ground all the time, Luther. You can be a non-righteous dick like the rest of us. We’re still assholes, but we’re not righteous.”

Luther had a pinched expression. “I’m trying.”

Klaus wanted to argue, but Luther was being civil, so he shrugged as best he could. “That’s enough, then.”

There was another awkward beat of silence.

“Can I make it up to you somehow? I don’t know, sneak you candy or something?” Luther finally said, sheepishly rubbing the back of his neck.

Klaus was about to deny him, but his admittedly slow mind sparked to life for the first time in a few days.

“Well, there is something.” He smirked at Luther, who suddenly looked nervous.

Klaus held his smirk for a little bit to strike fear into Luther.
Klaus motioned to the dark blue nail polish on the bedside table. “Can you paint my nails? I can’t do it myself, with the whole cast and braces business.”

Luther looked intensely uncomfortable.

“Shouldn’t you ask Allison or Vanya? Or- or Ben? I really don’t have the skill, uh, necessary-”

Klaus shook his head, pouting. “Nuh-uh, you gotta. This is how you can make it up, Luther.”

Luther sighed before grabbing the bottle. Klaus grinned at him.

Luther seemed to be focusing harder than he’d ever had to before, unscrewing the cap gently and gesturing for Klaus to outstretch his hand.

Klaus obliged, still grinning.

Luther breathed out a soft, “I hate you,” before squinting at Klaus’ fingers, leaning in to slowly and carefully paint Klaus’ thumbnail. His tongue was out for focus, and his hands were almost shaking with how much focus he was pouring into this little action.

For somebody who never used their fine motor skills, like, at all, Luther was doing okay. He got a little bit of paint on the side, and had an uneven coat on a few, but Klaus knew he was trying hard, and he could have Allison do a second coat another time.

Klaus laughed when Luther pulled back in relief after finishing his hand. Luther was sweating from the effort, wiping his forehead with his arm, actually releasing an audible “phew.”

“You don’t have to do the braced fingers, Luther.” Klaus held out his other hand, which Luther made slow work of, carefully painting the nails before finishing with a satisfied smile.

Klaus held his hands in front of his face, moving them to see the glitter in action.
“Looks good, dude!” Klaus complimented, and to his surprise, Luther perked up at the praise. Maybe Luther was more praise-starved than the rest of them, except for maybe Diego.

The blond puffed up a bit, grinning at a job well done.

“Thanks.” He grinned, crossing his arms and leaning back in the chair.

Silence fell again, and Klaus stopped observing his dark blue nails to look at Luther, still puffed up from the compliment.

For a moment they stared at each other, and reached a silent truce. Klaus didn’t say it out loud, but they both knew that Luther was forgiven. Luther gave an unsure smile before standing.

“I’ll see you later, Klaus.”

Klaus smiled back.

“See you later, Luther.”

Luther left, leaving Klaus with a warm feeling from a mended relationship, Luther feeling much the same as he made his way up to his room.

Nathan wandered down the hall, climbing up to sit on the stuffed water buffalo’s head. Telling that story to Klaus reminded him of a few feelings and regrets.

*Do they miss me?* He wondered, wishing that he hadn’t been such a dick to them.

Nathan took a ghost-nap right there, legs hanging off the sides of the neck.
The ASBOs five became the ASBOs four.

You could argue that it was well-balanced, that there was an even amount of guys and girls now, but to them, it was odd. It was weird, and there was no replacement that they bonded with like with their curly-haired Irishman.

Kelly watched the video Simon gave her once in a while, pain fading into happy memories with a hint of bittersweetness.

Alisha and Curtis found themselves hating the silence when they worked. Nathan would have made at least one stupid remark that they could rag on for the rest of the hours.

Simon would spend long hours on the roof, thinking back to the times that Nathan would drag him up there and tease him. He would never say it to Nathan’s smug little face, but he missed the Irishman.

A few weeks after Nathan’s funeral, they found themselves standing around his grave.

“What do you think his power would have been?” Alisha asked the question that they had all pondered.

Kelly sighed, frowning at the too-formal grave. “Whatevah it was, he would’ve been a real wankah about it.”

The group gave a sad chuckle before falling into silence.

“You think he’s having fun in the afterlife?” Simon wondered.

“I bet he’s already pissed off God so bad that he got kicked out.” Curtis responded.

They laughed their agreement. Alisha took a flask out of her purse, pouring it over Nathan’s grave.
The strong smell of vodka wafted up from it.

None of them protested, knowing that Nathan would have wanted it. It was a ritual they repeated every time they visited.

Simon promised Nathan’s grave that he would have a great time in his honor, unknowingly sharing the promise with all present.

It gave them closure.

In the mansion, Nathan jolted awake with a curse, falling to the ground noiselessly. He didn’t feel pain, but the shock was there.

“What the fuck was that?” He groaned, mind flashing with images of his friends having good times. His throat stung with the taste of cheap vodka.

It was strange.

He didn’t mind it, in fact, he hoped that the images were real.

The thought that his friends honored him by pouring alcohol on his grave every time, the thought that they had wild times in his name…

It gave him closure.

Reginald Hargreeves wrote quickly in his journal, cursing the jumpsuited menace called Nathan.

His writings and theories were crossed out and replaced.
Nathan the spirit has been harmed before. He sleeps and has hurt himself (been hit, stubbed his toes, etc.), but cannot be killed as previously theorized.

Foolish of me to believe a ghost can be killed, failure to rid Four of the ghost will lead to rebellious tendencies-

(See previous page, Klaus has been sneaking out of diet plan, aided by Five and Six)

His pen tapped against the paper, and his other hand reached into the drawer underneath. A bloody bullet lay in a plastic bag, ready to be sent off to a lab for testing.

Reginald took out the bag, staring at the bullet, recalling the intense fear he had felt when it had been spit into his hands.

Reginald would never admit to anybody else his greatest fear.

He feared that which he could not control. This was reflected in all he did. Strict rules for the children, never letting them outside for anything other than missions.

No outside influences, until Nathan came along with his orange jumpsuit.

He had heard Number Four *curse* the other day, that rebellious brat.

Reginald supposed he had to show them the bad side of the outside world.

He nodded at the thought, pulling out a different notebook and writing down ideas at a fast pace.

It was time to introduce the Umbrella Academy to the world.
Yes, finally! Some Nathan explanathan. I lowkey feel like I did him dirty by having him die like that, but at least I didn't give him the real ending.

And yeah, I redeemed Luther. I know, I know, he's a dirtbag and all, but he's also just a kid who wants his dad to love him.

Leave a comment if you liked, and thanks again for all the kudos. It blows my mind everyday.
Lights, Camera, Action!

Chapter Summary

The Academy robs a bank—oh wait, no, they just stop it from getting robbed. Lame.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Klaus was finally done with his casts and braces. He painted the rest of his nails and skipped to the dining table, picking up a fork to spin around. Ben moved away, expecting him to drop it or something. Klaus spun it harder to prove him wrong.

Diego flinched when it dropped to the ground with a clang, picking it up and putting it back.

Klaus shrugged at the withering look Diego shot him, waving at Nathan, whose head was sticking through a painting. Nathan puckered his lips in response.

Luther and Allison walked in, dragging their feet. Klaus waved blue nails at Luther, whose lips twitched upward at the sight.

Vanya strolled leisurely to the table, muttering a small good morning that the rest of them echoed.

Brisk footsteps sounded, and the children straightened up quickly.

Klaus tugged Diego by the sleeve towards him, staring straight ahead and fighting a smirk when Five popped right into where Diego was.

Diego stuttered out a quiet thank-you. Klaus smiled at him before snapping back to attention.

Their father stayed silent for a moment before giving them the order to sit. Unfortunately, the old man seemed to have regained his backbone in Nathan’s absence.
Klaus snorted into his oatmeal quietly, watching the curly-haired man gyrate behind his father’s head.

Their father stood up when they finished, and they did the same.

“We have received another anonymous tip about a bank robbery,” The man began.

The Academy exchanged confused glances. Why was he telling them now instead of when they were preparing?

“You are not to leave before the police and newscasters arrive. You will line up beside me, do not speak, and behave. Be sure you are presentable. And Number Four,” Klaus shrunk back at his father’s icy glare.

“Remove the paint from your hands at once.” Then, the man dismissed them and left.

Luther came to pat Klaus on the shoulder. “Sorry, man.”

Klaus sighed but smiled tiredly at the blonde. “It’s alright, Luther. They were getting chipped anyway.” It was a clear lie, but Luther stepped back and allowed Klaus passage.

Nathan trailed after Klaus.

“You know, you should grow your hair out more.” Nathan passed his hands through Klaus’ hair.

“I’m alright, Nathan. I’m due for a trim anyway.”

Nathan groaned for a solid minute. Klaus rolled his eyes at him.

“But you’d look so good!” Nathan argued, rushing forward to block Klaus’ path. Klaus stepped through him.
“No, I’d look like you!” Klaus stuck his tongue out Nathan, who clutched his heart in pain.

“Are you saying I don’t look good?” Nathan gave Klaus a hurt expression.

Klaus didn’t answer, but his smirk revealed his thoughts. Nathan cussed up a storm as Klaus closed his bedroom door, even though he could easily walk through.

Nathan stared at the door before giving Klaus a shout, “I have feelings, you know! And so. Does. My. Hair!”

Klaus’ laughter echoed around the hall. The others couldn’t hear it, but so did Nathan’s.

The Academy was on their way to a bank. The trip there was filled with thoughts and speculations on their father’s reasoning. Why was the academy suddenly being introduced? It was strange, but Klaus couldn’t deny his excitement.

Out of all of them, Allison and Klaus seemed to be the most accepting and excited about the situation. Luther and Five were nonchalant about it, not caring very much. Ben and Diego were against the whole thing.

Klaus and Allison did each other’s hair during the ride, making sure that they looked presentable. Nathan made some recommendations, which Klaus made sure not to pass on.

At some point, Klaus became curious.

“Hey, Nathan, how old are you?” Ben looked in the direction that Klaus was talking to, not very surprised that Nathan had been with them the entire time.

“When I passed on, I was nineteen. But that was a while ago, I might be twenty now. Hey, why is the American legal drinking age twenty-one? That’s so-“ Klaus tuned out the rest.
“Well? How old is he?” Ben asked. Klaus shrugged.

“When he died, he was nineteen, but I don’t know if he counts as twenty…” They turned to Five.

Five gave them his signature deadpan. “Why would I know?”

Klaus turned back to Ben. “I thought Five knew everything.” Out of his peripheral, Klaus saw Five’s mouth twitch into a smirk for a moment before smoothing out.

“I’d call him nineteen. What do you think, Nathan?” Ben looked around for the ghost.

Nathan disagreed, calling himself twenty. “He agrees,” Klaus said, nodding sagely.

Nathan groaned for a solid two minutes, tilting his head back, falling through the seat, before surging back up and flipping off Klaus. Klaus was impressed at his melodrama.

The rest of the ride was filled with banter and naps.

They decided to send Allison in first.

The girl strutted confidently to a man with a walkie talkie while Luther headed up to the roof.

Klaus and Diego strolled into the room to see the man shoot his partner in the foot.

“Ouchie,” Klaus muttered, stepping back as Diego ran forward.

Luther dropped from the fucking roof on top of a robber, to which Nathan shrieked out, “Christ on a cracker!” Klaus barely had time to shoot the Irishman a look before Diego unsheathed two glass knives.
“Guns are for sissies, real men throw knives!” Diego shouted without even a hint of a stutter. Klaus felt proud, but also couldn’t stop the snort at the cheesy line.

“I can’t believe I just had to hear that. I- ew. With my own two ears!” Nathan stared incredulously at Diego, and Klaus followed Allison to where a man was standing on top of a table.

“Get back, you freaks! Or- or...” The man shouted, pointing a small pistol at them. They smiled up at him mischievously, screwing with his head.

“Be careful up there, buddy!” Klaus mocked.

“Wouldn’t want you to get hurt,” Allison added, grinning up at the furious man.

Five popped in behind the man. “Or what?” he smirked at the man before popping away.

Klaus couldn’t deny the seize his heart gave when the man shot the spot that Five was in. They were lucky Five was a fast bastard. Oh, did he use bastard now? Dammit, Nathan!

Five popped in on the other side of the man, smirking at the stapler in his hand.

“That’s one badass stapler!” Five teased before ramming the stapler into the man’s head.

“I stapled somebody’s hand once…” Nathan commented wistfully. Klaus snorted before running over to the hostages and checking for injuries.

“Who are you kids?” A woman asked, face red and blotchy from crying.

“Don’t worry about it!” Klaus responded cheerfully, nudging the woman to stand with the others.

He glanced outside and saw loads of police workers and reporters. Klaus straightened his tie before heading back, where the group was facing a door where the last robbers were.
“Are there any hostages?” Luther asked. Five shook his head, saying he didn’t know.

They turned to Klaus expectantly. Klaus felt his chest puff out at being important. “Nathan, go check.”

Nathan rolled his eyes and strolled through the door, emerging with a negative.

“None,” Klaus said, and they turned to Ben, who seemed to sag in disappointment.

“Do I really have to do this?” The short boy complained.

Luther sighed. “C’mon, Ben, there are more guys in the vault.”

Ben glared through his mask before heading towards the door, hand on the bottom of his shirt.

“I didn’t sign up for this.”

Screaming ensued, and Klaus could make out the silhouette of Ben’s tentacles slamming men against the walls.

Klaus felt a rush of pity for him. He had the most violent creatures, and the most mellow personality. A clearer contradiction simply didn’t exist.

“Hey, so, um, what the actual fuck is Ben? Is he a werewolf? ‘Cuz FUCK werewolves.” Nathan gazed at the door with his nose scrunched up.

Klaus snorted. “Ben is not a werewolf,” He whispered to the not-ghost. Or was he an actual ghost? He said that he died.

Klaus shook his head and helped the hostages to the entrance, where they screamed and ran away.
He frowned at shouted after them, “A thank you would be nice!” No one responded, and Klaus sighed to return to the others.

Ben stepped out of the room, dripping with blood. He looked at the group and spat out what could be muscle mass.

“Can we go home now?” He muttered, looking small and frail. Klaus’ heart surged with sympathy.

Luther, Five, Allison, and Diego headed to the doors, ready for the camera.

Klaus took a jacket off of a dead man to help Ben clean up, wiping up as much of the blood that he could. Ben closed his eyes, sighing in relief when Klaus rubbed his hair clean, or as clean as it could get. Klaus could see the inner turmoil that Ben was having, that Ben always had after a mission.

Ben seemed to take each death personally, mulling silently in the car ride home, distant for days until the academy cheered him up. Klaus was always the first to try.

“You’re a good person,” He told Ben with an encouraging smile, gripping his hand tight. Together, they rushed outside to pose and wave at the reporters.

Klaus leaned on Five’s shoulder, wiggling his fingers at the reporters. Five was smirking, and Allison was posing.

The attractive image they held was dispelled when the old man walked in front of them, standing in the center as if he were the leader. He hadn’t even been there, he was probably just hanging out with Vanya on a rooftop nearby.

_Huh, I really consider Luther the real leader now, don’t I?_ Klaus realized with a start. He looked at his bare nails, before shrugging. _It’s not so bad, I guess._

The old man’s voice silenced most of the reporters. He spouted some bullshit about how the academy was the new age of superheroes, or the first age, really.
Klaus saw Ben falter under the weight of so many cameras and stares. He dropped his arm from Five’s shoulder and came over to squeeze Ben’s hand. Ben’s grip was bruising.

“Hey, at least now, we’re our own comic book stars.” He whispered down to the shorter boy, hoping that Ben would recall the sleepless nights that they would spend, Klaus’ head in Ben’s lap, as they verbally reenacted whatever Marvel comics they had. Klaus liked playing the villain, but Ben, without fail, played the hero every time.

Ben froze for a moment before a shaky smile adorned his face.

“I guess so,” he whispered back.

Nathan stood behind Klaus in a tense manner. The last time so many people had focussed on Klaus, he had been beaten up by ghosts.

Nathan couldn’t lie, he hated that Klaus was being a hero. It was a total knob thing to do, something only Barry would consider with any seriousness.

Nathan had to admit that deep inside, he wasn’t turned away from the idea because of the moral high ground that it required.

Seeing men point their guns at Klaus sent a cold panic into Nathan’s system, and there wasn’t anything he could do. Nathan dreaded the day that Klaus would join him in the ghost world.

I’m really staying with him ‘til the end, aren’t I? Nathan groaned.

I’m such a sentimental bastard! He thought with a scowl, rubbing his face and groaning.

Their father split them into numbered groups, with Diego and Luther, Allison and Klaus, and Five and Ben.

He then sent them towards eager reporters.

Klaus and Allison met with a woman named Vicky Hughes.
“Hiya, Vickie!” Klaus greeted. The woman nodded at him before clicking her pen and pointing it at them.

“May I ask your names?” She asked, leering at them.

Allison smiled confidently. “I’m Allison, I’m Number Three.”

Klaus grinned at the camera, introducing himself. “I’m Klaus, the Number Four.”

The woman jotted down something, looking back at them a few moments later. “Numbers, hmm? What are those, a ranking system? Is-“

Klaus smiled toothily. “We use numbers to count! It’s great, don’t you think? You can use your fingers if you forget!”

Allison turned to giggle into his shoulder.

Nathan peered down at Vicky’s notebook, reading aloud for Klaus.

“Klaus, Number Four, battles a clearly traumatizing experience with snark and humor. “We use them to count,” he jokes, his masked expression twisted with poorly covered fear, youthful face already marred with the pressure of heroism...”

Klaus looked at Vicky with a deadpan look.

“I’m not covering anything up with humor, Vicks, I’m just a humorous fella.” Klaus gestured to her notepad.

Vicky froze. “Are you psychic? Is that your power?” She averted her eyes.
“No, I’m just literate.” Klaus smiled sweetly at her. Allison laughed again.

A muscle in Vicky’s jaw jumped, and the grip on her pen tightened.

Nathan was chortling unattractively.

“So what are your powers?” Vicky forced out, glancing to the side, where a demure Ben and compliant Five were giving answers freely to another reporter.

“Wouldn’t you like to know?” Allison smirked, jumping on the snark train. Klaus laughed.

“I can see the dead.” He said, switching from a happy face to a haunted, dead face with a soft voice.

Allison gave the reporter a sweet smile. “I can make you do whatever I want!”

Vicky looked thoroughly uncomfortable, now. She seemed to weigh her options before turning to Klaus.

“Can you show me a demonstration? Prove it?” She looked disbelieving at him.

Klaus rolled his eyes under his mask. “What do I look like to you? A human Ouija board?”

Vicky kept her gaze even. Klaus groaned, looking to Nathan for support, who gestured to an old man looking longingly at Vicky.

“Say, Vicks, you ever seen a dude with his chest caved in?” Vicky put down her pen, narrowing her eyes.

“I’m sorry?”
“You’re forgiven,” Klaus grinned, “and he’s got a pair of really big glasses. Bald, lanky, with a very impressive beard.”

Vicky tensed, jaw clenched hard. “What are you playing at?”

Klaus smiled sweetly, calling to the man, squashing his fear down for the sake of proving Vicky wrong. “What’s your name?”

The man’s eyes glazed for a moment:

“Christopher. Car crash, big rig, car crash, big rig-“

Klaus tuned him out, leaning in close to Vicky.

“Christopher, car crash, big rig. Mean anything to you?”

Vicky jolted back, dropping her pen and notebook.

“Oh my god, you can- that’s- oh my god,” Klaus tilted his head at her.

“My mom’s boyfriend- no one knew- oh my god.” Her arm went out reverently to Klaus.

Before she could grab him, Reginald called them all back.

Klaus blew a kiss to the camera. “Auf wiedersehen!”

Allison gripped his arm and dragged him back to the group.

“Sorry you couldn’t go,” Klaus apologized to Allison.
“It’s okay, that was so funny.” She giggled.

Nathan trailed after the two, shoving back Christopher when he tried to follow Klaus.

“Back off, you great bastard.” Nathan hissed. Christopher gave him a look of longing before drifting off. Nathan stuck his tongue out at him before catching up to the group.

“...She was nice, but she kept asking to see them. It was annoying.” Ben was saying by the time Nathan came over.

“Oh, Luther lifted our guy up. I threw a few knives, yadda yadda.” Diego jerked a thumb at Luther, who had been catching up with Allison.

Klaus opened his mouth, ready to tell them about his own interview, when his father came around the corner and ordered them to go home.

Klaus, still reeling from his encounter with a ghost, made his way up to Vanya’s room. He was sleeping just fine until dream-Christopher shoved him in the way of a truck. When he woke up with a gasp, he immediately approached Ben’s room, before stopping. Ben was exhausted and sleeping by now. It was around eleven at night, Klaus guessed. Nathan was up on the buffalo head, taking ghost-naps.

Klaus knocked on Vanya’s door. Vanya, bleary eyed with what looked like tear streaks, opened it.

“Hey, Klaus.” She yawned.

“Hey, Vanya,” Klaus said. He bit his lip, looking at his socks.

“Can I- can I, uh,”
Vanya pulled him into the room. “You can sleep here.”

Klaus grinned at her thankfully, “Thanks, you’re my hero.”

Vanya flushed a bit.

They both squeezed into her tiny twin bed.

Silence reigned for a moment, before Vanya admitted quietly, “I wish I was there with you guys,”

Klaus turned to face her. “I wish you were there, too. Too much testosterone, wouldn’t you know it?”

Vanya giggled softly. Klaus’ hand searched for a moment before finding hers and grasping it softly, the way she would for him when he was still bedridden.

Vanya shuffled closer so they were cuddling. “I’m glad you’re not there, sometimes. I don’t like to think of the possibility that I’d see you as a ghost.”

Vanya buried her head into Klaus’ chest.

“I get scared, too, seeing all those bad guys with guns.”

They held each other, drifting to sleep.

“Hey, Vanya?”

“Hmm?”

“Thanks.”
They slept soundly for the rest of the night.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for uploading this so late at night. I originally had it up at 5, but turns out it was just on preview but not posted. I have a single brain cell and I have misplaced it.

I changed the dynamic of the mission a bit, according to Klaus’ shift. We're approaching true canon, now, folks!
The Academy goes out for breakfast and Klaus meets a strange man. Nathan doesn't like him.

The day after the bank mission was a leisurely one.

Nathan had drifted through the rooms in search of Klaus, eventually finding him cuddling with his sister.

He almost didn’t want to wake them up, it was adorable.

But Nathan found a diner, and he wanted to experience the American breakfast. Sure, the Academy had breakfast, and they were American, but Nathan wanted to see grease and fat and eggs.

Sure, he couldn’t really eat anything, but it was the experience that mattered, wasn’t it?

Caught up in his musings, Nathan missed Klaus opening his eyes and drowsily get up, disentangling himself from Vanya’s arms. Vanya stirred.

“Morning,” she yawned.

Klaus stuck his tongue out at her. “Ew, morning breath!”

Vanya laughed and chucked a pillow at Klaus.

Nathan found himself wishing that he could’ve had that kind of relationship with his brother before
he got himself blown up. Privately, in the back of his head, he made a promise to Klaus to be that figure in his life.

Klaus bid goodbye to Vanya and stumbled to his room. Nathan skipped over.

“When was the last time you had waffles, Klaus?”

Klaus yawned, making his way to the bathroom after grabbing his uniform.

“I dunno, five years ago? Me, Ben, and Five snuck out and stole some Eggo’s. Waffles don’t fit into our diet plan, you know?” Klaus answered, stepping in the shower. Nathan turned around, observing his reflection. He looked the same as always, didn’t he? Also, why did he have a reflection?

“Yeesh, that sucks. Klaus, why doesn’t Five have a name?” He asked.

Klaus shrugged before remembering that Nathan couldn’t see him. “I don’t know, maybe he didn’t like it or something? Five’s always been Five to me.”

“I didn’t want one.” Five had entered the room, passing through Nathan to brush his teeth.

Klaus greeted Five good morning. Five hummed a greeting back, saying hello to Nathan.

“Is Ben up yet?” Five asked, wiping his mouth on a towel.

Klaus finished up his shower, holding his hand out for a towel. Five handed him one without a word. “Probably not, you know how he is after missions.”

Five made a noise of understanding, popping into the shower when Klaus exit. A pile of clothes lay on the floor where Five used to be. Klaus and Nathan shared an impressed look.

“Five, what on earth were you doing when you teleported without your clothes for the first time?”
Five, as expected, didn’t respond, but Klaus could imagine the cheeky smirk on his brother’s face.

Nathan sat on the counter while Klaus brushed his teeth.

“I was looking around the neighborhood. You know, there’s this diner, Griddy’s, it looks very unhealthy. I think you deserve a good, greasy breakfast.”

Klaus raised an eyebrow at Nathan. “Are you saying—” he spat into the sink, “that we should sneak out and have breakfast at some diner?”

Nathan grinned toothily at him. “You know you want to.”

“Nathan wants you to go to Griddy’s?” Five asked, done with his shower. Klaus handed him a towel.

“Yeah, how’d you know it was Griddy’s?” Five rolled his eyes at Klaus’ reasonable inquiry.

“I can teleport and spend lots of time undisturbed. If anyone was going to explore, it’s me. Besides, it’s the only diner around.”

Klaus looked at Five for a long moment. “Huh, I guess I really underestimate you, Five.”

Five gave him a smirk. “Good.”

Klaus punched him in the shoulder with a laugh. Five bopped him on the back of the head.

“I could show you the way, if you wanted.”

“Won’t Dad notice?”
Five gave Klaus the kind of look that Klaus would give Nathan.

“Of course, that’s why you eat barely any breakfast and eat later, while we have free time.”

Klaus grinned at Five. “Awesome! I haven’t snuck outside since when we stole those waffles from the grocery store!”

Nathan and Five stared at Klaus with odd expressions. Nathan’s was full of pity and surprise. Five just raised his right brow.

“That was six years ago.”

Klaus nodded. “Mhm!”

Five looked away, buttoning up his shirt. “Why don’t we invite the others? You guys never…” Five tightened his tie with a quick motion. “You don’t get out much, do you?”

Klaus shook his head. Five hummed and patted his chest, leaving the room. “We’ll go at nine. Change into something else, would you?”

Klaus beamed, excited to finally use his only non-uniform outfit. He only had one, but it was much better than the button up shirts and knee socks. He had black shorts and a colorful shirt, along with a dark jacket. That was it, but he had never gotten to use it in public. Their father had gotten them all outfits in case they had to go undercover. So far, they hadn’t had to.

He dropped by everyone’s room, inviting them to the diner. They readily agreed, even if Luther needed a little convincing. Vanya was invited as well, something that she seemed thrilled about. Klaus had started to notice that Vanya was excluded from the others in more than just hero business, and he tried to remedy this in his own way, making sure that she always had a chance to join when she could.

Breakfast was a quiet affair, air filled with the light sounds of clinking silverware as the kids arranged their food to make it look like they ate.
They all met in Five’s room.

“Five, it’s 8:58, let’s go~” Luther was cut off by Five holding up a finger. The boy was reading a book on his bed, not even looking at them.

“...”

The clock ticked loudly, and they stayed quiet. Five licked his finger and turned a page slowly, paper dragging on paper. Allison was fidgeting. Klaus coughed loudly into his hand. Two minutes crawled on, marked by the nine chimes of the clock in the living room.

“Okay, let’s go.” Five stood, opening his window and gesturing to the fire escape.

The siblings shot each other looks of fond exasperation before following him.

They were all dressed casually, but tensed at every person that passed. Would they be recognized? Klaus looked around, savoring the feel of morning sunlight on his skin. He saw ghosts in the street, but Nathan blocked his vision of them. From Nathan’s expression, Klaus realized that the man was actually blocking him from their vision. He felt a warm feeling in his chest that had nothing to do with the sun.

“You guys look weird in casual clothes.” Allison commented. The girl was dressed in a light summer dress, and Klaus had a brief moment where he wondered if he would fit in it.

“Out of a-all of us, F-Five looks the w-weirdest, right?” Diego asked, yelping when Five bopped him on the back of the head.

Klaus crept up behind Diego, whispering out that yeah, he dresses like an old man. Diego chuckled, shaking his head.

They reached a crosswalk, and Klaus instinctively grabbed Ben’s hand. Ben didn’t judge, holding it as they crossed the street.
Finally, the Academy made it to Griddy’s. To others, it wasn’t much to look at, but to them, it symbolized rebellion.

Okay, maybe it wasn’t that deep. However, the giddiness they felt when they sat in a booth was real. Five fought off a smile, changing it last second to a smirk. Something in him warmed, seeing the childish excitement on their faces.

They each pulled out five dollars. Between the seven of them, they had $35.

Klaus happily grabbed a menu, flipping it open and surveying his choices. His eyes bugged out at the calorie count of each one. His mouth started to water.

Nathan pointed to a waffle, bacon, and egg meal. “This looks incredibly harmful for your body. Take it.”

Klaus grinned, nodding. Ben chose the same. He asked his siblings what they were getting, and was happy to see that they all chose similarly unhealthy options.

While they waited for a server to take their order, two men came in, demanding that the TV be switched to a news channel.

The server, a sweet lady named Agnes, complied, urging the two to sit down.

The screen flickered, and the Academy, the men, the other patrons, and Agnes watched a bank robbery’s aftermath.

Klaus patted Allison’s knee, whispering. “Look, it’s Vicky!”

The reporter was being interviewed, clips from the original interview at the bank flashing every few moments.
“They seemed so confident. I believe they were hiding inner turmoil.” A clip of Klaus telling Vicky how to count played. Vicky was shown once more, wiping her face. “We hide pain with humor, and these poor children are different. There was blood on their hands, those unfortunate kids.”

Klaus snorted into his orange juice. Allison giggled next to him. A server came over to them, blocking their view of the television.

They said their orders, and Ben said Diego’s for him, saving him from the embarrassment. While they were waiting, one of the two loud men from earlier approached their table.

“Are you the Umbrella Academy?” He sounded eager.

Five snorted into his coffee. “If we were famous superheroes, why would we be eating at a crummy little diner?”

The man flushed and apologized, going back to his friend, shaking his head.

Nathan laughed. “That was the best non-answer I’ve ever heard.”

Klaus chuckled and relayed the remark to Five. Five nodded his thanks, lifting his mug in a cheers before taking a big gulp.

The server came back with their orders, and they dug in with gusto.

“Guys, look!” Allison had lifted a piece of bacon. They stared in fascination at the fat drop of oil that dripped from its end.

“That’s disgusting!” Klaus laughed before chomping on his bacon.

Ben ate his waffles slowly, slicing them into little pieces and pouring an unhealthy amount of syrup on them. Diego nibbled on his chocolate eclair. Vanya was eating plain pancakes, but was experimenting with the different kinds of syrup. Luther had ordered a simple breakfast of pancakes and was eating them like a dog.
Five sipped on his coffee, feeling strange. Something about being the one to take them all here to this crummy little diner, something about the stupidly excited expressions they wore, something about this whole situation made Five feel warm. He sipped on his coffee, hiding a grin behind the mug.

They finished their late breakfast with satisfied grins. Luther let out a belch. Allison slapped his arm with a laugh.

“Ugh, I feel disgusting. It’s great.” Klaus leaned back, patting his stomach. Nathan nodded, a proud expression on his face.

“Yes, yes. My corruption continues. You deserve to eat like a king!”

Klaus grinned at him.

Vanya nodded her agreement at Klaus. “I feel gross, too. I almost feel too full, you know?”

Ben grunted his agreement, patting his stomach. “I don’t think I can finish. Does-” Luther had snatched his plate up and ate it like a wildman starved.

“J-Jeez, Luther.” Diego muttered, wrinkling his nose.

The Academy paid their tab and left, leaving a generous tip for their server.

Training went sluggishly that day. Their father frowned his disapproval, but didn’t push them any harder.

Klaus looked around. There weren’t any ghosts but Nathan nearby. Diego and Luther were sparring, Five was reading, and Allison was testing how long she could hold a note, Ben timing her. Gulping down fear, he closed his eyes and focused. His hands glowed, and soon, Nathan was there, hands in his pockets.
Klaus was about to run at the man with open arms when slow claps echoed through the courtyard.

An unfamiliar man clapped, sitting on a marble bench and watching them.

“Impressive, Klaus, was it?” The man stood, striding purposefully towards him. Nathan moved in front of him, glare on his face.

“What do you want?” Klaus asked, poking his head around Nathan. He observed the man. He was nondescript, all plain, gelled brown hair and a business suit.

The man sidestepped Nathan and wrapped an arm around Klaus. Klaus wrinkled his nose, and Nathan shoved them apart.

The man raised his hands in surrender. “I’m not here to hurt you, little seance. You can call off your ghostie.”


“Just a talk, Ghostie, just a talk.”

Klaus gulped, not releasing Nathan’s sleeve, but stepping forward.

“Just talk?” He asked.

The man gave him a grin that reminded Klaus of oil dripping from bacon.

“Just to talk, little seance.”

Klaus frowned. “Okay. Talk.”
The man clapped his hands together, looking Klaus head to toe. Klaus fought the urge to hide behind Nathan. Nathan was still tense, glaring at the man.

“My name is Michael Bensen. I saw your little mission on the news yesterday, and called a meeting with your father.”

Klaus tensed. Nothing good ever came from those who met with his father.

“See, I want to help you kids. I want to see you grow and flourish.” Klaus shifted uncomfortably, and Nathan detached Klaus’ hand from his sleeve to squeeze it, obviously not liking the man.

“You’re a young teen, little seance, I’m sure you like comics? Figurines? Grand stories of superheroes saving the day?”

Klaus hesitated. He did like comics.

His hesitation was enough for Michael.

The man’s grin seemed to stretch, eyes leering at the nervous boy and protective man.

“Well, the six of you may just become one.” Klaus felt excitement rush through him before he squashed it. He needed to be logical.

“If it concerns all six of us, why are you talking to me only?”

The man’s greasy grin turned almost predatory.

“I’m glad you asked, little seance,” he seemed to purr, reaching out and placing his palm on Klaus’ cheek. Nathan snarled in warning.

“You see, you and your companion are so fascinating. I think you could go very far as your own
solo series.” Nathan wrenched Michael’s hand away, hissing out a threat.

“Oh, I’ll show you something real fucking fascinating!”

The man chuckled deeply, and Klaus stepped back, nervous. Nathan was like a cat ready to pounce, all raised hackles and snarling white teeth.

“See, that’s a wonderful example! Such a brash, vulgar, defiant ghost and…” The man turned back to Klaus, tilting his head and continuing with an almost fond voice, “…and such a sweet, mellow, impressionable, innocent boy.”

Nathan growled low, shoving Klaus behind him. Michael watched with a smirk as Nathan stepped forward to fully cover Klaus.

“I don’t like your tone, Bensen. You’re on thin fucking ice, mate.”

The man raised his arms again, attempting to placate Nathan.

“I just wanted to let the boy know about the plans. His father has already agreed on his behalf, but I think that he deserves to know.” The man curled his fingers in a patronizing wave. Klaus didn't wave back.

“I have to leave now, little seance. We will being seeing much more of eachother in the future. Ciao!” With that, the man spun on his heel and exit the courtyard.

Ben came over to see Klaus gripping Nathan’s hand hard.

“Who was that dude? What did he want?”

Klaus turned to Ben, telling him. “His name is Michael Benson. He apparently met with Dad and is gonna make comics about us.”
Ben’s eyebrows raised. “Us? All of us?” Klaus nodded.

Nathan butt in, “Don’t talk to him, Ben. He’s a creep.” Ben nodded, confused.

Klaus, Ben, and Nathan spent the day debating the merits of being a public hero. They even dragged Five into it a few times, coming to the consensus that it was cool, while Michael was not. Five and Nathan seemed to have a weird silent agreement that Michael should never be alone with Klaus.

Klaus kept his solo comic future secret, only talking about it with Nathan.

“You’re gonna have to manifest me whenever he’s around, okay? Promise me.” Nathan was uncharacteristically stern, gripping Klaus’ shoulders tight.

“I promise! Why are you acting so weird? I mean, I agree, he’s creepy, but you’re kinda overreacting.”

Nathan sighed and pulled him into a hug, petting his hair. He didn’t answer, but Klaus could tell when and when not to push, so he accepted it. Besides, it felt nice.

Nathan was quiet for a moment, mind flashing back to when he was telling Simon, yes, Nathan knew his name, that if the priest didn’t like you, you were one of the ugly ones. It was easy to joke about, easier than telling anybody outright.

He looked down at Klaus, marvelling at how similar he looked to a young Nathan. The boy was all curly dark hair and bright green eyes. He smiled tiredly down at him.

“Sorry, you know how I am. Guy’s gotta worry about shit, especially when that shit is his little-”

Nathan abruptly cut himself off.
Klaus felt himself grin, tightening his arms around Nathan, silently urging him to finish. He pressed his head into Nathan’s chest, hoping to God that the man would say what he thought he would say.

Nathan groaned, the sound echoing in Klaus’ skull.

“Yeah, yeah. Fine. Especially when that shit is his little brother.” Klaus made a choked up noise, burying his face in Nathan’s chest, hugging him tighter than ever before.

Nathan grinned, relieved that Klaus was okay with it. So he abandoned his dislike for being an emotional bastard and squeezed back, just as tight.

They stayed like that until Klaus could barely manifest Nathan anymore.

Chapter End Notes

So yeah, Nathan and Klaus look alike!

And I'm always trying to find ways to prove that Nathan's a big ol' sap.

This chapter's implications are a little darker than usual, but a lot of the stuff Klaus says in the show is really dark if you think about it ("I remember my first time- oh, wait, no I don't").

Okay, thanks for reading, leave a comment if you enjoyed!
Another Mission

Chapter Summary

The Academy stops another heist, Michael is a creep, and Reginald makes yet another oopsie.

This chapter is kinda violent/morbid at some points, apologies.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The academy had another mission. It had higher stakes than last time, because this time, they didn’t have the element of surprise.

The bank that was being robbed this time was definitely of higher importance than last time. They were informed that the robbers were members of a prestigious gang.

Luther climbed into the driver’s seat (he and Diego were the only ones who had learned at that point) and Diego hopped into the passenger’s side. The rest of them clambered into the back.

“Hey Ben,” Klaus began, tapping the smaller boy on the shoulder.

“Yeah?” He responded.

“If your name is Ben,” Ben’s face twisted, knowing what was next.

“Don’t,” he pleaded, but Klaus continued. “And you have tentacles,”

Ben plugged his pinkies in his ears, frowning at Klaus.

Klaus leaned in obnoxiously, “Then could I call you...”
“No,” “Bentacles?”

Ben smacked Klaus on the back of the head. Klaus laughed and turned to Five.

“Hey Five,"

“This better be a real question. If it’s not, you will find yourself without hands.” Five snapped, not even looking at Klaus.

Klaus floundered for a moment, hastily coming up with a question in place of the high-five joke he was going to make.

“Uh…” Five looked up from his book and stared at Klaus with a deadpan expression.

Klaus looked to Nathan, who shrugged. Finally, he blurted out, “Can you teleport inside of somebody?”

Five’s eyebrow twitched and he stared incredulously at Klaus. The car had gone silent, save for the soft music in the background.

“I don’t think so, and I’d rather not find out, thanks.” Five’s sarcasm spurred conversation in the car once more.

The drive was quick, and they watched the situation from a news broadcast, surveying how skilled the bad guys were.

When they stormed in and began to fight, it had went relatively well. Most of the gang was out cold, thanks to Five and Diego. Allison and Klaus fought side by side, all high kicks and mockery. Nathan warned Klaus of incoming gunshots and punches, and Ben had picked up a gun and was shooting men in their legs and feet.
They were doing so well…

Until Klaus was yanked away and a gun was put to his neck. Allison grasped for him before backing off.

The fighting immediately paused, and no one knew what to do. They looked to Luther, who looked just as unsure as they did. The robbers seemed to relax and puff up once more, glad to see that they had the advantage.

The man holding Klaus laughed. “Not so tough now, are you, kiddos?”

Nathan was panicking and slapping his head in hopes for an idea. What to do? Even if he was manifested, there wasn’t much he could do.

The robber flashed gold teeth in a grin, digging the gun into Klaus’ neck, sure to leave a mark. Klaus was very still, waiting for the sharp noise of a shot.

“Klaus!” Nathan had an idea, gruesome as it was. He hoped to that little girl in the sky that this would work.

Klaus looked at him with wide, teary eyes.

“Nathan,” Klaus whispered. The man laughed.

“No one can save you, buddy,” he looked up and addressed the academy.

“You brats better back off-“ he moved the gun from Klaus’ neck to jab at his temple, “-or this little one will get it.”

The academy stood still.
Nathan hissed through his teeth, making sure his hand was phased through the man’s wrist.

“Manifest me, Klaus.”

Klaus trembled, balling his hands into fists. The man chuckled at his discomfort. Klaus ignored it, fists beginning to glow.

The robber felt tightness in his wrist for a moment before howling in pain.

Nathan had manifested inside of the robber, the hand in the robber’s wrist separating the fist, and by extension, the pistol, from his body. Nathan’s arm dripped blood, but not his own.

The man’s hand and gun dropped to the floor, twitching and bleeding. The man stumbled back, releasing Klaus, who grinned and ran to his siblings, who collectively breathed a sigh of relief and turned on the remaining robbers, incapacitating them quickly. Now, there was one last robber standing, or writhing on the ground in this case.

Nathan growled at the robber, who was still clutching the stump where his hand used to be. Five, ever the close observer, could see where the bone ended in a clean cut, watching the marrow drip onto the floor in clinical interest.

Nathan grabbed the man’s hair and bashed his head into his knee.

“Holy fuck that hurts!” He cried, grabbing his knee. The man was still blubbering, arm moving from his nose to his stump in a panic.

Suddenly, the man lunged forward, yanking on Nathan’s ankle and bringing him down with him. Nathan kicked the man in his already bloody nose and reached for the gun.

The kids watched in surprise at Nathan’s ferocity, looking away when a single shot sounded.

Nathan dropped the gun with a clatter, crawling away from the body, slipping on blood.
“Ew, ew, ew, that’s so gross—ugh.” Nathan muttered, pushing himself to his feet and wiping his hands on his jumpsuit.

He then pointed at the body, giving it one last kick.

“Don’t—“ Nathan flipped off the body, and the ghost that was beginning to form, “Don’t *fuck* with me!”

He spat on the bloody nose of the man, sticking his tongue out for good measure.

Klaus let out an exhausted laugh, steering Nathan’s attention towards him.

Nathan rushed over, checking for injuries, muttering curses at the bruises on Klaus’ neck and head.

After promising to manifest him if anything else happened, Klaus waved his hands, the glow fading from his fists.

The blood on the sides of Nathan’s jumpsuit fell to the floor as he faded from sight. Five noticed that the glob of spit (*how unsanitary!* ) on the dead man’s face remained.

The ghost that rose from the body advanced towards Klaus, growling menacingly.

The ghost stopped short when Nathan stood in front Klaus, crossing his arms. The robber turned tail and ran/ drifted away from Nathan and Klaus. Klaus waved goodbye.

After tying up all the bad guys, the academy kids escorted the hostages out, blushing at the praise they received.

“You guys are so cool!”
“You’re my heroes!”

“Thank you!”

Reginald’s orders echoed in their ears. They were to stay and charm the reporters and journalists, improving their public image.

So when the reporters, journalists, and cops rushed in, they stayed together, with Luther and Diego in the middle of their formation.

They made an impressive picture, heroic little kids triumphing when the police could not.

(Nathan said they looked like knobs, whatever that meant.)

Klaus blinked at the flashes, making sure to smile wide at the cameras.

His bright smile faded when a familiar man pushed his way through the crowd and hugged Klaus without his permission.

Klaus gently shoved Michael away, trying to keep his cool. Nathan was cursing, urging him to manifest him.

Five leaned in to mutter, “Get Nathan,”

Klaus nodded and manifested the young offender, who pushed Michael away from Klaus roughly. A new round of flashes blinded Klaus, and the rabble from the reporters seemed to double in volume.

Klaus could pick out a few voices and questions from the crowd.

“When is that kid?”
“Where’d that guy come from?”

“They call him the seance.”

“How’d he do that?”

“Like a medium?”

“You think he could summon my grandpa?”

Klaus was distracted when Michael addressed the group.

“Hello, little academy kids. If your father hasn’t told you already, my name is Michael Bensen. I’m making a comic series off of you guys. If the initial comics go well, we’ll move on to figurines, all sorts of Umbrella Academy paraphernalia!”

Luther shouted over the crowd. “Why are you telling us this here and now? Also, why did you just try to hug Klaus?”

Michael gave them a seedy smile. “I like the little seance, that’s why. Look at his adorable little face! And where else would I announce,” he turned to the crowd, announcing in a booming voice, “The Umbrella Academy is famous, and I, Michael Bensen, will be their manager!”

The crowd went crazy, but the academy themselves shifted their weight, not really caring much. Klaus had already told them about it.

“...Anyway,” Allison said, turning to her siblings. Michael’s grin seemed to waver at their unenthusiasm. Nathan butted his way into the little sibling ring, ejecting Michael in the process.

“Was this all we had to do? Sit pretty? Did Dad say anything about interviews?”
Luther nodded his head. “We gotta be charismatic this time. Dad didn’t like how snarky you two were.”

“Fine, fine.” Klaus agreed, Allison nodding her assent.

Klaus felt a hand on his back, assuming it was Nathan. It wasn’t until Nathan reached up to rub his nose that Klaus checked to see whose hand was resting on the small of his back.

It was Michael, who was listening in outside of the circle.

Klaus frowned at the man, feeling the hand go lower, to the bottom of his spine. He whispered this to Nathan, who immediately wrenched the man’s hand away.

“Don’t touch him, you sick pervert!” Nathan decided to use his words. Five glared at Michael, vindication twisting his mouth in a smirk when the reporters around them went crazy, cameras flashing wildly.

Michael glared at Nathan before turning around to try an explain to the reporters.

While he was turned, the Academy split in groups of three to talk to some journalists and reporters.

Ben, Diego, and Luther were in one group, while Five, Klaus, and Allison were in another.

The reporter looked less than thrilled when Five’s group approached instead of Luther’s. Klaus guessed that he had seen the previous interview with Vicky.

“Good afternoon,” He greeted, hoping to give off a more charismatic vibe. Allison gave the man a sweet smile, and Five had expression of polite disinterest.

“Afternoon. May I have your names?” The man took out a microphone and held it in their faces.
“Five,” “I’m Klaus, number four,” “I’m Allison. Three.”

The man held the mic out to Nathan, who was making faces at the camera.

“Oh, me? I’m not part of the academy.” The man’s brows furrowed.

“You just teleported in front of Mr. Bensen, though.” Five’s jaw clenched at the insinuation that Nathan of all people had the ability to teleport.

Nathan shook his head. “Nah, I was just manifested. I’m technically dead.”

The man was understandably surprised. Allison butt in, “He doesn’t do it on his own. He has to be summoned.”

Klaus nodded. “That’s my thing. I summon him.”

The man seemed to remember he had three superhero children in front of him.

“Oh, I see. So what happened in there? How did you use your powers to save the day?”

Five answered. “We incapacitated the robbers, and the only ones using their powers in the beginning were Luther, Diego, and me. Teleportation comes in handy in these missions.”

The reporter nodded, turning to Klaus and Allison. Nathan had wandered over to Luther, Diego, and Ben to go bother them.

“So what did you two do?”

Allison put on a charming grin. Klaus noted how much it looked like she belonged in the spotlight, looking perfectly at ease in front of a camera.
“Everybody is trained in combat, we don’t rely completely on our powers. We used hand-to-hand combat for that part.”

Their reporter, Daniel, according to his notebook, jotted down a few notes.

“So what happened in the end? You say things like ‘the beginning,’ or ‘that part,’”

Allison’s grin faltered for a moment.

“Klaus was held at gunpoint by one of the men. I’m sure the security footage will be given to various news stations to help pay for expenses.” Five answered, saving Klaus and Allison from speaking.

Daniel put on a fake sympathetic face. “Oh no, how did you get him out of that situation?”

Klaus answered. “Nathan asked me to manifest him, so I did. He took out that robber and saved me.”

The man in question had wandered back over, resting his elbow on Klaus’ head.

“Yeah, I sure did. Bashed his head right on my knee. Total badassery from me.” Allison swatted Nathan’s arm.

“You can’t cuss on television!” She hissed at him. Nathan gasped.

“Oh shit!”

“No!” Klaus laughed. Five had a smirk on, and the reporter looked almost amused.

“So you’re a ghost?”

“Yes,” “No,” Klaus and Nathan answered at once. Klaus rolled his eyes and let Nathan explain.
“I died, twice now that I think about it, and I’m a ghost, but I’m not like other ghosts. I’m far more aware, you know?”

Daniel looked like he did not, in fact, know.

“Yeah.” Nathan perked up, clapping his hands as a new idea came to him. “Say, you think anyone out there finds me sexy?” Nathan turned to the camera, putting on a smoulder.

Klaus shook his hands, mentally sending Nathan away before he said anything stupid.

Daniel let out a small, “Wow,” before looking in his notebook, asking them some more questions about the robbery, their training, and other, nonsensical things. Why would they have a favorite movie? They all looked at each other, knowing that none of them had really seen a movie before. Klaus finally lied through his teeth. “Hard to choose,” he said, which the others agreed with immediately.

Daniel looked like he didn’t have any more questions, so he turned to the camera with a grin.

“Well, this has been the Umbrella Academy plus one ghost, here on Channel Four news. I’m Danny Baxter, back to you, Sheryl!”

The red light on the camera turned black, and Daniel turned back to them. “Thank you for the interview, have a nice day.” The quartet wished Daniel goodbye and marched towards where Luther had parked the car.

Before they could get in, Michael came a-running.

“Wait up, kiddos!” He huffed, bent over from the effort. They wrinkled their noses at the man. Michael handed Luther some papers to pass on to Dad, waving to Klaus in the back seat.

“Little seance, hello! I’ll be seeing you soon!” He promised, blowing Klaus a kiss and shooting him an oily little smirk.
The academy watched as he walked away, confused and in Five and Nathan’s case, hostile.

“What a wanker.” Nathan muttered, crossing his arms from his seat on Diego’s lap.

Klaus shrugged, not really knowing what wanker meant.

The car was quiet until Allison asked a question.

“Has anyone here seen a movie before?” No one said yes.

“We should sneak out and watch one.” Klaus said. At once, they all turned to Five, who was trying to read his book on metaphysics.

Five glared. “What?”

Diego didn’t really answer, he just widened his eyes and raised his eyebrows at Five.

Five relented with a sigh. “Tell me what time you’re free. I’ll take you.” He turned to his book, angling his face to hide a smirk when the car erupted in whoops and cheers.

They arrived home, and Luther gave Reginald the papers. He gave them a once over and nodded.

“Adequate job on the mission today. Number Four, do try to be more tactical with your manifesting.” And then he was gone.

Ben and Klaus shared a look. That sounded like an admonishment for using the powers that had initially pleased Reginald. What the hell?

As had become the norm after missions, Ben and Klaus went up to Vanya’s room to compliment her violin playing. She didn’t seem to hesitate anymore, preening when Ben and Klaus applauded
Ben left to go sleep in his room, wishing Vanya a good night, even if it was only six o’clock.

Klaus stayed with Vanya, explaining what happened on the mission. Vanya nodded, hugging him.

“I saw you on the news,” she whispered, suddenly morose. “You were at gunpoint. I didn’t see the rest because Dad told me to go to my room-” She sniffed.

“I was apparently crying too loud for him to watch.”

Klaus hugged her, assuring her of his good health, minus the bruises along the side of his neck and face. He told her of how Nathan saved him, since she hadn’t seen it on the news. Of course Dad would send her away because she was crying. God forbid she be sad when she sees her brother at gunpoint!

Klaus cursed the man under his breath.

Up in his office, Reginald Hargreeves opened an envelope, taking out a bloody bag from it.

He read the letter that accompanied the bullet.

To Sir Reginald Hargreeves,

This bullet was contaminated with blood and spit, which you requested we test. Upon further inspection, we discovered that the blood and saliva were that of a dead male, unidentifiable due to deceased state. Blood and other samples of the deceased must be at least one month fresh to be identified.

We apologize.
Reginald glared at the paper, tearing it up and sweeping it off of his desk with a huff, along with an envelope. No identification meant no family members.

Reginald had planned to find Nathan’s family and use them as leverage to leave Number Four alone. He cursed under his breath and wrote some more in his journal to brainstorm, placing another envelope in a drawer for Pogo to send out.

Little did Reginald know, when he tossed an envelope in the trash and placed another in the out pile, he had made a mistake.

He had sent off the same envelope from the DNA testing company, and the envelope that he had swept away…

That was another order for antidepressants.

In the absence of the normal ones, instead of bothering Reginald, Grace went out to buy some more, not knowing that Reginald disguised powerful, almost lethal antidepressants in the containers of much weaker pills. So when Grace bought new antidepressants, they were much less affecting.

And Reginald was none the wiser.

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, yeah, Nathan’s bloody bullet didn't have a huge effect on the plot, sorry for leading y'all on. But, hey, at least Vanya will have weaker medication! I wonder where that's gonna go...

Ew, Michael's such a weirdo, blegh.

So for the Misfit watchers, just wanted to say, I mixed season one and two a bit (not on purpose, my memory just sucks). I have Nathan's death moved to where his initial write-off is, basically. This means that he met his brother, found out that the social worker died, etc.

Thank you all so much for the feedback! It really brightens my day, no lie.
Pills, Pills, Pills

Chapter Summary

Vanya feels funny.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Vanya felt funny.

Not necessarily bad, just…

Funny.

Klaus noticed it on the way down to breakfast, shooting her a grin.

“You look happy today,” he said, patting her on the back.

Vanya smiled back, surprised at the happiness that rushed through her veins.

“I’m… I feel awake.” She replied.

Klaus smiled at her, and Vanya was surprised at the stretch of her cheeks when she smiled back.

She looked around the mansion as if seeing it for the first time. Sunlight streamed through the windows, dust particles dancing in the beams. The light reflected off of the ground, illuminating the living room.

Vanya stared at it in wonder. Had it always been this bright?
“Vanya? You coming?” Klaus said, staring up at her from the bottom of the stairs.

“Yeah, sorry.” She said, taking one last glance and moving to catch up with Klaus.

Vanya and Klaus were the second to last to arrive at the table. Five, as per usual, popped in seconds before their father walked in.

He gave Vanya a once over.

“You look good,” Five commented. Vanya gave him a grateful, albeit puzzled, grin.

“Thank you.” She whispered, snapping to attention when the old man walked in.

_The old man? I’ve been hanging out with Klaus and Nathan too much._ Vanya thought.

“Sit.” The man commanded. They sat and ate in silence.

It was oatmeal.

Vanya pulled a face, surprised once more at the strong emotions she felt. She swallowed the goop down, knowing that she needed to finish it quickly.

She couldn’t help but pull a face. Five saw it and smiled a bit at it, pulling his own face. Klaus noticed Five pull the face, and pulled his own.

Soon, everyone had pulled a face, immediately smoothing them out when their father glanced up.

Once breakfast was done, Vanya headed to the kitchen to take her pills. The haze didn’t settle on her as it normally did, and Vanya stared at the bottle in her hands before shrugging.
Maybe she wasn’t ill anymore?

Vanya decided to wait until signs of her sickness showed before telling Mom or Pogo. Nodding at her decision, she headed up to her room to practice her violin while her siblings practiced with their powers.

Picking up the instrument and her bow, she settled it onto her shoulder. Her hand reached towards her music book before hesitating.

Maybe she could improvise today?

Vanya smiled at the idea, having never tried it before. She normally hesitated in doing things without permission, but it was just violin playing, right? What harm could it do?

Vanya’s smile felt a bit forced when she remembered that the only people who actually listened to her violin playing were a monkey, a robot, Ben, and Klaus.

Well, Vanya thought, I’ll do it for them.

She picked her bow back up and drew it across the strings. Her toes curled and her heart soared as she dove into the notes. Her eyes were closed, her fingers moving on their own to create a sweet melody. She thought of the first time her brothers poked their heads in and complimented her. The music seemed to echo like never before with a happy tune, encouraging like the brothers just a few weeks before.

Down in the courtyard, Klaus and Ben straightened, feeling their hearts soar, a faint melody echoing.

They looked at each other, confused at the enthusiasm that coursed through their veins. They shrugged and kept practicing with an uncharacteristic vigor.

Meanwhile, across the pond, four friends gathered at a bar.
Simon sat with Alisha, watching Kelly chug a full beer, letting out a loud burp. Curtis watched with a frown.

A man stumbled over, pointing at the television in the corner. “Oi, mate… You- could you turn the news on? There’s these- just do it, please?”

Curtis shot him an odd look before complying, finding a news channel and turning up the volume.

The group watched as a bunch of kids in masks let loose hostages in an American bank. Apparently, according to the news anchors, they had powers.

Simon raised his beer to his lips, taking a long sip.

“That could be us.” He muttered. Alisha laughed.

“I’d rather not look like a cunt, thanks.” The group chuckled a bit before turning somber. That was an oddly Nathan-esque phrase.

They turned back to the television to see a plain-looking man talk to the group. Kelly noted the little boy who tensed at the sight, seeing another boy lean in to whisper something.

They didn’t know what they were expecting, but what happened next was the farthest thing from it.

“Is tha’ Nathan?” Kelly choked out, glancing at her empty glass. Was this some sort of hallucination? Had to be.

They watched Nathan- because who else wore an orange jumpsuit and had that wild head of hair- shove the plain man away from the boy with an oddly protective look on his face.

“It totally is!” Alisha said, expression a mix between shock, joy, amusement, and sorrow.
The man made some announcement about umbrellas and managers. The kids had formed a circle, which Nathan was a part of.

Simon frowned. “Is that man fondling that kid?” They looked at the plain man. He totally was! His hand was creeping lower and lower until-

“Don’t touch him, you sick pervert!” Kelly choked on her beer, hearing that Irish cry. Now that was definitely Nathan.

“If there were any doubts…” Curtis muttered, just as shocked as the rest of them.

“No, that’s him alright.” Simon said, eyes wide.

They waited and watched the group split into triplets, heading to different interviewers. Curtis flipped through channels until they found one with Nathan.

“Oh, me? I’m not part of the academy,” Alisha laughed into her drink, a bit hysterical at seeing their dead friend on the television.

They watched in silence as the boy explained that Nathan was a sort of ghost, could only be summoned by the boy, and apparently killed a robber.

“Say, you think anyone out there finds me sexy?” Nathan asked, smouldering at the camera. The group let out a sad laugh. Even death hadn’t changed Nathan.

The interview ended, leaving the group staring at each other.

“He hasn’t changed, that prick.” Alisha muttered. Curtis chuckled.

“I told you he’d get kicked out of heaven.”
They laughed and refilled their glasses.

“To the ghost of Nathan Young,” Simon said quietly. They bumped their glasses, downing them.

Nathan felt a shiver run down his spine, an odd sensation. He wasn’t manifested at the moment, so he was surprised to feel something.

Of course, he didn’t care much, so he shrugged and went about his day.

He went out to the courtyard, watching the kids train, tapping his foot to the violin music playing from somewhere around them. He needed to be here in case that creep showed up. Klaus caught his eye and waved. Nathan sent him a thumbs-up in return.

Klaus dodged Allison’s high kick, using his arm and pushing her leg to the side, causing her to lose balance and stumble. He gave her a kick in return. She dodged, trying to pull his leg down, only pulling his sock and shoe off. She laughed at how he looked, one shoe and one bare foot.

“Might as well,” Klaus joked as he took off his other shoe and sock. Allison laughed and wrinkled her nose.

“Gross!” She teased before throwing a jab at his stomach. Klaus moved back, briefly distracted by the feeling of grass and dirt under his bare feet. It felt… right.

Allison dropped down and tried to sweep him down with a kick. At that moment, somewhere in the mansion, Vanya played a high, happy tune. Klaus’ heart seemed to soar at the sound, his hands glowing yellow, along with his feet.

When he jumped up to avoid the kick, he looked down to see he hadn’t made contact with the ground again. His toes glowed gold, like sunlight, along with his hands.

Allison looked at him in astonishment.
“You can fly?” She gaped, pointing at where his feet didn’t rest on the grass.

Klaus peered down, wiggling his bare toes in the air. It was strange, not feeling pressure or weight anywhere on your body.

Ben looked over, letting out a soft, “Woah,” before walking over. Diego, who he had been sparring with, noticed as well, looking at him incredulously. Luther didn’t notice, but gathered where everyone else was. Five popped in next to Klaus, grabbing his hands to observe their orange-gold glow.

“Did you get taller?” Luther asked, lining up with Klaus to see that their shoulders were close to aligning.

“Did you get dumber?” He shot back, pointing to his feet. He wiggled his toes for emphasis.

“Woah! You can fly?” Nathan had walked over and was now dropped on the ground to see how far up he was.

He wasn’t exactly flying. He was more… hovering.

He repeated this thought out loud, at which Five rolled his eyes.

“You’re levitating. Not quite high enough to classify as flying, but high enough to be more than hovering.”

“Can you move?” Nathan asked, getting up from where he was measuring.

“Um, I can try.” At the confused looks of his siblings he shrugged. “Nathan asked if I could move.”

He leaned forward, feeling his body go backward. The academy laughed at the squeak that escaped. “Don’t laugh, it’s harder than it looks!”
Nathan snorted at him. “You look so dumb,” the ghost laughed.

Klaus glared and straightened his posture, taking a deep breath. “Okay,” he said to himself, thinking hard. *Forward, go forward.*

His body complied, moving forward at a leisurely pace.

“You’re a bit slow,” Luther commented, tracking him with his eyes.

Klaus glared, willing himself to turn around to give Luther the middle finger.

He made a sweeping motion, directing his siblings to move out of the way.

*Forward. fast. Fast. Fast.* He thought, unprepared for when his body propelled itself forward in a blur.

Klaus smacked into the oak tree with a groan. His siblings burst into laughter as he peeled himself from the tree.

“Too slow, my ass!” He growled, feeling his feet lose their warmth, toes sinking into the dirt once more.

His siblings and Nathan came over, gasping for breath from laughing too hard. Five had the most insufferable look on his face.

Klaus was ready to laugh with them until his father and Michael walked out.

“Ugh, not this creep.” Allison muttered. The rest of the academy nodded, agreeing completely.

“Number Four, where are your shoes?” His father snapped. Klaus pointed to where he had left them.
Michael seemed amused, looking at his feet curiously.

“Oh, fuck no. Manifest me right now, Klaus. He’s looking at your feet- that’s a bad sign, nope! Do it.”

Klaus floundered for a moment, trying to explain why he had taken his shoes off.

“While we were training, Allison pulled my shoe off on accident. I decided to take off the other one… to see. How it felt?”

His father looked unconvinced and unimpressed.

“Put them back on this instant.” He commanded, and Klaus sighed, walking to where he had left his shoes. A shadow befell him, and from Nathan’s acidic expression, it was probably Michael.

He put his socks on, pulling them to his knees, not liking how Michael’s eyes tracked the movement.

While he pulled on the laces of his shoes, he tried to pull on the cool power within his veins without balling his hands into fists. His fists flashed and suddenly, Nathan was in front of him, blocking him from Michael’s view. Klaus smiled to himself. He was getting good at this!

“Ah, hello, Nathan.”

Nathan grunted in reply, crossing his arms and glaring down at Michael. If Klaus had to guess, he would say Nathan was six feet, while Michael reached about 5’9. The extra three inches plus Nathan’s hair seemed to tower over the plain man.

Klaus got up, frowning at the absence of the sensation of cool dirt and grass under his feet. He never got to be barefoot outside, and now that he had, he never wanted to put his shoes on again.

“So, what do you want?” He asked, annoyance seeping into his tone as the elation and adrenaline
from earlier left his mind.

“Just a little talk, don’t worry. Shall we go inside?” Michael gestured to the doors on the other side of the yard.

“Nah.” Nathan said, resting his elbow on Klaus’ head.

A muscle in Michael’s jaw jumped.

“Fine, that’s alright. We can talk here.”

Nathan hummed, playing with Klaus’ hair with his free hand, totally disregarding Michael.

“Is this about the comic?” Klaus asked, eyes crossed trying to look at the lock of hair that Nathan was twirling around his finger.

“Right in one, little seance.”

“Don’t call him that.” Nathan said nonchalantly, but the shift in the pitch of his voice was enough of a warning.

Nathan looked down at Michael casually. “It’s creepy. You wouldn’t want anyone thinking you’re a creep or anything, would you?”

Nathan smirked at the man to remind him of the field day that the media had at the bank. Their father apparently paid millions to keep them quiet. Michael clenched his jaw before turning to look at Klaus, expression softening immediately.

“Now look, little- Klaus, I’ve brought some concepts with me today to show you.”

“I thought you didn’t need my permission for anything. Dad already said yes to whatever you ask.” Michael’s expression went weird for a moment before smoothing out.
“It doesn’t hurt to let you see, Klaus.”

Klaus wrinkled his nose. “I think I liked it better when you called me seance. My name is too personal.”

Nathan snorted, patting Klaus on the shoulder.

Michael frowned briefly before pulling out a folder filled with sketches.

Nathan snatched it and flipped through it, brows raising.

“I’m not that buff! And Klaus definitely isn’t that small.” Klaus took the folder from Nathan’s hands, peering at the contents.

There was a drawing of him and Nathan in front of an ice cream shop. Nathan was in a ripped up version of his orange jumpsuit, buffer than in real life. His face was more square, his hair less curly, and he had a cigarette resting on his lips. He looked tough.

Klaus wrinkled his nose at the drawn version of himself. He looked three years younger, his outfit far more school-boy. He was smaller, in a way. His body was too slim and his eyes too big. He looked like a human fawn.

“Who drew this? I mean, it’s a nice drawing and all, but it looks nothing like either of us!”

Michael smiled at it. “Merely an exaggeration of your existing traits.” The man took the papers back, closing the folder and glancing to where the old man was waiting.

“I’m afraid the choices have already been made, li-Klaus.” He muttered, hand snaking out and tapping Klaus’ nose. Before Klaus or Nathan could react, Michael was walking away.

“So he pulled you aside to show you a drawing neither of us liked, tapped you on the nose, and then
left? He’s really grasping at straws here.” Nathan remarked, crossing his arms.

“Grasping at straws for what?”

Nathan sighed, looking down at Klaus with an odd expression. “He’s trying to find excuses to spend time with you. Trust me.”

Klaus looked puzzled at that. “How would you know?”

Nathan’s expression darkened. “I’ll tell you when you’re older.”

Klaus looked at Nathan and knew he wouldn’t budge. “Fine.” He sighed, shaking his hands and unmanifesting the Irishman. Nathan waved goodbye and wandered to the bench, deep in thought.

Michael and Reginald seemed to be having a discussion about the kids, estimated by the gestures that Michael was making towards them.

“I can’t be the only one who thinks these comics are dumb, right?” Diego muttered. Klaus nodded.

Five sighed. “Nothing we can do about it. The old man wants revenue, why not from his superhero children?”

Ben fidgeted, fiddling with a button on his blazer. Klaus nudged him, silently asking what was on his mind.

“You know…” Ben began quietly. The group turned to fully face him. Ben fiddled with the button some more before glancing up. “Vanya’s not in them.”

Five sighed. The rest of them didn’t respond, thinking.
“If it all goes south, then I’m glad Vanya doesn’t have to deal with it.” Five said before popping away.

They turned to Luther, who shrugged. “I guess training is over.”

Ben and Klaus chatted idly, making their way up to Vanya’s room. Klaus was buzzing with excitement, wanting to show off his new power.

Klaus pulled open the door after knocking once.

“Hello, sister o’ mine, can we come in?” Klaus drawled. Vanya grinned at them.

“Sure!”

Klaus, Ben, and Vanya fell onto her bed, staring at the ceiling.

“Vanya, it’s been a weird day.” Klaus hummed. Vanya sighed.

“Tell me about it.”

Klaus rolled over to face Vanya. “You’ve been having a weird day too?”

She nodded. “It’s like… You know how I felt more awake this morning?” Klaus nodded.

“It’s been like that all day. It’s like I’ve got this energy that’s never there. Like earlier, I was playing violin, and it was like I didn’t even have to think about it! The tune just came out, and it sounded amazing!”

Ben nodded. “I heard you, out in the courtyard. It was beautiful.”
Vanya flushed. “Thanks.” She turned to Klaus.

“So what’s been weird with you?”

Klaus grinned, sitting up.

“I can levitate.”

Vanya blinked. “Like, objects?”

Ben sat up as well. “He can levitate himself. He can also throw himself at trees.”

Klaus swatted Ben on the arm before standing up. Vanya sat up, watching him curiously.

“No, you gotta check this out. So I was enjoying life, right?” Ben snorted at his phrasing.

“Shut up, Ben. Look. I was feeling the sun on my skin, the dirt between my toes—” “Ew.”

“Shush, Vanya. Don’t knock it ‘til you try it. Anyway, I was having a great time—listening to your violin, by the way—and Allison goes to kick me. I jump, and suddenly, I’m floating.”

Vanya looked surprised and pleased.

“Can you show me?”

Klaus grinned. “I can try.”

Ben whispered something to Vanya, who glanced at her violin before pushing it under the bed. “For safety,” she explained.
Klaus tried to find the warm feeling from before, that sunlight in his veins.

“You’re turning red.” Ben stated. Klaus glared before groaning.

“What was happening in that situation that I need to recreate?” Klaus groaned, thinking back to when he was manifesting Nathan for the first few times.

Without warning, and really, when did he ever warn them, Five popped in.

“Are you trying to levitate again?” He asked, sitting down next to Vanya. He greeted her with a nod.

Vanya felt a rush of happiness again, realizing that they were all in her room of their choice.

Klaus nodded. “Okay… so I tried to kick Allison, she pulled my shoe off… then, she kicked me, and I was levitating.” Klaus snapped his fingers, eyes brightening.

“Maybe someone needs to kick- Oof!” Five had kicked Klaus in the stomach.

“Five, what the hell?” Klaus wheezed, bent over. Ben seemed amused, Five seemed disappointed. Vanya was mostly just concerned.

“So it’s not kicking.” Five concluded.

The four kids thought for a little bit. Vanya cleared her throat. “Maybe you should be barefoot?” The idea sounded dumb, even to her ears, and she was the one to come up with it.

Klaus shrugged. “Might as well,” he grinned, bending to pull of his shoes.

“Your feet are dirty.” Vanya muttered, frowning slightly.
“Sorry, I’ll clean it up.” Klaus said, tugging his sock off. His toes wiggled on Vanya’s wooden floor.

Klaus breathed in and out, closing his eyes. He searched for the warmth again, feeling his toes press into the hard, wooden floor. He felt sunlight through Vanya’s window. A breeze seemed to ruffle his hair and then-

Klaus was floating.

He opened his eyes to see an impressed Vanya, a mildly proud Ben, and a satisfied Five.

“Tada!” He sang, making jazz hands. His hands and feet glowed orange like sunlight at golden hour.

Vanya applauded.

“Does it matter what position you’re in?” Five asked. Klaus shrugged before testing out different poses, focusing on not moving.

Finally, after cycling through a few positions, he found himself with crossed legs, a slight pressure helping him tuck his feet under himself.

“Oh, this one’s good.” Klaus grinned, patting his knees.

Vanya laughed, getting up, followed by Five and Ben.

Five took a pencil from Vanya’s desk and pushed Klaus with the rubber end. Klaus floated away a bit before floating back.

Klaus floated to the door, opening it and exiting, followed by his siblings.

“Oh.” He frowned, looking at the stairwell.
Five pushed him forward. Klaus imagined himself floating the same distance from the ground at all times as he floated down the stairs.

“Can you go higher?” Five asked, writing in a notebook (when did he get that?).

Klaus’ mind flashed back to ramming into the old tree.

“Uh, can we try that later?”

Five rolled his eyes but put his notebook away, smirking. He turned to Vanya, whispering.

“He slammed into the old oak tree earlier after Luther said that he was going too slow. I think he actually left a mark.”

Vanya snorted before covering her face in embarrassment.

It was quiet for a moment before the boys burst out laughing, at which Vanya reddened further.

They laughed harder, even Five. Five had a weird chuckle laugh, while Ben and Klaus were full on belly laughing.

Vanya eventually cracked and laughed with them all.

Meanwhile, Nathan was on the marble bench, still thinking.

What if his family or friends saw him when he was on television?

He tapped his foot, wishing he had a cigarette.
Nathan breathed out, leaning back. Would he go back to England if he could? Would he return to his friends? His family?

He sighed again, looking up at the sky. It was a sunny day, and he could hear some kids laughing inside the mansion.

If Nathan left, what would happen to Klaus? Of course, Klaus would have to come with him and manifest him in order for Nathan to talk to everyone.

But Klaus would miss his siblings, wouldn’t he?

Nathan closed his eyes, rolling his head back, decision made.

He wouldn’t go back to England just yet, Klaus needed him here.

He opened his eyes, getting up and strolling to the mansion.

Klaus needed him here.

Chapter End Notes

Jeez, I need to stop promising to update every other day. My excuse this time is that I was doing school stuff. (For those of you who didn't know, I'm still in highschool! I don't have much free time.)

Anyway, y'all in the comments really wanted to see the Misfits squad react to Nathan on TV, so I wrote that in. I'm also starting to include Vanya and Five bonding because I rewatched TUA and that scene where Vanya says she left sandwiches and turned the lights on for Five? My heart is shattered.

Thank you for the feedback, you're all absolute darlings and I love you!
Revelations

Chapter Summary

The gang acts like real kids for once, Nathan and Grace hang out, and oh yeah, Five goes from 0-100 real quick.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Five wondered if telling the rest of the academy that he’d take them to a theatre to watch a movie was a good idea.

They were infinitely more excited than the last time they snuck out, buzzing in place during mealtimes. Five had to roll his eyes when he caught Klaus literally skipping down to the courtyard for training. He lagged behind to tell Vanya what was going on, staring at her when she asked if she was invited.

“Vanya, you’re always invited.” Five said slowly, as if he was talking to a toddler.

Vanya flushed a bit, looking down. “Not all of the time.”

Five wasn’t empathetic, but he could definitely tell when somebody was upset. He cursed mentally, seeing the way Vanya seemed to droop like a flower that had never been watered.

He awkwardly reached out to squeeze Vanya’s shoulder.

She looked up, lip wobbling. Five panicked, rushing out a, “Well, you’re always invited now,” and doing the least awkward thing he could think of.

He popped away into the courtyard, leaving Vanya confused, but with a growing happiness, rushing to her room to count up change for a movie ticket.

“Five, we’re leaving at five right?” Klaus asked, not flinching at his sudden entrance. Five spotted
Nathan at the fountain, splashing the water like an idle child.

Ben looked over. “What did you just say?”

Five glared at Klaus, daring him to speak, but Allison, ever the clever one with words, decided to answer for him.

“Five’s gonna take us at five to see a movie, the ticket of which costs five dollars.”

Five gritted his teeth, wishing that he had just taken the name Mom had offered him.

Ben laughed quietly, practicing his rolls with a grin.

Five sweetly invited Klaus up for a spar.

“Oh, it’s alright, Five-o, I’ve got Alli…son…” Allison had moved to practice evasion tactics with Ben.

Five smirked at Klaus, baring a bit of teeth. “Think fast.”

Klaus’ shriek could be heard through the courtyard, soon followed by laughter.

Five o’clock rolled around, and the Academy met in Five’s room. Five made a point to stare at his clock, watching the second hand tick until five chimes were heard.

He did a quick headcount before opening his window to the fire escape, hopping out. The soft footsteps of his siblings followed.

Five took a few shortcuts to get to a movie theater, happy to see that there was a movie in only fifteen minutes. They went to buy tickets, but a burly hand stopped them.
“You need an adult with you, kiddos. ‘S dangerous ‘round here, nowadays.” The man grunted, jerking a thumb at a sign that stated that all children under sixteen required a chaperone.

They looked at each other, nervous. Allison couldn’t just rumor the man, there were more guards around. There were also in a public space.

“Sorry, sir.” Luther apologized, leading the group out to hang around a closed storefront.

While they were caught up thinking in silence, Klaus broke it with a hiss.

“You hardly look like an adult, Nathan! Also, you’re wearing a public offender jumpsuit! You don’t exactly look responsible!” Klaus crossed his arms at the air, caught in a heated argument with Nathan.

Klaus blinked, noticing that the others were staring at him.

“Nathan’s trying to convince me that he’s a suitable chaperone, which clearly is a stupid choice because, I mean, he looks like a prisoner-”

Five held up a hand. “I can get him a change of clothes.”

The Academy stared at him. Luther and Ben seemed to be the only ones to have issues with it, Luther because of his moral compass and Ben because he didn’t want Five to leave.

“Do you guys want to see this movie or not? It starts in-” Five checked his watch. “Twelve minutes.”

Klaus shrugged. “Nathan says he’s down.”

Five gave a curt nod before popping away inside of the very store they were hanging out in front of. Not that they knew that, the windows were blocked.
Five found a simple outfit for Nathan, trying to remember whether or not Nathan wore shoes.

He popped back out, startling the group.

“You can’t just d-do that in public, F-Five. What if someone sees?” Diego asked, looking around to see if anyone had noticed. Five didn’t answer, but noted that Diego’s stutter had been getting much better ever since Five had added several speech impediment therapy guides to Mom’s database while she was charging. He wouldn’t admit to the action until he died, though.

Instead, he turned to Klaus. “Does Nathan have shoes?”

Klaus blinked, turning and looking down at air. “Yeah, he has shoes.”

Five nodded, popping into the store, ripping off the tags from the shirt, jacket, and jeans he had chosen.

He popped back out with the garments, this time in an alleyway nearby, much to Diego’s relief.

Five jerked his chin at Klaus, tossing him the clothes. “Manifest him. He can change in the alleyway.”

Nathan materialised, taking the clothes from Klaus.

“I’m sorry, did you just say the alleyway? What am I, a prostitute?”

Five glared at Nathan. “Do you want to be responsible for these-” he gestured to Vanya, Ben, Klaus, Luther, Allison, and Diego, “missing their movie?”

Nathan rolled his eyes but walked to the alleyway, coming out in the clothes and holding his jumpsuit in one hand.
Klaus wrinkled his nose. “You look so weird,” He said, standing up and leading the group back to the theatre.

The man eyed Nathan suspiciously. “That was quick. Is that a-” He had spotted the jumpsuit.

Nathan was about to give the man a resounding ‘yes,’ but he saw how Ben and Klaus and all the other kids, even Five, seemed to sag in disappointment.

Nathan gulped and held up the jumpsuit. “Yeah, it’s a prison outfit. The kids were lucky I was done with… rehearsal. It’s for a play I’m in… the Asbos, uh, Five… ever heard of it?” The man looked unconvinced.

Nathan floundered a bit, pressure on his shoulders encouraging him. “Well, it’s about a group of public offenders who suddenly gain powers through a freak storm while doing community service. It’s like those umbrella children! It’s quite a thrilling tale, I encourage you to go see it.” The man held up a hand, shooting Nathan a withering look.

“Just- just shut up. I’ll let you and the kids through, just shut up about your play.” Nathan shot the man what he hoped was a winning grin and passed through, watching the kids pay for their tickets. They looked at him, only then remembering that, oh yeah, Nathan’s kind of dead and broke.

Five pulled out a wallet, handing him a (heh) five dollar bill. Nathan nodded his thanks and paid for the ticket, flirting his way into a discount because Five had only given him enough for a minor’s ticket.

The group watched as Nathan flattered the old lady in the booth, flirting his way to a five dollar ticket.

“You’re too kind, love,” Nathan smiled, blowing her a kiss as they found the cinema they were supposed to go to. The movie started in half a minute, Five noted as they rushed to find their seats.

“Why are you only weirdly competent when flirting with old ladies?” Klaus asked Nathan, hands shoved in his pockets to cover the glow.

“Let’s not talk about this now, Klaus. The movie’s starting.” Nathan replied, but even in the dark light, anybody could see how Nathan flushed red.
The movie was not, in fact, starting. The previews were almost finished, though.

Finally the screen faded to black before brightening into a scene of pretty wildflowers and a young couple having a picnic.

They sat through it, laughing at the funny parts, gasping at the shocking parts, Allison and Klaus even shedding tears at an emotional scene.

Five didn’t care much for the movie, only paying enough attention to follow the plot loosely.

He focused more on his siblings, watching how Luther looked longingly at Allison during the romantic bits, laughing to himself when they all jerked back at a jumpscare. He watched as Ben cringed away at the slight gore, looking away with a frown. Five watched how Vanya stared, enraptured, at a closeup of the female protagonist, Klaus making the same heart eyes during a scene where the male protagonist was fixing his car. He watched Diego clench his fists when the main antagonist insulted his own mother and flipped the table, ruining the dinner she had made for him.

Five could admit to himself that he didn’t understand emotions. He was fine with this, proud, almost. It gave him a clear head during missions.

However, looking at his siblings enjoying the movie, hearts on their sleeves as they stared at the screen, Five felt his cheeks and chest warm up. He had to look away to hide his puzzled expression from them. Feeling his cheeks stretch into a genuine grin, jerking slightly at the feel of butterflies in his stomach, Five decided privately that he wouldn’t mind practicing this whole emotions business, as long as his brothers and sisters helped him through it.

The Umbrella Academy (plus one Irishman) strolled out of the theater, smiles painted on their faces. They made a cute picture, just a bunch of friends hanging out, their chaperone (a big brother, perhaps?) lagging behind to give them their space.

Allison clapped her hands together. “I’m going to be an actress one day!” She proclaimed with a grin. Five allowed himself to smile at the thought. He could definitely picture it, if Allison managed to escape Sir Reginald’s cold grasp.

An old man nearby looked her up and down, shaking his head. “Ain’t anybody like you gonna be on
Five clenched his jaw, knowing exactly what the man was implying. Nathan did, too, if the way his grip tightened around his jumpsuit was any indication. The others didn’t understand, tilting their heads in tandem like confused puppies.

“Well, of course not, not yet. I’m just a kid, I’ve gotta grow up first.” Allison said, chuckling and gesturing to herself.

The man sneered and cackled, slapping his knee and grinning nastily at her. “It ain’t about age, missy,” His grin turned hostile. “There ain’t never been a filthy-” Five rushed forward in a blur, pressing a small but sharp knife to the man’s throat.

“You finish that sentence, old timer, I dare you!” He hissed, glaring into the man’s watery eyes.

The man’s neck skin trembled in fear, Five’s knife pressing into it. Nathan came up behind Five to shield him from view, so the public wouldn’t see. There weren’t many people out at the moment, anyway.

“Five, what’s wrong, what was he gonna-” Luther tried, hands out in a disarming manner.

Five held up a hand, silencing Luther. “He wasn’t going to say anything, right, old man?”

The man shook his head, saggy skin wobbling at the frantic gesture.

“N-no, I wasn’t gonna say nothin’ to the miss. Nothin’ at all.” Five backed down, still glaring.

“That’s what I thought.” He hissed.

He turned back to his family, jerking his head towards an alleyway.
“Let’s get home before he notices we left.” He ordered, lagging behind the now silent group, Nathan leading the way.

Five stayed behind, a single hand on the old man’s shirt, preventing him from hobbling away.

He stared dispassionately into the man’s nervous little eyes.

“People like you will die out first.” Five said quietly.

The man jerked away. “Don’t play like that, boy.” He growled, apparently forgetting that Five was in possession of a very sharp knife.

“Don’t call me that.” Five murmured, stepping back and brushing his hair back with his hand.

“Do us all a favor and keep your idiocy to yourself, okay, old man?” The silent threat was louder than the request itself.

The man didn’t reply but also didn’t agree.

“You don’t have the balls, do you, kid?” He said, straightening and pointing a wrinkly finger at Five. Five tilted his head.

Silence reigned between them for a short moment, background noises of traffic and city life surrounding them.

“It’s not my place to judge people like you. That belongs to the big man in the sky.” Five grinned maliciously, pointing to the overcast sky above. The man followed his gesture, glancing at the clouds.

He leaned forward, trailing his knife across the man’s throat gently, mind flashing vividly, seeing the momentary hurt on Allison’s face. The man’s near use of the derogatory slur towards his sister echoed in Number Five’s head.
“A little kid like me?” Five gestured to himself, taking a few steps back and smiling at the sky. The man stared at him in apprehension. Oh, Klaus would love this when he told him, Five just knew it.

Five smiled innocently at the old man, placing a hand on his heart.

“I’m just the delivery boy.” He grinned at the man once more before warping out of existence.

The man looked around wildly, wondering if he had hallucinated the boy, finally falling to his knees and looking at the sky, praying feverishly.

When he finally returned to his siblings, they looked at him curiously, but didn’t push. They knew Five would tell them on his own time, if he decided to tell them at all.

Nathan, who was still around for the moment, gave him a knowing glance before moving to catch up with Klaus.

Five nodded at his family before popping upstairs to cool down in his room with a nice book.

Klaus headed up to his room, mulling over his feelings and their abnormality. He had felt them before, but they seemed to have surged forward while watching that movie. Ben and Vanya walked silently next to him.

Nathan tilted his head at him, noticing his quiet air. Klaus flopped onto his bed, staring at the ceiling. Vanya and Ben sat on either side of him, sharing curious glances.

Ben broke the silence. “So… that girl was really pretty, huh?”

Vanya nodded enthusiastically. “I know, right?” She immediately coughed into her hand. “…from a girl’s perspective, I mean.”
Klaus grunted.

Silence reigned for a few more moments before Klaus bolted upright with a gasp. Vanya, Ben, and Nathan made similarly alarmed noises.

“Are you alr-”

“I think I’m gay.” Klaus blurted out.

Ben looked at Vanya, unsure of how to react.

“Um… Congrats?” Ben said, unsure of what to say. Vanya looked similarly unsure. Nathan coughed into his hand.

“Yeah, uh, good job. What made you realize?” Nathan asked hesitantly.

“Well, you remember that scene where he took his shirt off and crawled under to fix his car? Well, it made me feel funny in my stomach-” Nathan abruptly stood up. Klaus looked almost hurt before Nathan gave him a quick hug.

“Nope! We are not having this conversation. Just- Good job on coming out, I’m proud and I love you, you’re amazing, I gotta go.” Nathan kissed Klaus on the head and left the room. Klaus stared after him, confused but relieved that Nathan didn’t mind. He fought a grin, realizing that Nathan had just admitted that he loved him out loud. Klaus, Ben, and Vanya chatted for a while afterwards, mostly about the movie. Klaus was glad his siblings didn’t mind.

Nathan made his way downstairs, frowning when he noticed Diego launch a knife into his favorite napping spot. He decided against arguing with the stabby teenager, though, heading to the kitchen.

“Oh, hello. I’m sorry, didn’t see you there.” Nathan apologized when he ran into Grace, who was about to put cookies in the oven.
“That’s quite alright, Nathan. You can take a seat if you’d like.”

Nathan tilted his head at the woman/robot, taking a seat and watching her bustle around the kitchen with a hop in her step.

“So Nathan, tell me about yourself.” The woman said, turning on the faucet.

Nathan shrugged. “Well, I’m from Ireland. Grew up in Cork, moved to England. Died, now I’m here.”

Grace hummed, washing her whisk with an unheard rhythm. “Why don’t you tell me what it’s like in Ireland? I’ve never been.”

Nathan noticed that she kept the same inflection for all her words, constantly happy.

“Well, what do you already know about it?” Nathan asked instead of answering.

Grace paused for a moment before reciting, “Ireland is an island in the North Atlantic. It is separated from Great Britain to its east by the North Channel, the Irish Sea, and St George's Channel. Ireland is the second-largest island of the British Isles, the third-largest in Europe, and the twentieth-largest on Earth. Politically, Ireland is divided between-”

Nathan made a shrill noise, interrupting her. His arms were crossed in an ‘x.’ “No, no. That’s far too textbook- let me tell you all about it. Sit down, I’m about to learn you a lesson in Irish culture.”

Grace put down her whisk and sponge, pulling out a seat and sitting down daintily, crossing her ankles.

“So, ‘round Cork, where I grew up. The place was almost always grey in the sky, you never saw sunlight,” Grace tilted her head, listening intently. Nathan leaned back in his chair, moving his hands for emphasis.
“But every morning you’d wake up to a tit or a lark or something screaming, so when you went outside to yell and give it a shout, it was like you were slapped in the face with a fish from the market! All cold and one hell of a wakeup call, don’t you know?” Grace placed a perfectly manicured hand to her mouth, a small smile forming.

“There wasn’t a soul there without red cheeks and chapped lips. We’re all pasty up there, if you’re tan, you’re either genetically superior or you’re burnt. See, sunlight doesn’t really reach ground level there, wouldn’t you know it? It rains on and off, so there’s always giant puddles that the kiddies like to jump in.” Nathan was in his element, weaving a scene with his words and hand gestures. Grace had an uncharacteristically awed face. She had always read the textbook definition of things, taking them for face value, but Nathan gave her a whole new meaning to process.

“I sound like a sap when I say it, but oh, hell, is it green there! The rain makes things grow like-” Nathan snapped in Grace’s face, making her jolt back and give a startled laugh in surprise.

“.That! It’s like a Kinkade painting, sometimes. There’s grass all in the pebbles of your driveway, ivy ’round your windows, and even on your roof, there’s plants growing.”

Grace felt gears shift in her synthetic conscience, suddenly able to think of driveways with green scattered around imperfectly. She was able to think of children, children who looked suspiciously like her own, splashing around in puddles and getting their uniforms wet.

“When you’d walk to school, you’d get grass on your knees from slipping on the puddles into fields or lawns or even the side of the road. The tips of your socks were always stained green, and your hands were never not muddy from falling. There isn’t a single mum in all of Ireland who hasn’t had to bleach her child’s socks to high hell and back. The kiddies of Cork are a force to be reckoned with, let me tell you! They’re like monkeys, they’ll climb all your trees and leave footprints on your roof-”

Nathan went on and on and on, Grace hanging on to his every word. He was lost in his own storytelling, describing this and that with hand motions and enthusiastic words. His enthusiasm peppered with homesickness seemed to give his descriptions a longing tone, one that Grace could almost mimic.

The oven beeped, interrupting Nathan. Grace blinked, and suddenly, she was robotic again. Synthetic. It quite reminded Nathan of when that cardigan girl controlled everyone. They weren’t really smiling, they were just masked with fake open expressions.
Grace’s expression was like that, shifting from the almost childlike, awed expression to the motherly, open expression. Generic kindness.

“A lovely story, Nathan, thank you for sharing.” She said before turning and grabbing mitts to pull the cookies from the oven. When she turned back, Nathan was gone.

Grace shrugged, placing the cookies on a plate and calling the kids down to take some, cleaning up afterwards and heading up to her charging port. The wall was decorated with a few paintings, one of which consisting of a leisurely looking woman in a casual pose. Grace tilted her head, mimicking it and leaning back. After a moment, she sat up again, scanning the wall.

There were at least three oceans made by old, dead, irrelevant artists. Grace looked around before moving them to another wall, creating a blank space begging to be filled. Pogo approached.

“Might I ask what you are doing, Grace?”

Grace turned, swishing her skirt with a grin.

“Why, I’m making some room, Pogo.” She replied, shifting frames, extending the space.

Pogo watched her, bemusement on her features. Grace never did things on her own, not things this significant.

“Room?” He pressed.

Grace sat back down, folding her hands in her lap and crossing her ankles, shooting a dazzling smile at Pogo. Pogo was surprised at how real it looked. It actually crinkled the edges of her eyes and gave her smile lines. It looked much more genuine, much less generic.

“I think this wall would benefit from some Kinkade, don’t you think?” She beamed.

Pogo looked at the wall. “I suppose,” He said, walking away.
Grace smiled at stared at the blank space, imagining ivy on windows and puddles with children splashing around, eyes fluttering shut as the chargers found their target.

Chapter End Notes

Um, just a note.

I've never been to Ireland. I've never been to Europe, actually, but I tried to sound like I was describing from experience for Nathan's homesick dialogue.

A lot of this chapter consists in Five being a good brother with literally no chill lmao, and also, Grace deserves so much love and I will fight anyone who disagrees.

Hope you guys enjoyed this one, if you did, leave a comment! They're the greatest encouragement for what I do.
Klaus sighs. He should’ve known.

Things were going too well. He should’ve anticipated the inevitable step back.

Their father was overseeing their training on this sunny day, so when Klaus took off his shoes, he was immediately shut down.

“Have you lost your mind, boy?” His father fumed, looking down his nose at Klaus, who kept wiggling his toes in the dirt.

“It helps!” Klaus insisted, stepping back, not making any moves to put his shoes back on.

The old man glared. “Helps with what, exactly?”

Klaus didn’t verbally answer, deciding that he should show instead of tell. His feet lifted from the ground, tucking themselves under his knees as he floated in the air. His father stared, scanning him and the space below him.

“You failed to inform me of this development why?” Reginald’s brows set, furrowed in that eternally cross way. Klaus floundered, floating down for a moment as he broke focus.

“Blame me.” Nathan volunteered, puffing out his chest.
“Nathan distracted me.” Klaus said, pointing to the air.

Reginald didn’t believe him, but backed down. Instead, he stepped closer, observing Klaus. Klaus bobbed in the air like a buoy at sea, subconsciously moving away from him.

Nathan snorted, still holding firm to the opinion that Klaus looked ridiculous like that.

Reginald nodded once, done with his quick scan. “You will meet me in the basement for testing after dinner, do you understand?”

Klaus felt like he had dug his own grave, noticing the vaguely interested glint in his father’s cold, dead eyes.

“Yes, sir.”

Later, after dinner, Klaus went down to the basement, seeing his father with a significant amount of equipment of unknown uses.

Nathan was immediately on edge. “Christ on a cracker, do you never get a break? This is ridiculous,”

Klaus tilted his head at the odd expression before snapping to attention.

His father turned to him, two contraptions in his hands.

“Arms up,” He ordered, strapping the device around Klaus’ middle. It was heavy, and the straps dug into his skin. Klaus hated the fact that something in him was overjoyed at his father actually touching him.

Nathan watched curiously, still wary, but less hostile. “What are you? A wrestler?”
Klaus remained quiet, wordlessly accepting the ankle weights his father passed him, strapping them around his legs tight.

His father wrote something on a clipboard in his looping scrawl.

60 pounds- initial 24 hours

Klaus’ eyes bugged out. His father had just given him 60 pounds to lug around for 24 hours?

Nathan looked curious. “I feel like this should be Luther’s training. What’s the old bugger up to?”

Reginald stepped back, surveying Klaus. He gave him a nod, gesturing for him to walk a few paces forward.

Klaus’ scrawny legs could barely move, and it was hard to breathe with the midsection weight.

Reginald scowled, hand flexing like he was suppressing the urge to slap Klaus across the back of his head.

“Levitate, boy.” Klaus flushed. Of course. He bent to undo his shoelaces, tugging his shoes off and stuffing his socks inside them, finally rising off of the ground sluggishly. The weights had made a difference.

His father didn’t seem all that impressed, but moved on.

“This is an endurance test. You will levitate for as long as possible for the next 24 hours. Failure will involve punishment, of course.” Klaus’ blood ran cold, and Nathan immediately bristled, jumping to his feet.

Klaus kept quiet though, nodding once.
His father double-checked the straps, tightening them further. He wrote a few more things on the clipboard, reaching into his breast pocket to press the button on a stopwatch.

“You may go, now.” Klaus nodded, floating up the stairs of the basement, down the hall, and into his room.

“Would resting on my bed count as failure?” Klaus wondered. Nathan sighed from beside him.

“Pretty sure, yeah. This sucks.”

Klaus groaned, stuffing his hands into his pockets. Their luminosity was too bright for this time of night. “How am I supposed to shower? Or do anything? This blows.”

Nathan looked upset that he couldn’t do anything about it. “It really does. Can you even sleep like that?”

Klaus groaned again, trying to shift into a different position. He stretched out as if he was lying down, floating in the air.

Nathan tilted his head. “It looks like you’re on a hammock.” Klaus twisted to look at Nathan. His brows furrowed.

“What happened to your jumpsuit?” Klaus asked, confused. Nathan was dressed in the casual clothes that Five had stolen for him, but that didn’t make sense, considering the fact that Nathan was currently unmanifested. Or was he?

Klaus abruptly shoved a palm out, phasing through Nathan’s head. “Thanks.” Nathan rolled his eyes.

“Jumpsuit’s in your laundry basket, if you needed to know.” Klaus turned to see the familiar orange peeking from under his dirty uniform.
“Oh. Wait- wait a minute! How did you change clothes if you’re… I don’t know, um, a ghost?”

Nathan shrugged. “Maybe it’s because I was given new clothes while I was corporeal, I don’t know! Maybe it’s because it’s how you want to see me? Who knows?”

Klaus rolled his eyes, pulling the jumpsuit out of the hamper with a wrinkled nose. He floated back to where Nathan was sitting on his bed. “What’s this?”

Nathan snorted when he realized where Klaus was pointing. When he had received the uniform, the first thing he did was deface it. On the back of the jumpsuit was the scribbled out print of the words, “Community Payback,” replaced with “Community Blowback.”

Nathan smiled at Klaus. “You’re as literate as I am, aren’t you?” Nathan sounded almost Five-like with the saccharine sarcasm.

Klaus rolled his eyes. “What does ‘Blowback’ mean?”

Nathan stared at Klaus, smile fading into a shocked gape. “You really don’t know? You’re, what, thirteen?”

Klaus nodded. “Is blowback—”

Nathan immediately yelled, stopping Klaus. “Okay, no. You’re not allowed to use that word until you find out what it means!”

Klaus narrowed his eyes. “I’ll just ask Five or Luther… Or Pogo or Mom!”

Nathan jumped up. “Don’t you dare! I’ll tell you later, I don’t want to be responsible for your birds and the bees talk!”

Klaus’ brows rose to his hairline. “What do birds and bees have to do with any of this?”
Nathan laughed, just a touch too hysterically. “I can’t believe I’m actually having this conversation with you.”

Klaus rolled his eyes, balling up the uniform and chucking it through Nathan.

“Whatever. I’m gonna go brush my teeth and sleep.” Klaus scoffed, crossing his arms and floating down the hall, muttering “blowback,” as an insult to Nathan.

Nathan sighed, dragging a hand down his face. “That’s not an insult- it’s.. Geez.”

Klaus floated into the bathroom, waving at Ben who was also brushing his teeth.

Ben paused, looking incredulously at Klaus, who admittedly looked ridiculous.

“What’s with the, ah…” Ben gestured at Klaus.

Klaus shrugged. “Endurance training. Makes no sense, I know.”

Ben shook his head. “What’s he making you do?”

Klaus sighed, picking up his toothbrush. “He’ff makng me lefftate for 24 hourss,” he informed Ben while brushing his teeth.

Ben took a moment to try to decipher what Klaus had said. “Oh,” He replied once he had found the meaning.

Klaus laughed, spitting into the sink. “Yeah. Oh.”

Ben frowned. “You okay?”
Klaus sighed, leaning against the counter. “Yeah, it’s just, these stupid weights are really…”

Ben gave him an exasperated grin.

Klaus’ lips quirked up. “Weighing me down.”

Ben balled up a towel and tossed it at him, laughing loudly when the impact threw Klaus back a few feet. Klaus floated back over and quickly draped the towel on Ben’s head, obscuring his vision.

When Ben finally pulled it off of his head, Klaus was gone.

Ben rolled his eyes and went to his room, muttering a goodnight to the empty air.

Klaus was getting tired. His weights were really starting to dig into his skin and his feet were cold.

“You think I can sleep and keep this up?” He asked Nathan.

Nathan shrugged. “We can find out!”

Klaus sighed, assuming his so-called hammock position once more. He supposed he would enjoy it more if he didn’t have stupid weights on his stomach and legs.

Klaus swayed in the air, feeling his eyes start to droop. “Wake me up if I start to fall, would you?”

Nathan nodded. “Seems reasonable enough.”

Klaus didn’t get any sleep that night. As soon as he started drifting off, he lowered to the floor. Nathan woke him each time, so Klaus ended up pulling an all-nighter.
Nathan looked concerned for him. “You’re not looking so good, Klaus.”

Klaus waved him off with a yawn, fumbling around for a new shirt. He swayed unsteadily in the air, lowering and rising with no real rhythm. His hands and feet pulsed with sputtering light like a lamp in a horror film.

Klaus just ignored Nathan, muttering about the headache that was starting to form.

“Morning.” He grumbled to his siblings, floating down to the dining table. Klaus blinked bleary eyes at his seat, or lack thereof.

He didn’t have a seat.

“Where’s my seat?” He asked, dazed and sleepy. His father decided to come down at that moment, his presence marked with sharp, measured footsteps.

“Your 24 hours are not over yet, Number Four.” His siblings shot him concerned glances, taking in his ruffled appearance and ankle weights. They probably couldn’t tell he had a weight around his waist, as well.

Klaus just sighed and unsteadily levitated to the empty space where his chair should’ve been.

“Sit,” the old man ordered, and all but Klaus sat down and began to eat.

Klaus slowly ate his food, ignoring the growing concern surrounding him.

Ben tapped his fork twice against his plate, the hidden code for, “Stay after he leaves.”

They looked at him and nodded, taking two sips of their drinks as a reply.
Klaus slowly ate the food on his plate, eyes barely able to stay open. Ben shifted uncomfortably. Before Nathan had come along, Klaus had always looked horrible in the mornings. When Ben asked about it, Klaus had always replied that he wished he had no powers.

Looking at him now, Ben guessed that Klaus had returned to that mentality.

Klaus felt horrible. He was exhausted in a way he had never been before, his head pounded, and his ankles and waist felt like they were on fire.

Breakfast was a slow affair, and once it ended, Klaus had to stop himself from immediately passing out. His father passed by him on his way out.

“You have twelve more hours, Number Four. Do not disappoint me.”

Klaus wondered if he strived for his father’s approval enough to permanently damage the nerves in his ankles. He bobbed in the air, not finding a comfortable position. Actually, any position was comfortable with how drowsy he was.

“Klaus!” Vanya cried as he suddenly fell to the ground, stopping a few inches from the floor.

“Mmm?” He hummed, eyes closing to shield from the bright light.

“Are you okay?” Klaus nodded tiredly, rubbing a hand along his face and slapping his own cheeks in an effort to stay awake.

“Twelve more hours. I’ll be okay in twelve hours, don’t worry…” Klaus nearly nodded off again, squinting his eyes open.

His hands and feet were sputtering more, now. Nathan hovered just out of his vision, being a total mother hen.

“C’mon, Klaus. The old man isn’t worth it- just a nap would do! You need to stop levitating, can’t you see how bad it is for you?”
It was true, Klaus looked horrible. It was different from when he had come home from the mausoleum, tired and terrified of every bump in the night.

Now, Klaus looked like he was dying. Nathan thought it made sense. The more he used his powers, the more connected he was to the spirit world. Klaus’ cheekbones looked too prominent, his eyes were sunken, his skin was gray.

The other kids noticed, taking it easy during training for him.

Nathan cursed when he saw a familiar man out of the corner of his eye, lounging on the marble bench and watching them train.

“Not now…” Nathan growled under his breath, trying to catch Klaus’ attention so he would take notice of Michael.

Klaus was too out of it, it seemed, lazily turning his head in Nathan’s direction before looking back.

“Michael’s here! You need to manifest me! Klaus! KLAUS!” Klaus was falling asleep mid-air, swaying gently.

Michael had walked over, right behind Klaus.

“Careful there, little seance,” he said, supporting Klaus’ weight by placing a hand on the small of his back. Michael’s other hand was under Klaus, and Nathan felt true anger in him.

“Klaus! Please, wake up and manifest me!”

Klaus wasn’t listening, too tired to keep his eyes open. He leaned back into the support, uncaring of who it was or where it came from. Michael looked exceptionally pleased at this, lips curling up in a greasy little grin.
Nathan was shouting louder and louder, panic breaking his voice. Maybe he was overreacting, maybe he was projecting his own trauma onto Klaus, but seeing that sort of smile towards his boy was triggering something deep within. He couldn’t access it, only Klaus could, and Klaus was exhausted beyond measure.

Nathan swore, looking around. How had Michael come in the one moment that the academy was distracted? They were deep into spars with each other, too distracted to notice Michael holding Klaus.

Nathan felt hysteria seep in, an angry flush making its way up his neck and face.

It was at that moment that Vanya poked her head outside, having been playing violin for a few hours.

Nathan didn’t know why, but he felt the sudden urge to scream.

And scream he did. He screamed for Klaus to wake up, for Michael to let go, and cursed Reginald for working Klaus into this exhaustion.

But no one could hear him but Klaus and the dead.

Vanya, with her pills weakened and her unknown powers strengthened, felt that sixth sense, the feel of power and emotion in the form of sound. She felt as if someone were screaming in her ears with no sound to accompany the feeling. She felt rage and panic not of her own, gasping at the feel of such strong anguish.

Vanya looked down in the courtyard to see a man cradling Klaus, a man she didn’t know, a man Vanya immediately decided she didn’t like.

Making a quick choice to abandon her lessons for the day (it wasn’t as if anyone really cared about her personal training anyway), Vanya rushed down the stairs as fast as her legs could carry, bursting into the courtyard with uncharacteristic brashness.

The noise finally distracted Five, Ben, and Luther, who looked at her with a question in their eyes. Vanya panted, saying nothing but pointing at where the stranger was still holding onto Klaus.
Klaus was dozing off in the man’s arms, hands and feet losing their glow. The man looked down at Klaus like he was a national treasure.

Ben actually hissed at the sight, rushing over to Luther and telling him something. Whatever he said pissed Luther off, but before the blond could stomp over, Five popped right in front of Michael.

“Let go of my brother, you sick bastard,” The lanky boy growled, yanking Klaus out of the man’s arms and hefting him into his own.

Luther stormed over, opening his arms for Klaus to be deposit into. Klaus was out cold, feet and hands bereft of any glow. Nathan breathed out, throat raw with the faint feeling of hoarseness, relief overwhelming him. Klaus still looked like a corpse, but the gentle rise and fall of his chest calmed Nathan down from his panic.

The ghost closed his eyes, shaking his head to rid memories of sweet voices and favors for older men.

Allison and Diego came over, cautious. Luther explained the situation to them while Five glared at Klaus, who was sleeping peacefully in Luther’s arms. Ben and Vanya stood in front of Michael, a total 180 from their normal attitudes. They were an ominous pair, silent but promising.

Vanya glared at Michael, unnervingly quiet. Ben had a hand on the bottom of his shirt, the tip of a crimson tentacle poking out and twitching, a nonverbal threat.

Five glared at Klaus, reaching out to feel his pulse. “Dummy,” he whispered under his breath, staring at the faded skin and breathing out in an exasperated sigh.

He turned to Michael. “What’s stopping me from killing you?” He demanded, glare strong.

Luther protested. “That’s illegal—”

Five whirled around and hissed at Luther. “This son of a bitch just took advantage of Klaus while he looked like that,” he pointed at the slumbering Number Four, who looked tiny in Luther’s hold.
Luther looked at him and sighed, accepting the admonishment.

“You can’t tell me you don’t want to make him hurt!” Five growled, moving his hand to point at Michael, who was trying to back away.

“Come now, children, he was about to fall, I was only trying to-”

“I heard a rumor that you shut the fuck up!” Allison yelled, before covering her mouth in shock.

Michael opened and closed his mouth, but no noise came out. Diego snorted, fingering one of his knives, twirling it in his hands.

“How valuable is he to Dad?” Ben asked quietly. Vanya looked unsure, suddenly. She wasn’t used to standing out here with the team.

“He’s just our manager. I’m sure those can be replaced, right?” Luther finally answered, shocking all present. Luther, actually considering doing something morally wrong? Five could feel a smirk growing at the corner of his mouth.

He looked at Klaus again and sighed. “If we kill him, he’d haunt Klaus, right?”

Ben frowned, stating that Nathan would keep them away. Vanya gulped before offering a suggestion.

“What if he doesn’t die?” Vanya gulped again at the weight of seven stares on her. Ben had restrained Michael, a single red appendage wrapped around his leg. Ben was sweating with the focus. He was doing this for Klaus.

Vanya explained her idea. “If he’s not dead, he won’t haunt Klaus. What if he was just-” She cut herself off, horrified at the idea she came up with.

Luther urged her to continue. She finished in a whisper. “Brain dead. He won’t die.”
Five looked impressed at the idea, turning to consult their resident vein expert, Diego. Before they could actually plan anything, Reginald burst into the courtyard, pausing and looking briefly impressed at Ben holding Michael in the air steady. He turned back to the kids soon, however, an impressive scowl on his face.

“You have stopped your training, and interrupted Number 4’s training! What’s the matter with you?”

Michael made a frantic motion. Reginald glanced at him for a moment before turning to Ben. “You are excused from punishment- exercise this fine control in the meantime. And put your manager down!”

Ben bit his lip and released Michael, who landed with a sickening crack. “I wasn’t even holding him that high,” Ben whispered, eyeing the unnatural bend of Michael’s arm.

The group collectively ignored the silently shaking man on the ground, turning back to Reginald for instruction.

“Number One, explain your actions at once!”

Luther swallowed. “Klaus was passed out, and Michael was holding him in a…” He looked unsure for a moment, “He was holding Klaus weirdly, and based on what Ben and Five told me, that was a bad sign. We were just trying to save Klaus.” He finished lamely.

Reginald regarded Ben and Five for a moment before addressing Michael, who was still clutching his broken arm.

“Is this true?”

Michael didn’t answer, after all, he couldn’t answer. Reginald sighed and turned to Allison, gesturing wordlessly.

Allison pouted. “I heard a rumor you explained exactly what happened and didn’t say a word afterwards.”
Michael seemed dazed when he explained. Five felt power gathering at his fingertips, pulsing every time Michael called Klaus ‘little seance.’ They all felt disgusted, hearing the man emotionlessly explaining his sick urges. Five covered Vanya’s ears, to her ire. She didn’t fight it. Luther held Klaus closer to his chest, face twisting in a snarl at Michael’s description.

Nathan, meanwhile, was fuming. He felt such acute rage and disgust at that moment, breathing harshly. He wished, not for the first time, that he was alive so he could pummel Michael into a bloody pulp. He couldn’t think straight, and all he saw was red.

Michael finished explaining, snapping out of his daze and attempting to run away. Diego’s leg shot out, tripping the man and making him land on his broken arm again, wincing when another crack sounded out.

“Wuss goin’ on?” Klaus had woken up, and was blinking blearily around him. The second he saw Reginald, his hands and feet sputtered a weak light, making him weightless before giving out, Luther holding firm. Reginald watched dispassionately.

Nathan rushed over, reassuring Klaus that everything was fine, he just needed to manifest Nathan for a little bit and then he could go to sleep.

Klaus blinked sleepily, nonetheless holding up a hand, which glowed blue. He held the light unsteadily, turning to nuzzle into Luther’s chest. Luther let him.

The second Nathan took form, he charged at the man on the ground, stomping on his arm with all his weight.

Michael soundlessly howled out in pain. The Umbrella Academy watched, fascinated, as Nathan clumsily broke Michael’s arm further, kicking his ribs and snarling about a priests and little boys and step-dads, to their confusion. Five’s mouth was set in a grim line, connecting the dots.

“Nathan.” Five finally said. Nathan didn’t listen, continuing to stomp on Michael, who was twitching. Ben had turned Vanya around, sparing her from the sight. He covered her ears, apologizing.

“Nathan!” Five shouted, finally gaining Nathan’s attention. He was shaken, eyes teary and nostrils flared in rage.
“You beat him. It’s over.” Five whispered, pointing at the prone form on the floor. Michael was wheezing, looking almost as close to death as Klaus had.

Nathan stumbled back, wiping his hands on his pants. He seemed to deflate, closing his eyes.

_He’s not wearing his jumpsuit_, Five thought before closing his hand around Klaus’ curled fist, telling him that he could stop. The light fizzled out and soon, Nathan was gone.

Reginald frowned at the man on the ground, a mixture of disgust and ire on his features.

“Do with him what you will,” he finally said. “Your punishment will be decided by dinner.”

And then he was gone.

The kids nodded, only mildly surprised at their father’s lack of concern for the man on the ground. The man had cost him millions of dollars, it was understandable. Ben looked at Michael struggling to breathe, before leading Vanya back into the house, nodding at his brothers and sister.

“What are we d-doing with him?” Diego inquired quietly, knife already out.

Luther looked at Klaus. “I think Nathan will take care of Klaus. What about you?” They all heard the silent question.

_Are we gonna kill him?_

Five narrowed his eyes, thinking of what to do.

“I’ll handle it.” They nodded, watching as Five popped out of existence. He came back with a smug grin.
“Handled it.”

Michael Bensen was never found.

Chapter End Notes

I'll be honest with you guys, I feel like this chapter is rushed/weirdly paced. Sorry for that.

Oh yeah, Michael's gone, that prick. I thought it was fitting that Five and Nathan had the biggest parts of his punishment. Poor Klaus, he can never catch a break, can he?

Why is it through Klaus' suffering that the siblings be actual siblings? I don't know, I blame the angsty muse. The muse, I say!

I'm curious though, what do you guys think/hope happened to Michael? I'd love to hear your theories.
Nathan explains his trauma to Klaus.

(Warning to y'all sensitive folks. I just needed some angst and hurt/comfort. Had a rough day, y'know?)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Five teleported back to his siblings.

“He handled it,” He said, smirking smugly. They nodded their acceptance, thinking that it may be better that they didn’t know where he had deposited Michael.

He had dropped the already wounded man into a lion’s cage in a nearby zoo, where the man made the foolish mistake of pushing a cub that came bounding over. The cub yowled, and Five warped out of there just as an angry mother rushed to the scene.

As he stepped through his portal, he could hear the sound of something crunching, and Five knew that Michael was dead meat.

No body, no evidence. Burning was too good for the pedophile, anyway. Five knew that no one had seen him, seeing as the enclosure was closed off.

Somehow, he didn’t feel an ounce of regret as he turned back to his siblings.

Klaus was snoring, now, drooling over Luther’s chest. Luther was disgusted but decided that his shirt didn’t matter at the moment, as Mom could always wash it later.

“He can never catch a break, can he?” Allison remarked, stroking Klaus’ hair. The boy shifted, wrinkling his nose and batting his hand blindly at her.
Diego sighed. “I wish we could go b-back before Michael even s-saw him. Then this wh-whole thing wouldn’t happen.”

The group went back inside, leaving Five to think on what Diego had said.

*Go back to before.*

Five made a mental note to consider time jumps before following his siblings inside.

Their father sat at the dinner table, waiting for them all to gather. Vanya and Ben were there, and Luther passed Klaus to Five, who popped in his room to let him sleep, popping back down to take a seat. Out of his peripheral, he noticed that Klaus’ chair was still absent.

Reginald barked out a, “sit!” and began to eat. The siblings waited patiently to hear whatever punishment the old man had decided on.

“I have decided on a punishment for you all. You will be trained in your weak spots for a month, since you seem so eager to abandon your regular training.”

They looked at eachother. That… didn’t seem so bad.

It seemed they thought too soon. “Number One, you will practice fine motor control, no weights for a month. Two, endurance and physical strength, Three, no speaking, endurance as well. Number Four will be trained personally to master his powers, Five, you will have to heighten your stamina, as teleporting everywhere is not aiding your physical fitness,” Five frowned, offended at that. His father was definitely insinuating he was scrawny, wasn’t he?

Reginald continued, almost done with his list. “Six, as said before, you will practice the fine control on your Horrors. And Number Seven…” Vanya looked up from her plate.

“Simply continue your lessons as usual.”

Dinner finished with no other hitchups. Five itched to ask about temporal jumps, but he could see that Reginald was not in the mood to humor him.
He couldn’t help but worry about his brother. Klaus was going to go through the same training that put them in this mess. Would the old man ever stop pushing them?

A voice in the back of his head laughed. *At least Michael isn’t here to take advantage, right?*

Five’s lips quirked up, vindication flowing over him for a short moment.

He knew that Nathan would keep Michael away from Klaus for eternity. The Irishman was fiercely protective of his brother, a trait in which Five found kinship. They had a silent agreement to allow Klaus to keep his naivety, as well as his innocence.

Five could say that he trusted the ghost, as brash as he was.

Nathan peered at Klaus, who was laying on his bed, staring at the ceiling.

Klaus sighed before turning on his side to look Nathan in the eye. Nathan was sitting cross legged next to Klaus’ bed.

“How did you know?”

“How did I know what?” Nathan replied, feeling his stomach sink at Klaus’ tone.

“That Michael was- that he was trying to…” Klaus made a vague motion with his hand, and Nathan understood.

“That he was going to take advantage of you?” Nathan finished, heart feeling exceptionally heavy.

Klaus nodded, looking at Nathan with eyes so much like his own.
Nathan sighed and got up, muttering a, “Would’ve figured it out anyway,” and sitting on the edge of Klaus’ bed.

“See, Klaus…” Nathan closed his eyes for a moment, lost in the memories. Klaus grasped his hand, manifesting him just so they could hold hands. Nathan’s lips quirked up.

“Well, let me tell you a bit more about myself.”

Klaus nodded, and Nathan took a deep breath before launching into his story.

“I grew up without a dad, so it was just me and my mum. We lived together, and sometimes, she’d bring guys home, guys who would pine after her. One of them got pretty far with her, eventually moving in to our house and telling me he was my new-“

Nathan cut himself off, setting his jaw. He heaved a shaky breath and hunched over, squeezing the hand in his.

He looked over at Klaus, smiled, and continued.

“He told me he was my new dad, and I could call him whatever I wanted. I didn’t want a dad, or I didn’t want him as a dad, and I called him a cunt. I was an annoying little bugger, but he found it- he found it endearing.”

Klaus sat up, scooting over to lean on Nathan. Nathan stared at their joined hands, sighing once more.

“He always looked at me funny, you know. I just didn’t realize he was looking at me wrong until he had gotten my mom drunk. She was passed out in her room and then he went into mine and he-“

Nathan couldn’t stop the angry tears this time. He hissed through his teeth. “The bastard took advantage of me. I was twelve, I was vulgar, I knew about sex, but I had thought it was supposed to be good, not a selfish- not a horrible, disgusting-” Klaus wrapped his arms around Nathan’s middle, and of course, being the emotional mess that he was, Nathan’s eyes cried a whole lot more.
He censored out the details, trying to keep some of Klaus’ innocence intact.

Nathan hung his head, gripping one of Klaus’ hands tight.

“It fucked me up, you know. I grew up and thought sex was just a tool, a stupid act, and I never wanted to take part in it again. I hated myself, I thought of myself as- as damaged goods. Do you wanna know the worst part?”

Klaus didn’t reply, but he squeezed Nathan’s hand, so Nathan whispered out his regrets.

“No one believed me. I had made so many jokes, I’d insulted and accused so many people that my mum just- she just thought I was playing a prank on her, and told me to apologize.”

Nathan allowed himself to cry for a little bit.

“So I finally grew out of it, deciding that if everyone was a dick to me, I’d be a dick right back. I’d give people loads of reasons to think I’m bad, to think I’m broken. I wanted them to hate me for being a rebel, a vulgar kid, not for being…” Nathan squeezed his eyes shut, shaking his head. “It worked. Everyone dislikes me seconds within meeting me. I hardly had any dependable friends, no one would let me crash at theirs when I needed, and over time, I got used to people hating me.”

“I don’t hate you.” Klaus whispered, the first word he had said since Nathan began.

Nathan had known that fact, he had accepted it, but that sentence seemed to be the straw that broke the camel’s back.

He hugged Klaus tight, allowing himself to break down fully. He hugged the boy he had chosen to protect, the boy he had kept intact.

Klaus hugged him just as fiercely, pressing his head into Nathan’s chest, a perfect echo of how they met. This time, it seemed that Nathan was the vulnerable one.

“I love you, you know,” he whispered to Klaus, the second time he had admitted the clear-as-day fact.
“I love you, too, Nathan.” Klaus whispered back.

They stayed like that until Klaus fell asleep in Nathan’s arms. Nathan carefully put him down, dragging the blanket on top of him. Nathan smiled down at his boy, and kept watch for the rest of the night.

Upstairs, Grace sat in her chair, admiring the new Kinkade painting she had placed. It was her favorite, even over the casual woman. It depicted a cottage with ivy crawling around the windows. If she tilted her head, she could imagine those puddles being splashed in by children. Her children. She wondered if they had ever been to a park. She imagined that they would like it, quite like it, in fact.

She was pondering this when Diego came to say goodnight. He tugged on her dress, opening his arms for a hug. Grace obliged, letting him sit on her lap as she hugged him. It was a routine of theirs, once almost everyone had went to sleep, Diego would come to her and she would hold him and tell him about this or that, until he was sleepy.

Tonight, she decided to tell him a story about a place far up north.

“It’s cold up there, always. There’s not a soul there without red cheeks or chapped lips,” She began, repeating the words that had painted a picture for her. Diego leaned against her, listening intently.

“Little children like you would splash in puddles, and get your uniforms all wet, and slip on the grass, because it’s so very green there, don’t you know?”

Diego’s eyes were fluttering shut. He hummed, and she continued.

“It’s nice, there.” Grace closed her own eyes, thinking of a cottage far up across the pond, where her children splashed in puddles and climbed trees all day, and she would call them in for cookies and they would have grass stains on their socks. It was a lovely thought, the world inside her head. It was a dream, a wonderful dream.

“I think I would like to go, one day.” She said quietly. Diego didn’t reply, already fast asleep.
She stroked his hair for a moment, listening to him breathe steadily.

She loved him, Grace realized with a start.

Love!

She loved him, she felt for him, she was concerned for him, she-

“I love you, Diego,” Grace whispered, carrying him bridal style to his bed, tucking him in and kissing his head, leaving a faint red lip mark.

She left the room, sitting down at her port and mulling over the fact that she loved her children with her synthetic heart.

Grace was aware that a robot was not capable of feeling love, that it wasn’t in her programming, that she shouldn’t even be able to consider the emotion and apply herself to it.

She thought back to her children. To her children, she wasn’t a robot.

She was just Mom.

And Mom loved them, as they loved her.

She could feel an echo of warmth in her body, the wires within heating with the impossible emotion that was love.

In his room, staring at the closed door, Diego’s mouth was parted in shock, before his cheeks warmed and he shut it with a click.

“I love you too, Mom.” He whispered to the door.
Sorry for the short update, gang! It's nearing the end of the school year for me, and you know what that means!

Tests!!

Updates might be a bit more sporadic from here on out, but that just means I'm making sure they're good before posting. I end up deleting more than I keep when I rush. It's horrible for a procrastinator such as I.

Anyway, next chapter's gonna have more action, including Five looking into time travel, leading to the canon disappearance. I'm still debating whether or not to have Ben actually die in this, because with how vague it is in the show/comics, I can't figure out whether or not it's preventable. Tell me what you think!

I wrote the Diego fluff in there because I feel like I've been neglecting him. He's such a sweetheart and a momma's boy, and with Grace's character arc, he fits like a knife in a sheath.
Ben woke with a cramp, which had been happening with increasing frequency. At 3:00 almost every morning, the monsters in his skin would waken, taking him with them to consciousness. It was horrible and it hurt. He wondered why they were like this, why they insisted on rolling underneath his skin, giving him primal pleads for freedom. They whispered it before, tentative. They didn’t want to bother him, they were fine with the amount of exposure they received.

They seemed to have changed their minds once Ben began to really work hard on fine control. He bent them to his will, a battle of the minds that left his head pounding and stomach unsettled.

Ben made his way down to the kitchen for a snack, quietly tiptoeing down the stairs. He snuck to the kitchen, opening up the pantry to find a snack. Closing the door, it took all his self control not to yelp when he came face to face with his brother.

Five held out his hand, lazily requesting peanut butter. Ben blinked and handed him the spread, noticing a bag of marshmallows next to the jam.

Five held out his hand, and Ben passed him the marshmallows, shrugging when Five gave him a deadpan look.

“This is not jelly.” The teleporter scowled at him. Ben smiled sleepily, scratching his head.

“No, it’s not.” He agreed, turning back to the pantry and grabbing some canned tuna.

Five glared at him, nonetheless placing the peanut butter and marshmallows on the counter and laying them between two slices of bread.
“You are fully capable of getting that jelly, you know.” Ben said, popping the can open. Five didn’t seem to care about his dietary choices, taking a big bite of his sandwich just to spite Ben.

Ben rolled his eyes and grabbed a spoon, scooping up tuna and eating it like ice cream. They stayed like that for a while, munching on their snacks until Ben spoke up.

“Why are you up, Five?”

Five shrugged. “Research,” he answered, “you?”

Ben patted his stomach, and Five gave him a sharp look.

“They bothering you?”

“Always,” Ben laughed bitterly, “but nowadays, it’s like they’ve suddenly decided to take control of me once I tried to control, really control them.”

Five tilted his head. “This from the new focus training Dad gave us?”

Ben nodded. “I think so,”

Five looked away, and Ben saw a muscle in his jaw jump after taking a bite of his sandwich.

“The old man needs to learn to stop pushing us too hard.” He finally said. Ben nodded, sipping at the leftover tuna juice.

“He’s even making Klaus do the same thing that made him literally pass out.”

Five stopped chewing for a moment, expression going dark.
He swallowed, and turned to look Ben in the eye. Ben noticed how they softened with his next question.

“Did you see how he looked when he used them for too long?”

Ben heard the question that Five didn’t ask.

Did you see how dead he looked?

“Yes.” He responded, throwing the can away with a scowl.

Five finished off the sandwich, licking his fingers of the leftover peanut butter.

“I’ll be in the library,” Find me if you need me, Five said.

Ben smiled softly. “I’ll try to go back to sleep. I assume you’ll be there all night?” I can come and find you anytime, can’t I?

Five nodded, popping away, leaving Ben to put away the marshmallows, peanut butter, and bread.

Ben went to sleep on the floor, allowing the cold wood to cool down his stomach, calming the beasts within. He slept easy, knowing that he could go to Five for company if he needed it. The monsters in his stomach rumbled all night, reminding him of thunder, and for that moment before slipping into dreamland, Ben listened to them and found himself content.

Ben was eight years old, and was locked outside, after Dad had closed the door, not trusting him and his monsters to play nice with the others.
“I’ll be good!” He pleaded, pounding at the door with tiny fists, “They won’t be mean!”

Storm clouds poured rain on his head, drenching his uniform in water. He started to shiver, and the monsters retreated, sensitive to the cold.

Lightning flashed, thunder booming shortly after. Ben yelped, jiggling the doorknob, but to no avail.

“They’re gone now- they’re gone! Please let me in, please, please-” The door opened and Ben was yanked in by his shirt, tumbling to the floor in a ball of water and boy.

Five stood there, watching Ben shiver on the floor, and Ben realized that his smartest brother was the one to pull him inside. Ben whispered a thank you to him, watching him open a portal and step away before Mom came bustling over with a towel and warm cup of hot milk.

He was sent up to his room after finishing the cup, instructed to have a nap. Ben trudged up the stairs, opening his door to find Five sitting primly on his bed, Klaus next to him, staring at nothing in the corner.

Five was flipping idly through a comic, and Ben would bet his marble collection that the boy knew how to say every single word in the story. Five was smart like that.

Klaus was staring in fear and fascination at a spot in the corner, eyes flickering to Ben. “Hey, Ben. You okay?”

Ben nodded, tilting his head at Five. He was normally in the library or doing Five stuff, what was he doing here.

Five looked up, closing the comic. He didn’t offer any explanation to why he was there, but he pointed to a character in the front.

“If you were a superhero, you would be Venom.”

Ben frowned, crossing his arms, “Venom isn’t a hero! He’s a villain, and he’s super mean to
Spiderman!

Five smirked. “You haven’t finished it yet, have you?”

Ben scowled. “Not all of us can read as fast as you!”

The boy grinned at him, standing up and dog-earring a page in the back. “That’s true,” He said, opening up a portal and disappearing.

Klaus and Ben stared at the space he used to be in, puzzled. Ben stomped over, flipping open to the page Five had folded.

In pen, Five had written “the monsters” over Venom’s introduction. Peter Parker had a similar label, a little label hovering over his head. “This is Ben, number 6.”

Ben slowly came to the realization that Five had meant that Venom was the monsters in his stomach, not Ben himself. “Fine,” he harrumphed, collapsing onto his bed and chatting with Klaus for the rest of the night as thunder rumbled outside.

Reginald Hargreeves scribbled in his journal, detailed training plans filling up the page. He had waited to implement them for a long time, but his weak link, the Number Four, had given him incentive.

He really had to do something about the relationships between them. Reginald had raised (or rather, had Pogo and Grace raise) the children in a ‘divide and conquer’ method.

Contrary to popular belief, the phrase meant to divide the opponents for easy pickings, not for your allies to divide to cover the enemy.

United we stand, divided we fall.
Reginald had given them plenty of ways to split and grow to resent each other. He showed blatant favoritism, given unfair punishments, and punished the children for standing up for their siblings.

So why on earth did they band together? It made no sense.

Reginald worked for the greater good, and if the manipulation of seven children was what it took to save the world, by God, he would do it.

By giving the numbers strict punishments for interrupting Four’s training, they were sure to distance themselves from each other to save their own hides. Children were children, and children were selfish.

Reginald paused his writing for a moment, mouth twisting in a scowl when he remembered the new variable.

Nathan the ghost.

He glared at the paper, recalling his past failures to ban the spirit from interacting with Four. His hand twitched, the feeling of a sticky, warm, bloody bullet causing him to clench a fist around his pen. Disgusting, degrading, embarrassing, unacceptable.

Pogo had told him that Seven, Five, and Six had become attached to the spirit in some way.

Reginald frowned harder, flipping to a new page. Nathan had sunk his nails into four of his charges, and in beating and protecting Four from his manager, he had probably earned the trust of Three, Two, and One.

Reginald knew the manager was a bad idea, but the man was good at what he did.

He couldn’t care less what Bensen did with Four, but he had not anticipated the violent protectiveness of the others in dealing with him.

In that moment, Reginald had been preoccupied with choosing punishment and finding a new
manager, so he had allowed the children to do as they wished with Bensen. In hindsight, it had been a foolish decision. They had experienced revenge, had felt vindication.

What if they turned on him?

He glanced to the televisions to his left, watching Five flip through books feverishly. He cursed to himself, wondering just when his children had suddenly grown independent. Even Seven did things on her own without permission, such as abandoning her violin lessons to go outside to the courtyard where he had forbade her to go!

Reginald breathed out, mentally stacking all instances of rebellion in his head.

One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven…

All of them had done something against him, be it little or big.

Reginald narrowed his eyes, realizing that a reminder of who was superior was due. He looked down at the training plans and began to write.

The next day, Vanya, Ben, and Klaus walked down the hall to the dining room.

Klaus paused at the top of the stairs, Vanya running into his back, mumbling a “hey!”

Ben caught up to them, rubbing his eyes. Klaus stared at empty space, listening intently to nothing. Vanya assumed Nathan was there, telling him something. Ben and Vanya made noises of alarm when Klaus hoisted himself on the banister, sliding down with a whoop.

Vanya and Ben watched, dumbfounded, as Klaus hopped off the banister when he reached the bottom, jumping in place in exhilaration.

“Try it!” He called, waving them down.
Ben declined, walking down the stairs. Vanya moved to follow but bit her lip, knowing that her father always arrived to breakfast last, anyway.

Klaus shot a mischievous grin at her, motioning for her to hop on the banister.

Vanya hoisted herself up slowly, not nearly as nimble as her brothers. “Like this?” She called, Klaus giving her two thumbs-up in response.

With that, Vanya loosened her grip, beginning to slide down quickly, she shrieked in delight, feeling her stomach flip. She panicked a little when she sped up too much, unable to twist and hop off like Klaus had done. “Help-” She squeaked before reaching the bottom and falling off of it into Klaus’ and Ben’s arms, the swaying chandelier above them unnoticed by all.

It was awkward, Ben was holding her arms, and Klaus was holding her legs.

They set her down, and she scrambled back up, turning to Klaus. “That was great!” She exclaimed, sneezing when dust came down from above.

The three stared at the chandelier above them, swaying gently in wind that wasn’t there.

“What?” Diego asked, walking down from the stairs to see Ben, Vanya, and Klaus staring at the ceiling, where the chandelier was still swaying.

Ben simply pointed upwards, and Diego followed the motion, looking at the chandelier.


Diego floundered for an answer before shrugging, stuttering out an, ‘I don’t know,’ and walking to the dining room, his siblings following suit.

They ate breakfast in silence, hanging out in their rooms afterward. Five and Ben took naps in their
respective rooms, leaving Allison and Luther to do… *whatever it was they did*, and Klaus, Vanya, Diego, and Nathan to wander in the courtyard.

Vanya looked around curiously, breathing in the spring air. She was still getting used to how sensitive she was now. It was great, even if her nose burned a bit from the chilly air.

“I want to start a garden!” Klaus said, pointing to a bare patch of earth in the corner of the yard.

“Do you know how to garden?” Diego asked. Vanya and Klaus took a moment to appreciate his near stutter-less sentence before Klaus shrugged.

“No, but we have books.” He said.

Vanya smiled. “I would help you start a garden! I have a lot of free time, anyway.”

The two turned to Diego, who shrugged. “I don’t think I w-would be the best for the job.”

Vanya and Klaus sighed but accepted it. The idea of Diego in a garden didn’t seem to resonate, anyway.

Klaus turned to Nathan, who stared at the patch of earth curiously.

“Do you know how to garden?”

Nathan shrugged. “*Never got the chance. I don’t think I’m, uh, patient enough,*”

Klaus walked over to the patch, kneeling and pushing his finger into the dirt, feeling it with a pensive look.

“What’re you guys doing?” Allison had come out to the courtyard holding Luther’s hand. Klaus took a moment to look at their hands confusedly before replying.
“Me, Vanya, and probably Ben are gonna start a garden right here. I’m testing the dirt.”

Luther tilted his head. “What’s the verdict?”

Klaus inspected his finger, rubbing the soil between his fingers. “It’s dirt.”

The group giggled, even if Luther rolled his eyes.

A cold breeze brushed over them, reminding themselves that they were outside. Allison and Luther promptly went inside, the rest of them witnessing the piss-poor attempt that Luther made to give Allison his coat.

“They were outside for two minutes… It takes ten seconds to walk back inside, and… Jeez, that’s depressing.” Nathan muttered, watching Luther attempt to drape his coat on Allison’s shoulders, only to walk inside where the coat wasn’t necessary.

“Tell me about it,” Klaus whispered back. Vanya turned back to him, making a small, ‘oh’ noise when she realized that he was responding to Nathan.

“So, what plants would we have?” Klaus opened his mouth, closing it when he realized he didn’t know any plants. He turned to Diego, who shrugged again. Nathan offered a single suggestion.

“Weeeed.” He sang.

Klaus wrinkled his nose. “No, that’s what you have to pull out, dummy.”

Nathan gave him a fond grin and rolled his eyes. “My bad.” he hummed.

Klaus gave him a look before turning to see Allison and Luther reenter the courtyard, their father behind them.
Ben and Five also came, and Vanya took it as her cue to leave.

“Bye, Vanya.” Klaus muttered, waving with a pout on his face. She waved back, whispering a reminder to ask Ben about the garden.

Klaus nodded, turning to Ben, who looked nervous. He loosely grasped the shorter boy’s hand. Ben smiled softly, squeezing his hand.

“Me ‘n’ Vanya wanna start a garden. You in?”

Ben seemed to consider for a moment before nodding slowly, eyes distant, like he was imagining what he would put in the patch of earth.

“Knew it,” Klaus whispered.

Ben was about to reply before Reginald called his number. That was odd. One went first, that was the rule. So what was the difference here?

Reginald gave a list to Pogo, gesturing for Ben to follow him. His brothers and sisters shot him concerned looks as he followed his father to the basement.

He heard Pogo giving orders for the others, before Reginald closed the door, leaving Ben alone in the room.

Ben looked around, noting that the room looked like an interrogation room without a table and chair.

“Sir?” Ben called, looking into the one-way window.

The lights turned on, and speakers above Ben’s head crackled to life.
“Sir?” A slot in the door opened, a pair of glasses being pushed in on a tray.

“Dad?” Ben finally called out, to which the speakers responded.

“Fine control, Number Six. Need I remind you of your punishment?”

Ben sighed. “No, sir,” he replied quietly, pulling up the bottom of his shirt and trying to enforce his will over the Horrors once more.

They shot out, taking a small moment to pause, and in that moment, Ben fooled himself into believing he had taken them over.

He was wrong.

They launched towards the walls and the glasses, shattering them with the tiniest motion.

The glass shards cut into Ben’s exposed knees and legs as the Horrors retracted.

Ben stared at the blood trickling down his legs, frowning when the speakers crackled once more.

“Pathetic, Number Six. Perhaps you need higher stakes?”

Ben didn’t have time to ask what was happening before something new was pushed through the slot in the door.

“No…” He whispered, gazing at the bunny in a cage.

“An incentive, Number Six.”

Ben shook his head, stepping back, his legs stinging with the movement. Ben didn’t even register the
pain, only looking at the white rabbit wiggling its tiny nose at him.

“I don’t think—”

“This is not an optional matter.”

Ben felt tears well up at the corners of his eyes, biting his lip so hard it bled.

“I’m sorry,” He whispered to the bunny. The bunny twitched its nose at him.

Ben squeezed his eyes shut, pulling the bottom of his shirt up and releasing the beasts within.

He tried his very hardest, face flushing with the effort, to keep them calm, to keep them away from the little bunny in the cage.

A strangled squeak sounded out, and Ben felt fat tears roll down his cheeks. The monsters retreated back to his stomach, the faint impression of satisfaction echoing in Ben’s head.

This bunny was not a bad guy, this bunny was innocent, and Ben, oh, Ben had just murdered it, hadn’t he? He was a monster-

“Better.”

Ben opened his eyes, feeling his gag reflex trigger as he gazed upon the carnage left behind. The cage’s wires were all bent out of shape, white fur strewn about the room. The walls were painted red, as was his uniform.

“Can we stop for today?” He asked, revulsion flooding his senses when blood dripped into his mouth.

Ben should’ve known his father wouldn’t listen.
Two more bunnies, all with adorable little noses, were slaughtered before his father decided to take a break. A glass of water was pushed in, and Ben sipped at it, almost dropping the glass with how slick his hands were with blood. He felt hollow, and had thrown up his breakfast earlier.

Ben looked through the mirror, staring at where the old man must’ve been, scribbling notes and recording his movement.

Empty rage filled his senses, the monsters inside pleading to be used, to get out.

The slot opened once more, and Ben closed his eyes, expecting another rabbit.

He jolted back physically when a meow echoed. His eyes snapped open to see a grumpy old cat staring at him with yellow eyes.

“No!” Ben pleaded, looking towards the mirror. There was no response.

Ben squeezed his eyes shut, fist on the bottom of his shirt pausing.

*Klaus liked cats.*

Ben felt bile once more in his throat, bending over to dry heave, body trembling when he was finished.

*Klaus would call me a monster.*

Ben cried, nonetheless releasing the Horrors. They paused for a full two minutes before finally snapping loose, a startled yowl feeling like a punch to Ben’s gut.

He dropped to his knees, curling in on himself.
Ben screamed, his tentacles working in tandem to wreck the room, tearing bricks from walls and cracking the mirror. The room shook with every powerful wack to the roof, the lightbulb shattering. The speakers were wrenched out, and their wires weakly sparked at him.

Screams dissolved into sobs, and the monsters went away, satisfied.

His father opened the door, allowing him to stumble out, dripping head to toe in blood and animal fur.

He staggered up to the bathroom, leaving footprints in red. The others were still outside.

Ben quickly shed his clothes and ran a bath, uncaring of how cold it was. He sat down, pulling his knees to his chest, resting his forehead on them.

Quiet cries wracked his body, every hiccup choking him up. Laughter echoed from outside, and Ben vowed to never tell the others of his training. They would call him a monster, they’d want him to be put down, Ben just knew it.

In another life, Ben would suffer alone through his training, finally giving in to the monsters and destroying his body in the process. In that life, no one had heard him cry, not even Vanya, who had acute hearing.

However, in this life, a ghost drifted through the doors on accident. With a curse, the ghost almost fled, but the sight of blood and the sound of poorly concealed sobs gave him pause. The spirit stayed for a moment before running to fetch someone to help.

In this life, Ben was not going to suffer alone. In this life, Four pounded on the door, bursting in to save Ben from his meltdown.

Klaus ran his fingers through Ben’s black hair, cleaning him up and feeling the tremors fade.

“I’m a monster,” Ben insisted with a hoarse and hollow voice.
“You’re my brother.” Klaus murmured, turning Ben so he could look into his eyes.

Klaus never did find out what Ben had been forced to do, but he did understand that the old man who forced him to do it was the true monster.

Ben leaned into Klaus’ touch, and Klaus helped pick glass out of Ben’s knees, distracting him by babbling about the garden.

“I was thinking maybe some sort of fruit tree- what do you think of peaches, Ben? Peaches are nice. Hey, let’s have a plant for each person! I’ll pick the best one for you, oh, do you think Vanya would like some sort of flower or something like a mint plant? I think that suits her, huh? Do you…”

Ben felt his eyelids grow heavy, and he fell asleep in the cold bath, clutching his brother’s hand like a lifeline, thinking of mint and peaches and cats and rabbits.

Klaus stopped talking, staring at Ben’s sleeping form.

“I’ll protect you from the real monster,” He promised, reaching forward to clumsily carry Ben to his room.

Ben didn’t reply, but he curled closer to Klaus’ chest in his sleep.

In this life, Ben did not die at thirteen.

Chapter End Notes

I feel awful for treating Ben like this. But hey, at least he won’t die, right?

Just let my children garden, dammit!

Anyway, thank you for reading, and the comment notifications truly cheer me up, so thank you very much for them! I'm such a sucker for long comments, so even if it's just your theories on what will be in the garden or what the kids eat for dinner (or even what you ate for dinner), I'd enjoy it immensely.
Chapter Summary

Klaus never gets a break, oopsie.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Academy had been doing their weak-spot training for about two weeks, and Klaus had only passed out once or twice, something that Nathan was still upset about.

Among other things, anyway.

Nathan and Klaus found themselves increasingly concerned for the diminutive Number Six, who cried in the bathroom and couldn’t bring himself to eat any kind of mammal meat, resorting to fish and salads, pushing around his food at dinner times.

Of course, Klaus helped out as best he could, holding Ben’s hand and washing his hair and letting him sleep in his room. Five pitched in, warming up a cup of hot milk late at night when Ben would sneak down to the kitchen and eat his tuna.

The most surprising contribution, though now that he thought about it, it really shouldn’t be, was Vanya.

Klaus liked to tell her that if she had a superpower, it would be her music.

She’d blush or duck her head, sometimes swat him on the shoulder if she was feeling sassy, which was happening with increasing frequency.

These days, soothing violin music would echo through the old house, lifting spirits or calming them down. The notes were palpable, and it was as if she created scenes with the bow.

Like right now, Ben, Vanya, Klaus, Five, and Nathan sat in her room, listening to her music with
closed eyes and soft smiles, save for Five, who simply had a not-so-pinched expression.

Vanya drew the bow across the strings, the smell of crisp spring air, the tickle of a soft summer breeze, and the sensation of warm morning sun enveloping the room.

Ben felt the Horrors settle in his stomach, a lazy contentment filling his head.

“This one’s nice,” Klaus murmured, basking in the sounds around him. Five nodded, leaning back and resting his head on his knees.

Ben hummed his agreement. Nathan lay on the floor, eyes closed. He was unmanifested at the moment.

Vanya smiled, finishing up the song with one last note. The boys clapped, cheering, with Klaus being the most enthusiastic.

Five looked pensive, though, looking at Vanya like he was trying to decipher a puzzle.

“See you later,” he said before warping away.

Vanya sighed. “I wish he’d use the door, sometimes.”

Ben smiled, stretching. “You know how he is. He’s number one in spirit.”

Klaus nodded, grabbing Vanya’s hand and twirling her around, humming the melody she had created moments before.

Vanya giggled, beckoning for Ben to join them. Ben stood, rolling his eyes but allowing Klaus to grab his hand. Nathan moved to sit at the windowsill, watching Four, Six, and Seven make a poor attempt at a kickline.
“We should go somewhere, you know. When we’re big.” Klaus suggested, arms on either of the other two’s shoulders.

The three stared out through Vanya’s window for a moment, looking at the courtyard.

“The ocean,” Vanya suddenly said, turning to see their reactions.

Ben hummed thoughtfully, imagining what it would be like.

“Maybe we could find seashells and give them to Mom,” Klaus said, to which the others nodded. Mom had been more human lately, seeming more and more genuine as the days went by. She was wistful, and shared her thoughts about different locations around the world.

“I’d catch a seagull for you guys.” Klaus continued, dropping his arms and miming snatching something out of the air. Nathan chuckled at the baffled expressions on Vanya and Ben’s faces.

“I’m alright, thank you.” Vanya finally said, smile fading when the mission alarms began blaring.

Ben and Klaus turned to each other with a frown before patting Vanya on the shoulder. “Sorry, Vanya. We gotta go now.” Ben said with a sigh, giving Vanya a quick hug.

Klaus hugged her too, kissing her on the cheek and promising to be safe.

“Don’t die,” Vanya joked, but there was a real note of warning in her tone.

“Never,” Klaus winked, gesturing for Nathan to follow him as he left to go get his mask.

After finding his mask under a comic book (thanks, Ben), Klaus walked to the living room to find out what was happening. Pogo was there, holding a single letter in his hand, waiting for Ben to arrive before describing the mission.

A drug ring that had been operating in a few restaurants needed to be raided and taken down. Easy
Apparently, the only reason the ring was being taken down now was because the leader had some very special medication that was of great value to the old man.

Nathan joked that it was coke, and Klaus shushed him, not understanding what soda had to do with the mission.

Nathan smiled and shook his head, nonetheless falling silent.

“They have heavy defenses, right?” Diego asked, clear annunciation stunning the occupants of the room.

Pogo blinked for a moment and nodded. “Yes. Number One, that is your job. You too, Number Five. Five will disable them and One will remove them if that doesn’t work.”

The two nodded, accepting their job.

The rest of them clambered into the van, ready to bust the drug ring. Nathan sat in the passenger’s seat as normal, a frown on his face.

“What’s with the long face?” Klaus questioned.

Nathan furrowed his thick brows. “I don’t quite know. I just have a bad feeling about this.”

Klaus shrugged. “We’ll be fine.”

Nathan sighed. “Whatever you say.”

The Academy drove to the restaurant, which was empty and had a, “closed for maintenance” sign.
Five and Luther went in first, and the screech of metal echoed from the secret passageway they found in the breakroom.

“Move it, panini-head.” Five muttered, frowning when Luther stopped in his tracks. They barely had a second before Luther dropped to the ground, dragging Five with him when gunshots sounded, lighting up the dark room.

“Shit!” Five hissed, squinting and trying to make out the figures in the dark. He tossed a panel in the air away from them, which landed with a clang. Gunshots rang out once more, and in the fire, Five made out at least twenty two men and women.

He whispered the information to Luther, who cursed. “You go up and tell the others. I’ll be okay.”

Five whacked him on the back of the head, rolling his eyes at the martyr/moron that was his brother.

“Did you forget I could take two? Stupid.” He said, opening up a portal below them and reappearing back with his siblings in the break room, who were also surrounded by men with big guns.

“Shit.”

Six of them were incapacitated, likely due to Diego.

“So One and Five decided to join you.” A man drawled, stepping forward and rolling a wooden straw between his fingers.

_Not a straw. That’s a dart-

Five’s realization was too late. The man had drawn the straw to his mouth and caught Five in a blur. Five narrowed his eyes, yanking the dark out of his neck, stumbling back with a gasp. The power in his fingertips were gone. What happened? Where was it? He couldn’t do anything, he couldn’t breathe, oh _god_-

He blinked and looked around hazily, seeing his siblings in similar states of uselessness, groaning at
the repeated mantra from Allison, who was trying to get her power to work. If she said ‘I heard a rumor’ one more time, Five was going to kick her.

Ben was panicking, more so than his siblings.

“Guys,” he whispered frantically.

Klaus groaned blearily blinking around, realizing that Nathan was gone. “Where’s Nathan?”

Ben shook his brother’s shoulder. “I-I’m slipping- my control- I-”

Ben had been darted in the neck, his human side succumbing to the poison easily.

However, his human side and his Horrors were so detached from each other that they worked independently from each other. As his human side went down, his monsters rose up.

“Help- they’re gonna break through- get out-”

Klaus shook his head, feeling like there was cotton in his ears. Was Ben talking? Everything was fuzzy. Where was Nathan?

Nathan shouted at Klaus, trying to get his attention, but it was all for nothing as Klaus closed his eyes and drooped on the floor.

Ben whimpered, hugging his middle as the men and women closed in, guards down now that their superpowers were removed.

Diego growled. He didn’t need his powers to throw knives, did he? He stabbed a man in the neck, moving in a flash to slit a few more throats before hearing Ben whisper for him to grab the others and run.

He called Luther, who hastily took Allison in his arms. Diego grabbed Five, hauling ass out of there,
trying to avoid gunfire.

Shit, Klaus!

Diego hissed, trying to move back and retrieve his brother, but before he could, Ben screamed, and beasts screamed with him, breaking from his stomach, stronger than ever now that Ben’s control had been removed.

“Klaus!” Ben sobbed once all the men and women were destroyed. The Horrors were unsatisfied.

Klaus groaned and tried to get up from the floor.

Klaus was the most connected with his powers. They kept him from falling into the spirit world, the kept him on that thin line between life and death. They were always present, there was no off button, no option for him to turn them off. Luther could just not lift things, Diego could just not throw pointy things, Allison could keep her mouth shut, Five could walk instead of teleport, and Ben could attempt to keep the beasts locked inside.

But Klaus?

Klaus was power. He wasn’t like the rest, he was born dead and the world knew it, bent to accommodate the stillborn life that wandered its plains.

Klaus was death and life wrapped in a curly-haired bundle. He was the laws of nature’s worst exception. Death was something that was inevitable, unstoppable. It was separate but forever intertwined with life.

Life was nothing without death, but was not dead. Death was nothing without life, but was not alive.

Klaus was both at once, and the universe knew it, even if he himself didn’t.

Without it, he was fading.
And so, without his power, he couldn’t move, couldn’t think, couldn’t attempt to get away as a tentacle propelled towards him.

Ben hissed, trying to pull it back in. He wanted to die instead, but it was too late.

It was almost in slow motion to see Klaus be picked up and thrown away, a sickening crack repeating in Ben’s head. Ben screamed, feeling his monsters turn on him for a moment before his rage took them over and they retreated like timid dogs.

Maybe, in another life, Ben would’ve destroyed himself, Klaus injuring himself but not dying. The tiny semblance of control Ben had gained through his torture/training seemed to make all the difference, since Ben hadn’t given up completely, allowing the monsters to ravage himself first, destroying their vessel and themselves in the process.

Ben rushed over to Klaus, whispering ‘no’s’ feverishly and squeezing his eyes shut, trying to pretend he hadn’t seen the unnatural bend of Klaus’ neck.

“Wake up, Klaus, please- I’m sorry, I knew it, please, no, not you, why-” Ben was sobbing, shaking and holding Klaus’ limp hand.

Klaus did not wake up.

Klaus looked around, hearing a light accordion play in the background. Where was he?

He was sat in a barbershop, and everything seemed devoid of color.

“Hello?” He called out, turning to see a girl flip idly through a magazine in one of those big hair dryer things.

“Hello,” She replied, not looking up.
“Uh, do you know where we are?”

“I would hope so, I made it.” She said, lifting the contraption away from her head and walking over to inspect him.

“Oh. Are you God, then?” Klaus blinked, thinking back to Nathan’s story.

“If you want. I’ve been called a lot of things. God, Fate, Ruler, Creator, Imaginary Friend,” God said, brushing Klaus’ hair with a small comb.


“See, I’m still deciding on that.” God said, taking out a pair of scissors and snipping at Klaus’ hair. It took a moment to realize that She was talking about his state of living, or lack thereof.

“Can I please go back?”

God sighed, turning Klaus’ head to snip some more of his hair off. “Why do you all want to go back when you spend your whole lives imagining Heaven? Humans were a blunder on my part, I’d say,” God leaned back, surveying the state of Klaus’ hair, “why do you always need a haircut when you’re here?”

Klaus squinted, unsure if she meant him specifically or dead humans in general. “I’m not one of those people. I just wanna go back, I need to help Ben.”

The girl paused. “Who do you think killed you?” She seemed to be awaiting an outburst.

Klaus cursed again. “Shoot, he’s probably so guilty! He’ll be sad about this for years- oh, please let me go back!”

God tilted Her head, apparently thinking he would react differently.
“Sure.”

Klaus blinked.

“Sure?”

“Sure.”

And the accordion stopped.

Klaus surged forward with a loud gasp, smacking his head into Ben’s. Ben shrieked, before sobbing harder and hugging him tight. His siblings let out similar sounds of surprise, and rushed to check if he was alright.

Klaus squeaked out a, “Back off,” to which they listened, stepping back and giving him space to breathe.

Klaus barely had time to realize he was in the infirmary before his vision was filled with angry Irish ghost.

“Did you just fucking die? You left! Your body had no pulse, you maniac!” Nathan had red eyes and blotchy cheeks.

“Sorry,” He whispered back, rubbing his sensitive neck. Nathan deflated, sagging tiredly.

“Don’t do that. Please. Ever.”

Klaus couldn’t answer before a Vanyan blur enveloped him in a hug, shaking and sobbing.
“You promised m-me you wouldn’t die and look wh-what you went and did! Y-you asshole!”

Klaus hugged her back, murmuring an apology.

The siblings stayed with Klaus until night fell and Pogo ushered them to their rooms. Ben was quiet, vowing quietly to control his monsters once and for all. They quivered, feeling the acute rage from the normally mellow vessel. The Horrors cringed back, finally having a primal understanding that they were the passengers, not the other way around.

Nathan held Klaus’ hand, watching his young charge snore softly.

“Hello, Nathan.” Grace greeted, deftly changing the bandages around Klaus’ neck.

Nathan nodded a greeting, going back to watching the slow rise and fall of Klaus’ chest, two fingers on his skinny wrists to feel the pulse.

Nathan glanced at Grace, who scanned Klaus twice, almost as if she needed to make sure.

After a few beats of silence, Nathan bowed his head, leaning on the bed to sleep right there.

Grace watched him, too, before exiting, returning shortly with a blanket to drape around Nathan’s shoulders, moving back to tuck Diego goodnight and charge.

All were asleep in the Hargreeves household except for one.

Reginald Hargreeves scribbled in his notebook, feeling a sense of satisfaction and detached appreciation of Number Four’s new ability.
He decided not to test the ability, simply writing it down.

Of all his children, Number Four impressed and scared Reginald the most, seconded by Five and Seven. Six used to, but his control had increased and Reginald no longer feared the diminutive little Horror.

Somewhere deep inside, there was a primal fear of Number Four, the boy with one foot in death, and one foot in the land of the living.

The instinctive fear only increased as the boy grew, no longer a sniveling child in a room who feared, what, the dark?

Four was not a child like that anymore, not since he had defeated his first fear of ghosts. Perhaps that Nathan had done that for him?

Reginald decided to focus on Number Six, knowing that if he thought about Nathan Young for too long, he would become discouraged.

Six had killed Four today.

Reginald could not say that he was terribly concerned.

A mild inconvenience, a reminder to train the power within.

Reginald had Pogo keep a patch of earth in the courtyard bare ever since he began sending the Numbers on more difficult missions.

He even had a coffin ready in the basement. He was prepared.

Reginald was mostly just surprised when Klaus had woken up, his heart restarting and his neck snapping back into place. Immortality. Of course.
When Reginald had found Number Four, it had been a stillborn. It was entirely too easy for Reginald to buy the body off of the mother, only forty-five euros. The girl had been happy to give it away, confused at the sudden pregnancy, but glad that it was not alive so she could finish school in peace.

Nonetheless, Reginald had taken it, deciding that its state was due to the mother’s own health.

He had almost crashed when the baby wailed in the backseat, startling him enough for him to need to pullover, turning in his seat to see that the baby was alive.

Coming back from the dead was officially one of Four’s abilities, having occurred twice.

Levitation, seeing the dead, summoning the dead, coming back from the dead…

Reginald couldn’t deny the shudder he felt when he realized that Four would most likely unlock more powers.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, first things first, this update is late, even with the sporadic warning I had. I had something of a writer's block while writing this, and I'm not sure if I've actually conquered the beast.

Also, yes, this mission is the one where Ben would die in the original timeline, but that's just what I thought would happen.

Help a gal out and comment what you want to see in the future, please! It really helps spark ideas. Also, I just really like comments.

Sorry again for the late update, y'all.
Chapter Summary

Klaus tries again, but the results aren't too pretty.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Grace hummed as she put away a few uneaten cookies. Her children were reaching that age, it seemed. Allison had declined the dessert, wanting to stay healthy. Luther had followed soon after. Diego, wanting to beat Number One, also refused a cookie. Five, Ben, Klaus, and Vanya still ate theirs, thank goodness.

Grace paused briefly, thinking about Klaus. He had died the other day, she thought. She could still remember the jolt that ran through her circuits, the flicker of her vision as she froze on the spot.

When she had put his body on a stretcher as per Reginald’s instructions, she had wondered (as she had begun to do) why he was giving the children false hope.

Then, her son had snapped forward, whacking his head with another, and Grace felt relief course through her synthetic veins like a tidal wave.

Hearing Klaus argue with who she assumed was Nathan around 11:00 at night was strange, as she could only hear Klaus’ speaking. Why did Klaus say that God was a little girl on a bicycle? Had any of the children even been to a barber’s shop? Where did accordion music fit into all of it?

At least he had come back.

He was fine now, thank goodness. He was sat at the kitchen table with Ben and Vanya, munching slowly on a cookie.

“I think,” Klaus swallowed and scratched his chin. “I’m gonna try banishing all the unfriendly ghosts.”
Ben tilted his head. “Will you be okay?”

Vanya nodded, still very concerned with, obviously, Klaus’ death.

“Can’t hurt to try, right? We already know I’m immortal. Shut up, Nathan.”

Vanya looked around. “What’s he saying?”

“That I’m unoriginal and a copycat. Which makes no sense, because if Nathan was immortal,” Klaus gave a pointed look to an empty chair, “He wouldn’t be a ghost!”

Klaus then plugged his fingers in his ears, screaming ‘lalala’s until Nathan stopped harassing him.

Vanya giggled, and Ben rolled his eyes before steering them back on track.

“It’s not that I don’t think you can do it, it’s just…”

Klaus sighed, sobering up. “...just that last time I did it, I almost got mauled to death?”

There was a beat of silence before Klaus turned to the empty chair with an incredulous look on his face. “This isn’t about you, man.”

Klaus turned back, apologetic. “He, a ghost, is complaining about being shot.”

Ben smiled this time, but grabbed Klaus’ hand. “I’m serious. What if it happens again?”

Klaus grinned. “Well, I’ll have you guys to save me, won’t I?”

Ben nodded, determined. “I’ll help. What about you, Van?”
Vanya shrunk in on herself. “Well, I- I’m not much use-”

“Moral support-”

“Sound the alarms-”

“Just a great friend-”

“Please be there-” Ben and Klaus burst out at once, startling Vanya out of her dejectedness. A shy smile crept up on her face, brightening her face and the entire room. “Okay,” She muttered.

“Should we try it now?” Ben asked. Klaus nodded, looking towards where Nathan was ad having a silent conversation.

He turned back, and Ben and Vanya could clearly see the determination on Klaus’ features.

Ben, Vanya, Klaus, and Nathan stood in the courtyard, where Klaus was doing breathing exercises and holding his hands out in front of him.

Klaus breathed out, looking up at the sky and whispering a quick prayer to the little girl who lived there.

“First sign of something going wrong, tell them.” Nathan ordered, still such a mother hen over Klaus. Klaus nodded, relaying the information to Ben and Vanya. Vanya was stood a little ways away, not as damage-proof as Ben.

“Good luck, Klaus!” She cheered, standing near the door, ready to call for help if he needed it. Klaus blew her a kiss, turning to Ben.
“Alright. Your priority is Vanya.” He said quietly. Ben began to protest, after all, Klaus was the one most likely to be in danger. Klaus shushed him, squeezing his shoulder, whispering slowly.

“I can come back from the dead. Vanya can’t. You’ll get her out if it goes to shit, right?” Ben bit his lip but nodded slowly, stepping back and gesturing for Klaus to begin. Klaus bent and took off his shoes, standing up straight and walking a few paces away.

Klaus breathed deeply, eyeing the ghosts at the corners of the yard. He turned fully towards them, holding his hand out like he was trying to push them.

He thought of his first meeting with Nathan, how a strong command was enough to make them leave.

His hands started to flicker green, a whole new color from the yellow of levitation and the blue of manifesting. It was acid green, like every villain in Ben’s comics.

Klaus glanced from his hands to the ghosts, who were staring at him with slowly rising hackles.

“I need you to leave.” He whispered, hands pulsing with raw energy. Suddenly, all the groans of the ghosts around him seemed to be all he could hear.

Klaus grew acutely aware of how many there were. These men with their insides on the outside, wandering the yard mindlessly. There were two or three nannies behind him, mumbling their French songs and dropping wailing teapots. Klaus closed his eyes, feeling a chill creep up his spine. Everything was suddenly hazy except for the spirits, which were crystal in clarity.

Klaus could hear vague buzzing from his side, but he couldn’t decipher it, so he kept counting and observing the ghosts around him.

Roofs around them had men and women caught in endless cycles of falling and jumping and landing with sickening crunches. The screams on the road accompanied with the screeches of tires sounded like shrill trumpets if Klaus closed his eyes.

He didn’t like trumpets. They were too loud.
“*I need you to leave.*” He ordered once more, squeezing his hands into fists, digging little crescents into the meat of his palms. The ghosts flickered, some looking like they were melting into the floor, some rising into the sky. Others dissolved where they were.

Ben and Vanya were nervous. Klaus seemed fine, he didn’t have the deathly pallor like before, but the grass under his feet was beginning to shrivel and shrink, browning like cookies in the oven.

“Is he okay?” Vanya asked, pulling the edge of her shirt nervously. Ben looked at Klaus for a long moment, and nodded. “He looks okay. We’ll stop him the second he doesn’t, okay?”

Vanya breathed, nodding.

Meanwhile, Nathan felt a lurch in his stomach, matching the pulse of Klaus’ fists. “*Klaus- hey, Klaus...*”

He fell to the ground, feeling his gag reflex trigger as Klaus’ fists glowed brighter.

He felt like he was melting, he felt like he was being pulled to the sky and stretched like rubber.

It seemed to stop for a moment, like the power was confused at him, before pulling in a certain direction.

“*Klaus-*”

“*I need you to leave.*” Klaus intoned for a third time, and Nathan barely had time to yelp before he was pulled, *pulled, pulled* to a place far away, far away from Klaus, who dropped to his knees and threw up on the grass.

Klaus squeezed his eyes shut, groaning and spitting on the grass. Bile stung his throat, but he no longer felt the deathly chill in his bones.
“Klaus!” Ben shouted, rushing over and making sure he was okay. Vanya hesitated between getting help and helping Klaus herself, eventually going to fetch Mom.

Mom rushed outside, bending smoothly and pressing her hand to his forehead. “He’s at a normal temperature,” She announced.

Ben and Vanya let out a sigh of relief before turning to Klaus.

“Did it work?” “Are you okay?”

Klaus waved a non-glowing hand at them, nodding.

“I mean, I don’t see any ghosts ar…” Klaus suddenly looked around in a panic, scrambling to his feet and surveying his surroundings with wide-eyes.

“Klaus?” Ben asked, hand moving to squeeze Klaus’ shoulder. Klaus shrugged it off and raced around the courtyard, looking behind the old tree and checking under bushes.

“Klaus?” Ben tried again, sharing a concerned glance with Vanya. Mom stood, hands folded primly in front of her. She had a blank look on her face that Ben and Vanya had learned was her confused face.

Klaus finally circled back around to them, looking scared out of his wits. He bit his lip, bruising it red. He wrung his hands in his lap anxiously, eyes darting from side to side and beginning to water.

“Klaus, what’s wrong?” Vanya asked, grabbing one of his hands.

Klaus’ lip wobbled for a moment and he seemed to crumble, falling to his knees.

“Klaus-” Vanya started, pausing when Klaus began to laugh hysterically, tears running down his face.
“It worked. No ghosts around.” He laughed brokenly, digging his nails into his legs.

Vanya and Ben shared another look. Mom moved forward to pet Klaus’ hair, holding him close to her.

“Isn’t that good?” Ben asked, Vanya nodding her agreement.

Klaus let out a shaky breath.

“It would be, but there are zero ghosts present,” Klaus raised his head from where he was pressed into Mom’s chest, looking at them with red eyes.

“Zero ghosts, including Nathan.”

Nathan surged forward with a gasp, whacking his head on something hard and wooden. The air was hot, and smelled something fierce. He was suffocating. Where was he?

Nathan tried to get up again, knees knocking into the wood above him. He couldn’t see. Where was he?

Nathan banged his fists against the roof of where he lying, screaming for someone to let him out, realizing where he was with a start.

“Nonononono- let me out- LET ME OUT OF HERE! I DON’T WANT TO BE-”

Nathan was back in a coffin, a dark, smelly, hot, cramped coffin. His coffin.

Shouting was no use, no one would hear him, right?

He couldn’t breathe, it was too tight, too dark, he couldn’t see, why was he here again?
In the back of his mind, Nathan could dully hear Klaus saying that the ghosts around him needed to leave.

“I’m stuck again, aren’t I?” Nathan said aloud to his tiny coffin. How did he get out last time? Oh yeah, he died of starvation.

“Ohay,” He said, calming down somewhat. All he needed to do was wait.

All he had to do was wait.

A few days later, Kelly grinned at Simon’s disgruntled face as he poured vodka on the grave. It was weird, honoring Nathan when he was out somewhere across the pond, living it up with a band of young superheroes.

Suddenly, she looked down at the grave in shock.

“Just gotta wait- just gotta wait-”

Kelly gasped, pointing at the grave with a shaky finger.

“I think he’s down there! I can hear him!”

The others reared back, shocked.

“You better not be joking, Kelly.” Alisha growled, eyes darting from Kelly’s shocked face to the tombstone.

“Why would I joke about this!?” Kelly growled back, stomping her foot down.
Simon gulped, looking at them with his fish eyes. “Only one way to find out.”

Curtis groaned. “How many times do I have to dig up a body? Also, this is, uh, what’s the word, illegal?”

Simon frowned. “If he’s really down there, and he’s alive, do you really want to be the one who left him alone in his coffin?”

Curtis groaned and they knew they had him. They quickly broke into the cemetery’s shed, finding shovels for each other.

It took an hour or so, with their combined shoveling. Alisha sneered and complained the entire time.

“Brings back memories, doesn’t it?” She said snidely, the others laughing at her expense.

Simon’s shovel suddenly struck something hard, and they worked twice as fast to uncover the coffin.

Once it was uncovered, they looked at Kelly, urging her to open it.

Kelly took a deep breath, forcing open the box and rearing back at the stench.

Nathan looked like he was merely sleeping, cheeks flushed with life still.

Kelly’s hand slowly inched out, landing on his shoulder. Was her mind playing tricks on her, or was it warm?

Nathan suddenly sprang forward with a scream, startling them all. Alisha shrieked, chucking a rock at him. Curtis and Simon fell on their asses.

Nathan groaned, rubbing his head. “I did not miss you.” He said snidely, slowly lifting himself out of
Once he was out, he stretched, bones popping and groaning.

Kelly was the first to snap out of it, rushing forward and hugging him tight. After a short moment, Nathan hugged her back. Alisha joined, then Simon, then Curtis.

“Your dick,” Kelly whispered, stepping back and wiping her eyes. Nathan stuck a tongue out at her.

Whatever he was going to say was cut off by his stomach, which grumbled in a strange, slow way that she had never heard before.

“I need something to eat, I’m starving.”

The Asbos 5 looked at eachother, agreeing that yeah, that was probably a good idea.

Nathan took one step before fainting, falling forward into the dirt, to the panic of the group.

Klaus sat in the bath, staring at the wall.

_Had he just banished Nathan?_

He swallowed back tears. He was almost a grown-up, he shouldn’t cry about things like this. He just needed to find him, right? He needed to find out where Nathan went and he needed- he needed-

_What if Nathan was gone forever?_

Klaus dunked his head underwater to scream. No, no, no, he couldn’t be gone. He needed Nathan, he couldn’t have sent him away forever, right?
Right?

Wrong. His mind replied, the image of a betrayed Nathan choking him up.

He stayed underwater until he couldn’t breathe, gasping big gulps of air and pulling himself down again, the water in his ears muffling his intrusive thoughts.

Ben caught Five at an early hour the next day, pulling him back to tell him what had happened.

“Klaus was trying to banish all the bad ghosts around him, but-”

Five tilted his head, urging Ben to continue silently.

“He banished Nathan. Nathan’s gone.”

Reginald Hargreeves set down his monocle, staring at the camera feed for the kitchen.

“Nathan’s gone.” Number Six said quietly.

A cold, nasty grin spread across Reginald’s face, a triumphant huff leaving his mouth. The independent nature of Number Four finally worked in his favor.

The one variable that had ruined his equations was gone.

Reginald’s cold grin turned into an eager sneer, and the scratch of a pen against paper was the only
noise in the office for the rest of the morning.

Chapter End Notes

Finals week approaches. Pray for me.

Anyway, I hoped you liked this chapter. How's Nathan gonna get back to Klaus? They're both in pickles, aren't they?

I need to stop ending the chapters on Reggie being a dick, it's starting to mess with my head.

Leave a comment if you liked, I love reading them all. A lot of your comments have actually sparked inspiration, so don't be shy!

Update schedule will stabilize after tests are over, I swear. Scouts honor.
Chapter Summary

Nathan adjusts to living, while Klaus adjusts to living without him.

(Trigger warning- implied suicide and pedophilia)

Why do I write these things? I suffer and drag y’all down with me.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Nathan woke up to an alarm. Carefully, he sat up, trying not to fall. Last time he had gotten up too fast, he had fallen off of the buffalo head and-

He was in a bed.

Nathan scrambled out of the bed, landing with a thud on his elbows and knees. He hissed at the pain, looking around wildly. Where was he? Last thing he knew-

Coffin. Banishment.

“Shit,” He muttered, standing up and running his hand through his hair. Klaus had banished him on accident, hadn’t he?

“Nathan?” A voice called from the doorway. Nathan turned to see Kelly looking at him with her arms crossed.

“Hey, Kells.” Nathan greeted, hearing his voice sound far away.

Kelly shifted awkwardly before asking if he wanted breakfast. Nathan accepted, following her to the kitchen to eat some frozen waffles.

“What happened with you? You were dead!” Kelly finally blurted out after a beat of silence.
Nathan swallowed, unused to eating after so long. “I… Klaus banished me on accident. My body was still in good shape, I guess, so here I am.”

*I need to get back.*

Kelly narrowed her eyes at Nathan. “How’re you gonna do that? You’re homeless.”

Nathan blinked, before scowling. He had not missed that particular talent of hers. “Stay out of my head, Kelly.”

Kelly squinted at him and crossed her arms. “You’ve gotten polite. What the hell happened to you?”

Nathan bit his tongue, thinking of Klaus and the other kids.

Kelly burst out laughing. “Those kids mellowed ya out, didn’t they? Oh, that’s so funny,”

“It really isn’t,” Nathan scowled, taking another bite.

The two spent the rest of breakfast catching up. There was no more community service, so there wasn’t anything for Nathan to do.

“Maybe you should give your mum a visit, I bet she’d be glad to see you,”

Nathan laughed. “I don’t think so.”

Kelly gave him a look. Nathan rolled his eyes at her. “Fine, fine. Just a visit.”

Klaus hadn’t left Ben’s side since he had banished Nathan. Ben and Vanya had reached an
agreement to never let Klaus be alone for the time being, or at least until Nathan came back.

*If Nathan came back at all.*

Ben breathed out into the hallway, leaning against the wall while he waited for Klaus. The only time Klaus would be alone was when he was in the bathroom. Ben tried to always be outside when he came back out.

While he waited, Ben thought of the recent training sessions the Academy had undergone. It was like as soon as Four fell apart, the Hargreeves Sr. did his best to kick him (and the rest of them) while he was down.

Klaus’ wrists and ankles were once again the shade of cherries, and just as tender. His chair was hardly ever there during mealtimes anymore. Luther had been lifting cars and semi-trucks until he had pulled a muscle for the first time. Mom had made a habit of brewing tea with honey for Allison after training, and Five never walked anywhere, required to jump to his location always.

Ben pressed his hand against his stomach, closing his eyes.

Rabbits, cats, and other small animals that Reginald could find in bulk were the main victims of the Horrors.

Ben decided that he had it the worst. He was the only one who had to take lives.

He idly wondered if Klaus could see them; the old cats and lab-white rats and snuffling bunnies with ruby red eyes.

Klaus opened the door, holding Ben’s hand without noise. Ben squeezed it and they made their way to dinner. Klaus was allowed short breaks between levitation training, but the breaks seemed to be getting shorter and shorter.

Ben wondered what would happen if Klaus reached his peak, if the boy could no longer stay afloat. The hollowed cheeks and sunken eyes thoroughly spooked the others, even Luther, who made a point to be brave. Vanya was a welcome help, playing soothing tunes on that violin of hers. The idea that Vanya’s music was an actual power danced in the back of Ben’s head, something he shared with Five, who took it seriously.
“I always wondered why Father would keep her if she didn’t have any powers,” Five admitted, eating what he called a fluffernutter sandwich.

Ben opened his mouth to say that you couldn’t just give a living child away for no reason, but Five shut him down.

“He bought us, Ben. It would be like returning a pair of shoes. We’re just products, transactions. We’re nothing to that man.”

Ben fidgeted with the canned tuna in his hands.

Silence reigned for a long while, the two mulling over a subject they had accepted long before.

“Would you ever go back to your real parents?” Ben asked, mouth stumbling over the word ‘real,’ as if it was anything but.

Five paused. “She didn’t want me. Besides, I was hardly planned, according to the story. She probably didn’t have any attachment to me before Father bought me.” The boy’s fox-like eyes flicked up to meet Ben’s.

“Would you, Ben?”

Ben’s mouth opened and closed, not a sound leaving his lips. His real parent would probably think of him as some freak. Besides, he had a mom here, and a bunch of brothers and sisters. He had real family.

“No.” He answered finally.

“No, I wouldn’t.”
Nathan stood outside of his mother’s home, wondering how he should go about telling her he had risen from the dead.

He knocked on the door, ducking his head to pinch his nose bridge. He was not ready to see his mum again. Meeting Grace and taking care of Klaus had opened his eyes to how odd his mother had raised him. She had trusted his independence when he, like any other teenager, claimed he could handle it.

The door opened, and his mother, in excellent health and an easy beam on her face, greeted Nathan with a cheerful ‘good morning.’

Nathan looked up, offering a greeting of his own. “Hello, Mum. Surprise.”

All cheeriness drained from his mother’s face and she screamed.

Nathan winced. “Shush, the neighbors will hear you!”

His mother ceased, touching his hand and gasping when she realized she wasn’t hallucinating.

“Love, who’s there?” A man that Nathan recognized wandered downstairs.

“Ah, it’s you. The dog-man. Good to see you’re still around.” Nathan said sourly. After all, his mother had chosen the man over him. He still had a grudge.

The man blinked in shock. “Aren’t you dead?”

Nathan rolled his eyes, realizing that this place should have been left alone.

“I’m sure I could die again if you wanted me to. Prick.” He muttered the last part under his breath, looking back to his mother.

“Mum, can I crash here? My place isn’t available to me anymore.”
His mother snapped out of it.

“How are you– how can you be here!?” She said, nonetheless moving so he could step inside.

He vaguely noticed a surplus of pictures with the dogman, some overshadowing the sparse collection of pictures of Nathan. Great.

“I can leave if you want,” Nathan offered tiredly. His mother shook her head, still looking as if she’d seen a ghost. Nathan’s sheepish grin slipped at the comparison, flashing back to Klaus. He hoped he was okay.

Nathan growled, pinching the bridge of his nose again. “Remember how the storm turned Scruffy over there into a werewolf? Well, it made me immortal. They’ve only just fished me out of my coffin.”

His mother looked exceptionally troubled by this statement.

“Wait-” She called as he began to make his way to his room.

It was too late.

The door was open, and Nathan’s heart sunk.

His posters were down, the walls barren. His lamp, laptop, and personal things were gone. The bed where he had tried to hide from the host of men his mother attracted was nowhere to be seen.

Everything was gone.

A study was in its place. And Nathan knew his mother, she was no scholar.

Footsteps behind him and a hand on his shoulder alerted him of her presence.
“Nathan- we didn’t expect you to come back- why would we? I know this must be.”

“Two months.” Nathan said slowly, interrupting her.

She paused. “I beg your pardon?”

Nathan turned, his back to the study, to the bookshelves and trinkets and lived in chair.

“I was dead for around two months. Two months, and you get rid of all my possessions and turn it into a study for your boyfriend’s work. That’s great.” Nathan snarled, crossing his arms.

His mother stayed quiet, only pleading with her eyes.

Nathan paused, resisting the urge to sigh. He never should have come here.

Finally, he asked her a simple question.

“What did you do with my things? Are they in the garage?”

His mother looked even more pained. Nathan glanced at the man staring from the bottom of the stairs.

“What did you two do with my things?”

The man answered, Nathan’s mum whirling around to chastise him.

“Sold them…”

Nathan scoffed, a delirious laugh bubbling sinisterly from his throat.
“Should have known, should have known.”

The woman looked genuinely pained, now. She couldn’t even look him in the eye.

“Glad to know I could give you extra profit. Least you could do is spend the money on my funeral.” Nathan inspected his nails, a habit he got from Klaus.

He looked at his mum through his lashes. “You know, Kelly paid for most of it? And Simon. And Curtis. You don’t even know them.”

Nathan felt Five-style vindication run through him. “You allowed three strangers to orchestrate your son’s funeral.” Was the woman fine with her son being buried in a hoodie and jeans?

Nathan pushed passed his mother down the stairs, grabbing a slice of toast as he went, sipping from a coffee cup on the counter.

In the doorway, he squinted at his distraught mother, mentally comparing her to the robot in the Hargreeves’ household, thinking of the code the housewife snapped herself, the loopholes she made to love her kids.

“Mum,” He began, the words tasting like ash on his tongue. For a moment, he was back in his coffin, all tight space and no light.

The moment ended, and Nathan gathered vindication and courage. “Did you miss me?”

His mother took a full five seconds to say yes.

Grace would have taken none.

In the back of his head, he knew it was an unfair comparison. The robot was programmed to be a mother, his own had never even planned him.
Nathan bit his lip and left, a shameful flush creeping up his neck. He would stay at his friend’s place.

Nathan met Simon and Alisha on the way to Kelly’s.

He eyed their interlaced fingers, finally shrugging. “Never would’ve thought it. Good on you, Simon.”

Simon looked startled, beloved fish eyes blinking at him.

Nathan winked at him, “Have you finally gotten to piss on her tits?” He made a vague impression of when Simon had fallen under Alisha’s power.

Simon choked, and Alisha smacked him in the back of his head for the vulgarity.

Both were red.

Nathan barked out a laugh, spirits lifting. He ate lunch with them, with Simon paying. Turns out, Simon was the BMX bloke who saved Nathan from being Christianized.

“You.” He grinned. Simon gave him his trademarked tiny grin. “Thank me when I do it.”

They talked a bit more, and Nathan realized that he wasn’t as important to them as before, if he was even back then. Being dead will do that to you. They’d moved on. He wasn’t needed.

A horrible plan hatched in his head.

“Say,” He began, turning to the super-spy-Simon. The man had eased up towards him, with Nathan’s apparent mellowing out.
“Can you give me a gun?” Simon immediately looked suspicious.


Nathan sighed, lying on the spot with the ease and charm of Allison on a mission.

“If people find out I can return from the dead, they’ll cart me to a lab and take me apart to try and find out how I tick. I need protection,” Nathan took a sip of beer before sighing. “Besides, it’s not like I can buy one at a shop like in the States.”

Simon blinked, looking surprised at the oddly logical reasoning behind Nathan’s need to acquire a firearm.

He shared a look with Alisha, communicating without words, (oh, so they were a couple) and turned back to Nathan.

“I can get you a pistol. Nothing more.”

Nathan nodded. “Okay. Thanks, Simon.”

Every time Nathan said Simon, the man seemed to morph into the quietly startled Simon from community service, before turning back.

Nathan would be given a gun the very next day, a modest little pistol with three full rounds.

Back in the Umbrella Academy, training was starting to pay off. They had grown smarter, faster, stronger. Klaus was doing good, learning to resist the fear (or at least say he did, but he was actually just bottling it up) and never walking.

He was still not over Nathan, sure that the Irishman would never return. It hurt, especially because it was his fault. He hoped Nathan wasn’t angry with him.
Ben, in contrast with the rest of them, was breaking apart. Sure, his control had skyrocketed in skill, and Father was mildly impressed or proud, but the boy, not the Horrors, was decaying. No one knew what Ben was forced to do, but they could see the effects.

Ben was constantly barraged with moral attacks, guilt leaving him unable to eat any sort of meat, even fish, without gagging and running to the bathroom to vomit. Mom had accommodated him with a concerned stare, cooking an animal-free meal for the diminutive Asian boy.

Progress was progress, the man at the head of the table would say each day, pretending he was genuinely proud of them.

Klaus was eating quietly when he saw it.

A nanny with a horribly misaligned spine stood in the doorway with a steaming teapot, singing French songs in a shrill voice.

So the ghosts had come back.

Klaus put down his fork to let his father know. “The ghosts are back.”

His father’s face soured, but instead of scolding Klaus for talking at the table, he looked at him in the eye, an almost imperceptive sneer curling his lips slightly.

“I suppose that means your Nathan has returned.”

Klaus looked wildly around the room, craning his neck to stare at the buffalo head. No Nathan anywhere.

“...no,” He answered, disappointment palpable. Vanya patted his knee in consolation.

His father looked cheered up by the admission.

“All for the better,” The man said before returning his dinner.
As soon as it ended, Klaus raced around the house, frantically searching for Nathan, calling his name like a madman.

After his fruitless search, Klaus walked to the bathroom to take a long bath with a sigh of disappointment, as he had begun to do. His hands were at the bottom of his shirt, halfway through lifting it off when he heard it.

A low, but pleased chuckle echoed around the room.

Klaus lowered the shirt to see the worst man he had ever met.

“Did you miss me, little seance? I missed you.” Michael Bensen crooned, smiling benevolently down at Klaus’ half dressed state.

Klaus stumbled back, nose scrunching up at the mangled flesh on the ghost’s body, giant bite marks leaking ghost-blood.

“See, I wasn’t able to visit you sooner,” The ghost apologized, as if it was something Klaus would have mourned, “Your Irishman had kept me away.”

Michael gave him that seedy grin, the one like bacon grease and oily fingerprints on glass and cobwebs in a crypt that would latch to your face.

“But luckily for me, he seemed to have left.” The man purred, sickeningly pleased with the turn of events.

“That leaves just the two of us, doesn’t it, little seance?” Michael had begun to walk towards Klaus, backing him into the door. Klaus’ hands were trembling, scared to attempt banishment when it could just as easily turn Michael solid.

Michael reveled in Klaus’ fear, it seemed, taking an icy cold finger and trailing it along his cheek, phasing through uncomfortably in some places.
“I don’t think your Irishman will be back any time soon. I intend to enjoy the time I have left,” Michael smiled wider, tone sounding obsessed and wistful.

Klaus squeezed his eyes shut and pressed his hands into his ears, shaking his head to rid the feeling of a ghost caressing his cheeks and jaw.

Klaus wished Nathan were here.

A few days late, Nathan hefted the surprisingly heavy pistol from hand to hand. His feet dangled off the edge of the community center, a note under a beer bottle resting beside him. The note was an apology.

_I’m writing this because you’d be dead mad if I didn’t._

_I’m leaving again, and as you guessed, not by plane. I don’t have that kind of money, and I can’t even sell my things to get it._

_Can you bury me three feet under? Is that allowed? Just in case I come back._

_See, there’s someone in the States who really needs me, I think, and this is how I met him last time, so yeah._

_Sorry, it was fun catching up. I’ll try to visit in the future, so don’t be a stranger if I do._

_ Nathan Young_

Nathan took a breath, inhaling the cold of England with relish. It stung his nostrils, and smog filled his lungs. Perfect.
He would’ve jumped, but he had a feeling that this was somehow cleaner.

He finally pressed the pistol to his head, nestling it in his curls gently.

*Bang.*

A little girl in a barber’s shop put down her magazine.

And the accordion started up again.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the long wait, but here it is!

I wrote Nathan’s mom as such an asshole for literally no reason other than I wanted angst. Also, how much does she differ from canon, really? Idk how you could choose your boyfriend over your son. I could never lock my door while my kid tells me he’d be homeless smh

P.S.

I passed ALL my finals! For somebody who daydreams instead of doing work in class, I think that’s pretty good.

Thanks for all the well wishes and such, you’re too kind.

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed, leave a comment if you did!
Oh, To Be Young

Chapter Summary

God is getting tired of routine. Perhaps a change would do Her good?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“It would be best if you would stop.” Nathan was laid out in the road, God looking down at him impassively.

Nathan hummed. “I can’t afford a ticket to the States, sorry.”

They both knew he wasn’t very sorry at all.

God wrinkled Her nose, delicately turning her nose up at him.

“Money. Such a fickle, human invention.” She commented before wheeling around him. Nathan scrambled up to follow Her.

“I suppose you want to go back,” She called over Her shoulder, looking back at Nathan with a dead stare.

“Yes, please.” Nathan responded in a sing-song voice.

She stared at him for a moment longer, mulling over the odd relationship between two deathless beings.

The Irishman hadn’t had much thought put into it, She had just given him immortality to compliment his attitude.

The little one had been meticulous in creation. When She gave the baby the host of powers relating
to one of the most inevitable forces in the universe, it had died from shock. Humans were never meant to overcome death. Of course, the baby came back, but it came back with ropes in the death plane to keep it supported.

Their powers didn’t quite fit together as well as they could’ve, but it was hardly Her concern, since their strange relationship made up for the gaps. She had started a new timeline, and Nathan Young was the pebble to disturb the waters of routine.

She was curious to see where it would go. It had been far too long since She mixed it up, so to speak. Years and years ago, Her indulgence in humanity had been in spades. She hardly interfered in these times.

The Irish boy looked at her, growing uncomfortable at her long stare. This one never seemed to register Her as God. It was odd, but not unwelcome. At least he didn’t try to call Her as if She was his servant. God shook her head, banishing the memory of a man asking Her to call two bears on rowdy children.

“Do what you will, try not to separate from the child. Good luck, Nathan Young.”

Nathan grinned, hearing the accordion quiet down, giving Her a mock salute as he was flung back into Earth.

God stared at the spot where he used to be, before raising a hand to salute the blank space.

Klaus was sick of it.

He was taking showers in the dark so no one could see, and was always clinging to any other child who could stand to be around him. He wouldn’t dare tell them, he knew they couldn’t exactly do anything about it.
Michael Bensen was enjoying the afterlife far too much.

Unsettling and vulgar threats constantly spewed from his mangled mouth, and leering eyes tracked Klaus’ every move. Klaus hadn’t felt truly comfortable since Nathan was still by his side.

The memory still stung, and there was nothing he could do to bring him back. He had searched the whole house, stumbling on Allison and Luther in the attic (what even-), but couldn’t find Nathan, no matter how hard he looked.

At the moment, he was curled up in his bed with the covers over his head, trying to block out the sickening whispers of the mangled man next to him.

Icy hands stroked his cheek, sending cold burns through his face and mouth. Michael was sat on the edge of Klaus’ bed, reaching through the blanket to harass Klaus some more.

“I wish you would manifest me- why don’t you manifest me? You’d have a wonderful time, I know-”

Klaus pressed his hands into his ears, blocking out the low mutterings. Finally, he bolted upright.

“Leave me alone!”

His hands clutched the blankets, fists beginning to glow. The light was soft, and Klaus couldn’t tell if they were green or blue.

Michael leaned back, smiling in the not quite benevolent way he had when he was alive.

His horribly shredded up skin was illuminated in the dull light that Klaus’ fists produced.

There was a moment of silence where Klaus thought Michael was banished, a small moment where his shoulders drooped in relief.

As soon as the moment began, it ended, and Klaus realized with horror that his hands were actually
blue.

Somewhere in the back of his head, Klaus could almost hear Nathan smacking his forehead and grumbling at him.

Michael struggled to move, flopping a bloody limb in Klaus’ face, the coppery taste startling him enough to stumble back and run to his door, shaking his hands furiously. Michael’s injuries hindered him in his manifested state, obvious in the way the man tried to crawl towards him.

Ragged breathing through torn up lungs filled the room, and as it got closer, his panic overcame him and he curled up into a ball by the door, covering his face in fear of what the newly solid ex-manager would do to him. His sweaty palms slipped off of the doorknob multiple times.

His fists sputtered in front of his eyes, flickering bright blue. The luminosity of it blinded Michael and Klaus both, and Klaus looked up at Michael, confused at why his fists suddenly sparked. Michael looked no different, if not a bit bewildered.

In the low light of his hands, Klaus made out a figure around six feet, plus a head of curly hair, standing right behind Michael.

Klaus hardly had a chance to process Nathan’s sudden appearance when the Irish man grabbed Michael by the shoulders and slammed him to the floor, producing a large thud that was sure to be heard by his siblings.

Nathan held the man up by his disfigured neck, pressing him against the window, leaving smears of old blood. He cussed lowly under his breath, obscene things that Klaus couldn’t even comprehend. Fury seemed to roll off of Nathan in waves, and the way his hair stood up suddenly represented the hackles of an angry wolf.

“What the fuck are you playing at, Bensen?” Nathan’s fingers squeezed the neck harder, digging into wounds with a wet squelch.

Klaus blinked, before a crushing amount of hysteria and relief overcame him and he breathed out in relief, sagging where he sat and allowing his head to hang.
Several sets of footsteps rushed to his door, Luther bursting in with a shout. Five popped in, and the rest of his siblings stared in horror at what was transpiring at Klaus’ window.

Allison, Vanya, and Ben gagged quietly at all the blood. Diego scrunched up his nose, and Luther’s lips twisted in disgust.

Five blinked and tilted his head, not bothered in the slightest by the mutilated man that was twitching on Klaus’ window.

“It’s Michael.” He said in vaguely stunned realization.

The siblings snapped to attention, observing the man with dawning horror and a different kind of disgust.

Vanya gasped, turning to Klaus, who was hazily watching Michael struggle to breathe.

“If he’s here, and you’re the one making him solid-” Vanya crossed the room in a few quick steps and knelt next to Klaus with wide eyes. “Was he haunting you? Is that why you’ve been feeling horrible ever since Nathan left?”

The gentler of the siblings (Ben, Vanya, and Allison) tended to Klaus on the floor, looking close to tears while Five, Diego, and Luther helped Nathan open the window and throw Michael’s body into an alleyway. A wet crunch echoed around the alley and Klaus’ hands finally grew dim.

Nathan slowly walked back, dropping to his knees to look Klaus in the eye for a long while, before breaking.

He sighed and hung his head, “I was hoping for a happier reunion, wouldn’t you know it?”

He choked on his own sob and balled his hands into fists, to the alarm of his siblings as they flashed blue once more.

Klaus dove forward and clung to Nathan as if he thought the man might disappear again. Nathan hugged him back just as tightly.
“Sorry I took so long.” Nathan murmured to Klaus, who was clinging on to him for dear life.

Klaus just shook his head and breathed deeply, calming his furiously beating heart.

One by one, the children joined the hug, last numbers first, ending with Luther, whose long, gangly arms encircled them with a supernatural strength that ought to have been crushing, but Klaus had never felt safer.

“You should’ve-” Five began, before starting again in a softer voice, murmuring low from behind Klaus, resting the chin that he hadn’t grown into just yet onto Klaus’ shoulder. “Why didn’t you tell any of us?”

Klaus sighed, still relishing in the contact with Nathan and his family.

“What could you have done?” He asked instead of answering, even though it was an answer all on its own.

Five sighed, breath smelling of marshmallows and peanut-butter. Klaus’ lips quirked up for a moment.

The smile faded when he heard a hiss in the corner. Looking over Nathan’s bony shoulder, he shrunk back at the sight of Michael. He gulped, whispering this to Nathan, who patted Klaus’ hand with a grim look.

“I’ll take care of it.”

And with a curl of Klaus’ fists, Nathan vanished.

Klaus kept half an eye on how Nathan stalked towards Michael, dragging him through the wall to another room.

Vanya scooted forward to take up the space that Nathan left, holding Klaus’ hands. “We could’ve
been moral support,” She said quietly, in the tone of someone telling an inside joke.

Klaus shot her a small smile, about to answer when soft footsteps interrupted what he was going to say.

Pogo and Mom stood in the doorway, surveying the pile of children in Klaus’ room.

Mom wasted no time, walking briskly forward to scan them for any ailments.

“Is everything alright, children?” Pogo asked, looking at them with the all-knowing, too-human eyes that they had endured their entire life.

Klaus nodded, a grin splitting his face.

“Yeah. Couldn’t be better,” Mom leaned over to press her hand against his forehead. She smiled dazzlingly at him, apparently proud of his health.

Klaus loosely grabbed her wrist, making sure not to dislodge FIve’s chin from his shoulder.

Mom paused, tilting her head.

“Nathan’s back,” He admitted quietly.

Mom grinned even brighter, teeth gleaming in the low light. “Pass on my greetings, will you?”

Klaus smiled back at her, marvelling at the stark contrast between her and her creator.

Pogo seemed satisfied that no one was having any problems, stepping back and nodding at Mom to leave.

They heard her footsteps get softer, and Pogo shifted and stopped blocking the doorway.
“It would be best for you to return to your own rooms, now, children. I will not inform your father of this if you go quickly.”

The siblings looked at Klaus, concerned. Klaus waved them off, gently pushing Five off of him and lifting Ben’s legs out of his lap. He stood, stretching in a Nathan-like way, bones popping and all.

“I’ll be okay guys,” He promised, eyes flickering to the wall where Nathan had disappeared.

They accepted his promise hesitantly before making their way back to their own rooms. Five, as always, didn’t bother, disappearing with a warping sound.

“Goodnight, Klaus,” Vanya whispered before leaving, giving him a quick hug.

“Goodnight, Master Klaus,” Pogo said once she was out of the room, inclining his head in a bow and closing the door.

Klaus walked to his bed and collapsed, ears straining to hear Nathan. He stared up at his ceiling, hoping to hear a whoop of victory or a final curse.

Instead, Nathan called out to him after walking back in.

“Klaus,” He greeted, sitting on the edge of Klaus’ bed.

“Nathan,” He greeted back with a grin.

Nathan jerked a thumb to the wall behind him. “I don’t think he’ll be a problem. If he becomes one again, I’ll fuck ‘em up.”

Klaus smiled, basking in Nathan’s presence instead of answering.

Nathan realized that Klaus didn’t want to speak, and took it upon himself to fill the quiet.
“You know, the reason I took so long was because I was sent back to England. Ain’t that a kick in the nuts? It’s more gray than I remembered, but I guess distance makes the brain grow fonder and all that.”

“Heart,” Klaus corrected, smiling at the familiar affronted look Nathan shot him, relieved that he wasn’t mad at Klaus for sending him there.

“If you weren’t such a trouble-magnet, I’d up and leave just because you’re such a smartass.”

Klaus grinned wider at the mock-exasperation that Nathan exuded, shifting to sit up and listen to his story.

“One of the weirder parts of being dead is that your friends move on. Odd, innit? Anyway, after they fished me from my coffin, which was rank, by the way, I was sort of lost.”

Klaus tilted his head in a silent inquiry.

“See, they had all moved on, and technically, I was dead, so it’s not like I could legally get a job or be a functioning adult, so I went to my mum’s place to see if I could crash there.”

Klaus’ brows furrowed. “I thought you lived at the community center.”

“Well, firstly, I have no business being in the community center anymore, don’t do service. Thirdly, they threw all my shit out.”

Klaus decided against telling Nathan that he forgot a number.

“So, my mum’s it was. Turns out, she sold all my things in around two months, probably less, and turned my old room into a study for her dog of a boyfriend.”

Nathan looked angry, but also a bit disappointed. “Sorry,” Klaus said, because he couldn’t really insult Nathan’s mother.
“Don’t be. She wasn’t. Anyway, after I left them, because I didn’t wanna sleep on the couch knowing my room was an office, I bumped into two of the friends who helped get me out of my coffin. I asked one, Simon, he’s the invisible guy, for a gun.”

“Couldn’t you buy one yourself?” Klaus asked, squinting in the low light to see Nathan snort.

“No, because I was broke, and you can’t just buy one on the street, you crazy Yank. Besides, I only needed to borrow it so I could… you know.”

Klaus frowned. “No, I don’t know.”

Nathan rolled his eyes and mimed shooting himself.

“Oh! Oh. Oh. Ow.” Klaus said quietly. Nathan grinned, and made a broad gesture with his hands.

“But hey, now I’m here, I saw God again, and yeah, I’m back.”

Klaus gave an exhausted chuckle before leaning back and smiling at the ceiling.

“Mom’s glad you’re back. Everyone is. I’m- I’m sorry I sent you away.”

Nathan scoffed, though not in a mean way. “Don’t worry yourself over things you can’t- things you couldn’t control. Besides, now we know if you ever send me away, all I have to do is expire early to come back.”

Klaus choked at the poor phrasing, dissolving into giggles.

Silence reigned for a moment longer before Klaus sighed, eyes fluttering shut.

“Goodnight, Nathan.”
“Goodnight, Klaus.” Nathan stared at Klaus, waiting for the gentle rise and fall of his chest, standing when he saw it.

“I missed you, too.” He whispered before making his way down to the kitchen to give a long talk with the maids and nannies he spotted a few days before.

God stared at the suited mortal that stared back at Her in bemusement.

“I hope this doesn’t set a precedent for sending random humans into my realm.” She said, more to Herself than to Michael.

“Of all the people to refuse passing on, of all the reasons to do so, you decided that you should stay on Earth to what, be a horrible person? I created you all with the intent of being self-sustainable. I didn’t think you would turn to children as sources instead of the adult males and females that presented themselves to you. Why pluck an unripe fruit? Ugh, humans and fruit. Humans are horrible, horrible things…” God pinned Her issues with humanity on the man in front of Her, who looked increasingly uncomfortable the longer She spoke.

“Um, is this heaven?”

God squinted at him, wrinkling Her nose and crossing Her arms. She hadn’t a bike with Her this time.

“You really think you would go to heaven?”

Michael flushed, and didn’t answer.

God sighed. “People like you always tell others to see you in Hell. Here’s your chance, you fool.”
She tossed a coin to him, which he caught instantly.

He turned the coin over in his hands, seeing that one side was an engraving of his birthplace with a list of his name, birth date, and parents’ names. A small section featured some details about him, meaningless things like how many times he donated to homeless people (N/A), how many people he had inadvertently killed, and what hair gel he used.

Michael turned the coin to the other side, gulping at the image. It was him in a battered suit, wearing a jester’s hat and staring sullenly out from the bars of a prison. There were only five words on that side, neat printing that read, “will he even be missed?”

He could swear the jester in the coin hung his head lower, and the snouts of lions appeared behind him. Michael blinked, and it was back as it was, except for the words changing to, “no, he will not be missed.”

The coin fell from his hands, a great chasm sprouting in the earth where it landed in the dirt. The girl watched impassively.

Cracks sped out from the chasm, and Michael clung to a ledge as he fell. “Help me! Help!”

The girl tipped her hat at him, remaining where she was on a pillar of soil.

The rumbling got louder, and Michael fell for hours, landing with a harsh thud that didn’t kill him.

He was surrounded by children, all impassively watching him. Some, he recognized, some he couldn’t. One twirled a familiar tie between his hands, the other flipped through a comic book.

“Treat others how you want to be treated,” one intoned with a giggle.

“Reciprocation, Michael Bensen.”

Michael could only stare helplessly as they grew, warping into versions of himself, all wearing cheap suits and seedy grins and crooning with voices that weren’t theirs and reaching with hands that were his own.
Then, Michael experienced a world of pain.

The small coin was true, not a soul missed the man.

Chapter End Notes

I wonder how ticked off Reggie’s gonna be when he finds out Nathan’s back?

Ok I’ll be real- I hate writing about god because of the precedent I set for myself of capitalizing every pronoun.

Sorry for the late update, I’m trying to get back in the groove since school is over.
Jump In

Chapter Summary

Ben gets worse, and Five has to make a decision. He's not the only one.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Klaus woke up, the excitement of the night before hit him like a truck.

For a long moment, he just blinked dumbly, staring into the space of his room without processing anything, his brain not fully comprehending the events. Then, that moment ended, and he shot out of bed like a rocket, speeding down the stairs and stumbling around the house in pajamas in search for his ghost, bare feet thudding on the cold ground. The idea that he dreamed it all up was squashed when he looked up.

There Nathan was, sleeping on the stuffed head with his limbs dangling everywhere. Klaus let out a relieved sigh.

“Nathan!”

The Irishman’s eyes snapped open, and Klaus grinned as he used the horns to swing down to the floor, clumsily landing on his feet and hands.

“It’s too early for this,” Nathan muttered, though his fond smile betrayed his true thoughts as he got to his feet.

“I thought I was dreaming,” Klaus said, eyebrows raised to his hairline.

“Surprise,” Nathan sang, waving his hands like a showman.

Klaus grinned up at him, fists flashing blue. Nathan wheezed as Klaus tackled him to the floor in a brutal hug.
“Agh!” Nathan managed to get out before dissolving into laughter.

“Sorry for sending you away—” Klaus muttered, yelping when Nathan flicked his forehead.

“Oh, shush, it’s fine. I’m back now. We went over this, Klaus.”

Klaus grumbled but accepted it, simply basking in Nathan’s presence until the sharp clicks of heels alerted him to someone new.

He glanced up to see Mom standing in the doorway, a blank expression on her face. Her lips twitched, and she looked to the stairs, then back at Klaus and Nathan, who were sitting up.

“I suggest you go get dressed before your father sees you in such a state,” As Klaus got up and unmanifested Nathan, ready to march back up the stairs, a gentle touch on his shoulders stopped him.

“Would you please tell Nathan that it was good to know he was back?”

Klaus blinked at the android, sensing a sort of earnestness to her tone.

“Yeah. Yeah, of course I will. He’ll be happy to hear it,” He finally answered, smiling softly at her and making his way up the stairs. Nathan trailed behind him in pensive silence.

He shared a look with Klaus and gave a nervous smile. Klaus guessed it was because he didn’t know how to react, especially with how his own mother…

Well, that wasn’t a good thing to think of so early in the morning.

Klaus busied himself with getting ready, his good mood blinding him to the plight of the diminutive Number Six.

Ben looked horrible, which wasn’t anything out of the ordinary. He had shed weight further, somehow. The empty praise from their father didn’t make him glow or comfort him as it used to do.
Ben personally wished that he hadn’t shown improvement. He wished that his father never found out that he could fight for control, that there was a skill to be honed there. He hoped that the man would switch back to wine glasses and would stop bringing him rabbits.

After his regular private training sessions, Ben slipped into long, hollow trances where he didn’t feel or think, but his body moved of its own accord. In the back of his head, he called it autopilot.

Klaus left the bathroom, offering a hasty ‘good morning’ to Ben before speeding out to make up for lost time with Nathan.

Ben hummed in reply, fingers scrabbling on the counter for his toothbrush, knocking over the cup that held them with a loud clang.

He stared at the cup with unfocused eyes, hazily remembering that his toothbrush was probably in the cup.

But the cup was knocked over.

While Ben’s dazed mind struggled to process this, a toothbrush was pushed into his hands gently.

“Ben,” Five said, cautiously moving to try and catch Ben’s eye. He had heard the sound of the cup falling over, peeking into the open bathroom to see Ben staring dazedly at an overturned cup, not moving to set it back upright.

Ben blinked and moved his head so that he was facing Five without really seeing him.

“Ben, you need to brush your teeth. Ben, are you okay?”

Ben blinked again with his hauntingly empty eyes and nodded very, very slowly.

“Yeah.” He said softly, agreeing with Five’s statement. His hand stayed motionless by his side, fingers loosely curled around the toothbrush.
Five chewed his lip in concern. How had he overlooked how bad this was getting? He was supposed to be perceptive and freakishly intelligent-

No, now wasn’t the time for self-loathing.

“Ben. Ben- hey, look at me.” Five snatched the toothbrush from Ben, tossing it on the counter and grasping Ben’s bony shoulders with both hands.

Ben kept up that empty stare, the zoned out expression making Five feel both angry and sad.

Five chewed his lip harder, feeling it bleed.

He wasn’t the right person for this.

With a grudging sigh, Five pulled Ben forward into a hug, pressing him tightly to his body.

*Please work.*

For a few long moments, Ben’s hands stayed at his sides, before slowly coming up to hug Five back.

And just like that, in the fashion of a puppet with cut strings, Ben sagged and leaned all his weight (which was hardly anything) onto Five, beginning to breathe in short, shaky gasps. Being aware was an awful lot heavier than being numb, after all.

“No, Five, I’m not okay- they’re not okay, I’m not okay- ” Ben babbled hysterically into the fabric of Five’s nightshirt. Five breathed out in relief, knowing that Ben had broken out of his trance.

“What’s going on, Ben? Talk to me- talk to me *please.* ” Five pleaded, hooking his arms under Ben’s armpits to support him, disturbed at how easy it was.

Ben broke further, sobbing into Five’s chest.
“Bunnies, cats, rats, mice, anything he can get his hands on- I have to- they have to-”

Five processed the ramblings with a slow realization.

All the listed animals were easily procured. ‘They,’ the name that Ben called the Horrors. Ben was a sensitive boy who loved all life, even beetles and centipedes and the boring blades of grass in the yard. And Ben was upset.

Five’s eyes narrowed dangerously, even as he held Ben ever closer.

“You can’t stop him, Ben. I’ll never want to do this anymore. I don’t want it. I never wanted- I’ll never want to do this, Five! But I can’t stop him! I’m too weak- I can’t control anything!” Ben rambled and sobbed in Five’s arms, screaming his frustrations with himself and the man that claimed the title of ‘Father.’

“I’ll tell Mom you’re sick. Stay in today. Maybe Dad will cancel your training.”

Five stayed with Ben for a while longer, arriving late to breakfast under the excuse that Ben wasn’t feeling well (true) and he was busy looking to cure whatever was ailing him (also true).

He made up a lie on the spot, claiming that Ben’s lack of sleep was the cause, adding in how Ben’s habit of throwing up his meals weren’t helping. Once the words left his lips, he winced at how true they were.

The siblings shot each other concerned glances, and Five spotted Klaus giving a tiny nod to the space behind Allison.

Nathan, most likely. That was one thing Five didn’t have to worry about anymore, or at least for the time being.

Five took his seat and started to eat, coughing to get his siblings’ attention. Once their eyes were one
him, he tapped his fork twice against his plate. They took sips of their drinks in reply.

Their father took his leave without a goodbye, as expected. The siblings made moves to leave as well, but stayed put where they were.

“What’s up, Five?” Allison said, brows furrowed.

Five jerked his chin at Ben’s empty seat. The siblings made similar noises of concern.

“Ben’s private training is getting too much. I think he’s being forced to kill animals.” Five stated bluntly.

Vanya gasped, clapping her hands against her mouth in shock. Everyone looked at her in alarm.

“I knew something was wrong!” She exclaimed, looking close to tears, answering the inquiring looks with an unsettled frown.

“I- well, my hearing’s gotten a lot better for some reason. I can hear things from really far away or really quiet things, and I heard-” She looked sick.

Klaus nodded at her encouragingly, reaching over to grasp her shoulder.

“Animals… like meows and squeaks. I thought they’d been coming from outside since they were so faint, but I guess they were coming from the basement.”

“Oh god,” Allison said, looking sick.

“Ben l-loves animals,” Diego muttered quietly, and for a moment, the air was so heavy with pain that Five reached up to adjust his collar.

“We need to stop this.” Luther said, convicted in his decision. No one disagreed.
“Allison, this is a job for you.” Allison nodded, face set in determination.

“Wait-” Klaus intervened. The siblings turned to give him accusing looks. Klaus cleared his throat and snapped his fingers.

“Nathan said that Dad writes down everything in a journal… I think he’s been doing that since Allison learned to talk.” Klaus explained, and the siblings leaned back to think.

Five bit the inside of his cheek, recalling his own journal’s notes.

Time travel.

Five clenched his jaw, mind working at freakish speeds to consider the issue while his siblings talked among themselves.

If he could go back to before Ben’s training started, that would be useless. Reginald would go on to do it anyway if he deemed it necessary.

If.

Five scowled, whole body tense in consideration.

These were control exercises. But how could Five get back far enough to train Ben’s monsters without totally screwing up the timeline?

Reginald probably started the training around the mission where Klaus had-

Five’s eyes darted towards Klaus, thinking back to when there had been no rise or fall to the other boy’s chest.

Five recalled his own heart stuttering at the sight, and didn’t need to think to know that his siblings felt the same.
No, there were too many monumental moments during that mission. Any change could cause an irreparable tear in Five’s timeline.

Or would it?

Five had studied two popular theories of time and how it flowed. One said that it was a treadmill that always moved forward, and any attempt to move back was against time’s very nature.

There was another theory, one that Five hoped more than believed was accurate. Any odd movement in time would simply cause a new branch of the timeline to sprout, which would continue indefinitely.

Five bit his lip, realizing that he had to stop being theoretical and start putting his powers to the test. He needed to do this to fix everything. To fix Ben, fix Klaus, fix everyone-

Fix himself.

Five clenched his fist, eyes hard with determination.

He would time travel and fix his family.

The siblings went on with their day under the impression that they would brainstorm at a later idea, oblivious to the plans whirling around Five’s brain.

Five flipped through his notebook, scrawling long equations feverishly in a single-minded determination.

He would save his family.
Five’s gut twisted with anticipation and a little bit of excitement. His hand flew across the pages, filling them with ink and numbers.

He had decided to travel back to before the first public mission. He would start training Ben’s control from there.

That was also the point where that Michael Bensen had been introduced to the academy, and more specifically, Klaus. Five planned to nip that problem in the bud and let Klaus grow without having to endure the sickness of the man.

He needed to do a trial run first.

Five took a deep breath, feeling power creep into his fingertips, expecting to open a wormhole. With a deep inhale, the power flooded his hands and arms, muffling his senses with the haziness of untapped potential.

A feral grin found its way onto Five’s face as he readied himself to jump like never before. He would be sailing across time, the frontier that humans simply couldn’t control.

In this moment, Five was no human. Five was a god, he could do anything, he could rule the world-the universe -

But he needed to save his family. What good was ruling a world with no one important in it?

With a final glance towards his clock (11:00 AM Tuesday), Five’s shoes squeaked against the polished wooden floor as he dove into a wormhole leading to a different time.

It was like nothing he had ever felt. Where normal jumping felt like being dipped underwater and being pulled out, this felt totally different.

Sound blared in his ears, odd echoes of the past and future and present and for a moment, Five could swear he saw demons, horribly cruel men and women who wore suits and colorful children’s masks and held suitcases. He felt nails scratch his face for a moment, hearing the crooning tones of a
woman, then a man, then something different altogether.

He swore he saw Reginald, holding a jar with tiny but breathtaking lights, unscrewing the lid and letting them free. A woman on a bed breathed her last breath, watching him.

Reginald stepped off of a boat with the earnestness of a man on a mission, something so odd to Five that he almost turned away before the vision faded.

He saw people that felt familiar, a blue haired lady with pale skin, a half-ape abomination of an astronaut, a woman in a skintight white suit holding a white violin destroying the world and wrecking the moon, a huge chunk hurtling towards them at supersonic speed, only to be stopped by a man in black holding a hand out.

For a moment, he caught the brown-haired man’s eye.

“Five?” The man asked breathlessly before Five was whisked away again.

He saw a woman on a red carpet being informed that her father had died, then an odd flash of Griddy’s, the waitress looking far older than he knew her to be. Gunshots, bullet wounds, and blood flooded Five’s vision before he finally pulled himself together and exit his portal.

With a thud, Five landed on his knees in his room, brain turning to soup in his skull in its effort to comprehend what he had seen.

Finally, a chime sounded, and Five’s head lifted to see his clock.

10:00 AM Tuesday.

Five held his breath, waiting to be erased from existence.

After a few seconds, he released the breath he had been holding, getting to his feet and pulling out his notebook.
He had been so taken by the visions he had seen that he hadn’t focused on where he was supposed
to go. He still traveled, nonetheless, but he had been distracted.

Five wrote down the word ‘destination’ in big letters, underlining it twice.

He took a moment to compose himself, before taking a deep breath, glancing at the clock, and trying
again.

God swirled a snowglobe in her hand, looking at the boy who ran through time again and again.

Time was something that she didn’t meddle in often, so watching it unfold was mildly interesting to
her.

She put the globe down, accidentally jostling it with a few others, other dimensions and times that
had the same people, if a little different in nature. God let out an impressed whistle, seeing the time
traveling boy tumble through all the other snowglobes, ignoring the glass barrier that kept them
separate.

God decided not to meddle with this one, allowing him to do whatever he wanted.

Five was ready to go further than just hours and days.

After a moment of deliberation, Five took out a pen and notepad, scrawling a condensed version of
his plan for his siblings to read if they stumbled upon it. Hopefully, if Five came back to this time, it
would be different, and everything would be okay.

Five stepped outside through his window, walking to the sidewalk, preparing to jump again.
He launched himself through the portal, ignoring all that he saw.

When he emerged, people milled around the streets, wearing summer clothes and colors. He had gone back to summer, then.

He needed to go back further.

Another portal, another season. Snow fell around him, chilling him in a refreshing way.

A little more, at least he was in the right season.

Five felt his confidence waver when his pants of exertion wafted through the air in a cloud. No time to wait, he had to go while he was on a roll.

Five ran and launched himself through a portal, ignoring the sights and sounds once more, focusing only on saving his family, feeling his feet touch solid ground. Finally, the day before that mission, he could finally save his-

All around the young time traveler, ash blew around like snow, coming from the burned buildings around him. The sky was grey with smoke, and Five looked back to see a crumbled building behind him. Had he gone to a warzone?

Five saw a newspaper stand and prepared to walk towards it, pausing when the creak of rusty metal sounded behind him.

Turning around, Five felt his heart sink when he recognized what made the noise.

A horribly misshapen gate greeted him, the umbrellas on them wilting like thirsty flowers.
Five ran from the gate, heading towards the newspaper stand in a rush, pulling one out to stare at the headline.

*CITY SAYS GOODBYE TO REGINALD HARGREEVES.*

Five wasn’t focused on that. His eyes were glued to the tiny printed date above the headline.

*March 24, 2018.*

Five felt his lungs burn as he tried to jump again, only for it to fizzle out of his fingertips like sand out of coriander.

He fell to his knees, ignoring the sting of broken concrete.

He had failed.

He was stuck.

God looked at where the boy ended up in the box of snowglobes. The After of the End? Unfortunate.

The boy didn’t have enough determination to get himself out of there, did he? Not after learning that he had landed in the apocalypse.

God hummed thoughtfully, trailing a single finger along the top of the globe, considering her options.

On one hand, she could allow time to flow as it was supposed to, and the boy would spend decades in the wasteland, only to be picked up by another powerful individual who had control over time.
On the other…

God had never meddled with this world, with this timeline. The characters and stories were fascinating on their own.

But what if she did? She’d heard the story time and time again, so what would happen if she shook the globe?

Would the glitter rise and swirl? Would it fall to reveal a whole new picture?

There was really only one way to find out, but did God even want to?

Her finger stayed on the top, considering the fate of the world.

What to do?

Chapter End Notes

So what do you think? Should God meddle?

I stopped capitalizing all her pronouns cuz that was becoming problematic.

Very sorry about this whole late thing. My inspiration for this fic is wobbling, since I started it with the intention of it being a oneshot. Look where it's gone since then. I'm not good at making decisions. I might take a little break, but that's kinda cruel.

Thanks for reading.

Also, the title was sort of a placeholder, and it's ironic how playful the fic is, and then you get to the actual story, which is like...

Well, anyway, might change the title, might not, who knows?

Honestly, I think this fic will go on hiatus until I can sort out my affairs, sorry.

Leave a kudos if you liked! It's crazy to know that this fic has gone so far.
Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!